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The Phenomenology of Customer Delight:
a case study of product evaluation

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Abstract

This thesis presents a phenomenological case study of customer delight during product evaluation. The literature presents two existing 'theories' of customer delight. The first, from the field of Consumer Research, presents a cognitive model of post-purchase customer delight as the affective result of expectation disconfirmation. The second, from the Manufacturing literature, proposes that customers are delighted when products contain unexpected features or levels of qualities that exceed expectations. This research was motivated by the fact that our current understanding of this commercially important phenomenon is confined by expectation-based thinking. Furthermore, both streams of research have neglected to study the naturalistic occurrence of delight from the customer's perspective. The aim of this research was to generate an integrated understanding of the affective, behavioural, and cognitive nature of customer delight and its product basis. A case study methodology, incorporating interview, self-report and observational methods, was adopted to generate a triangulated understanding of product-based customer delight. The naturalistic product evaluations of 918 customers were observed and self-reported delight reactions were collected from 66 research participants. In total 414 customer delight reactions were analysed in detail. This approach aimed to generate new theory, rather than test the existing models, and this new integrative understanding of customer delight is the primary contribution of this thesis. A new model of product-based customer delight is presented, and the existing Manufacturing model is extended to incorporate the empirical findings of the case study. Whilst the findings of this research support concepts contained within the existing theories of customer delight, they also demonstrate their limitations. The cognitive and affective diversity of customer delight reactions, previously unaccounted for in the literature, was uncovered and five product-based routes to delight were identified. The emergent theory successfully integrates the two previously separate concepts of delight and builds upon them by identifying the behaviours associated with customer delight resulting from both attribute-based and holistic product appraisals.

Author Profile

Andrew gained his BSc in Psychology at Birmingham University in 1997, having conducted undergraduate research into the processing of graphical information displays and consumer sensory thresholds. Over the three year period of this first degree, he divided his time between his studies in Psychology and a market research post at a local radio station. The experience of being educated in the field of human behaviour, whilst being involved in an organisation's attempts to understand customers, stimulated Andrew's interest in consumer behaviour and the application of Psychology in business. After a year working as a marketing assistant and course facilitator at Nottingham Law School, Andrew came to Cranfield University in 1998 to take up a post as Research Assistant on the CUPID project (Customer Understanding Processes In Design). Andrew was able to apply Psychology to an industrial problem, working with Nissan to incorporate in-depth customer understanding into the vehicle design process. During 2001, in parallel to his work on the CUPID project and his PhD research, Andrew acted as a visiting lecturer in Consumer Behaviour for Marketing at City University Business School, London. At the time of writing, he is working at Cranfield University as a Research Officer on the HiCS project (Highly Customised Solutions), another project with consumer behaviour at its core. He teaches Empathic Design and Consumer Behaviour on the Department of Enterprise Integration's Masters courses in Manufacturing and Sustainability and Design.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Aim
To provide the reader with an overview of the thesis and an understanding of its structure.

1.0 Summary

This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the background and nature of the research that this thesis presents. The focus and objectives of the enquiry are introduced and the research process is summarised. The chapter concludes by providing an overview of the thesis structure and the contents of each chapter.

1.1 Background to the research

The ability of an organisation to delight its customers seems to have important marketing implications. There is mounting evidence to suggest that customers that are merely satisfied feel no loyalty to brands (Thomas, 1998 and Jones and Sasser, Jr 1995). And whilst many product sectors are categorised by large numbers of product offerings competing with very similar specifications and features, the strategy of matching the best in class often fails to capture new customers (Ealey and Troyano-Bermudez, 1996). Today's post-modern consumer no longer makes purchase decisions solely on the basis of logical product comparison. Customers now buy for pleasure (Hedonic Consumption - Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982), and on the basis of the subjective feelings evoked by products (Affective Choice - Mittal, 1988). To capture new customers, companies now need to lift their offerings above their competitors, differentiating them and making customers desire and covet them.

Consumer Researchers have long studied the opportunities organisations have to maximise customer loyalty. This has elevated the idea of the 'delighted customer' to the ultimate organisational goal, (Oliver et al, 1997). Empirical evidence seems to support this edict. Raising reported satisfaction levels makes companies more profitable (Anderson et al, 1993), the more satisfied people are with a company the more they advocate it to others, (Albro, 1999) and a non-linear relationship between satisfaction scores and loyalty rates has been identified (Jones and Sasser, Jr., 1995). On this basis companies strive to achieve that which lies beyond satisfaction, supra-satisfaction, more commonly referred to as delight. Since customer satisfaction has long been recognised and modelled as the result of people's comparison of what is received with what was expected (e.g. Oliver, 1980 and Westbrook, 1987) this cognitive view has been applied to the study of customer delight. Existing definitions of delight in the Psychology literature include components of arousal, surprise, and positive feelings referred to as 'affect' (Russel, 1980 and Plutchik, 1980). The causal basis of customer delight was then demonstrated to be the positive disconfirmation of expectations resulting in surprise and arousal which in turn amplify positive feelings (Oliver et al, 1997).

This principle has also been embedded into the Manufacturing discipline in the form of the Kano Model of Product Quality (Clausing, 1994, Kano, 1995, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998, Shen et al, 2000). This model makes an expectation-based link between product quality and customer satisfaction. Three ways in which product

features can influence customer satisfaction are proposed. Firstly, products must contain things customers' expect otherwise they will be dissatisfied. Secondly, the more a product has of the things people want the more satisfied they will be. And finally, customers can be surprised and delighted by product features that they never expected. Most Western interpretations of this work call for the identification of latent customer needs so that designers can delight customers with product features that they never knew they needed (e.g. Clausing, 1994, Vasilash, 1995, Matzler et al, 1996, Hofmeister et al, 1996 and Plesk, 2000). However, this view of customer delight and product quality results in some unwelcome implications. Not only is it easier to delight customers who have low expectations of your product, but delighting customers today makes it harder to do so in the future because expectations have been raised (Rust and Oliver, 2000).

This research was motivated by the fact that our empirical understanding of customer delight is limited to expectation-based thinking and based upon scored reactions to researcher-defined product attributes (e.g. Oliver et al, 1997 and Kano, 1995). Even the most recent research calls for the achievement of expectation-based customer delight without first considering the nature of this subjective emotional reaction (Shen et al, 2000). Empirical research into the nature of delight is also noticeably lacking (Ludvigsen, 1995, Rosenberg, 1996, Peterson et al, 1986 and Keiningham et al, 1999). Whilst the field of Psychology has tended to focus on the negative emotions, the applied discipline of Consumer Research has tended to propose general theories of emotion (e.g. Elliot, 1998). Prevailing in this field and the prescriptive literature is the cognitive view of expectation-based customer satisfaction. The nature of customer delight as a consumption phenomenon has only been studied in terms of its pre-defined components of expectation disconfirmation, surprise, positive affect and arousal (see Oliver et al 1997), and its bases and effects in service consumption.

1.2 Industrial Context

The research to be described here was conducted with the collaboration of two organisations operating in the automotive sector. Both organisations were interested in how they could improve the product design process so that the resulting cars delighted customers. The work to be presented in this thesis is a constituent part of a funded research project that aimed to deliver and test tools that product designers could use to increase their customer understanding. The CUPID project (Customer Understanding Processes In Design) was funded by the UK government's Innovative Manufacturing Initiative and the resulting tools and guidance for their use are presented elsewhere (Evans et al, 2002). As a necessary component of this larger project, the research to be presented here specifically focused on understanding the nature of customer delight and its product-basis. The research was also set against an on-going period of broader industrial activity focussed on delighting customers. In the year 2001 the UK Design Council ran its annual Design in Business Week event under the banner "Delight your customers" (Decker, 2002). And prescriptive literatures and experts continue to emphasize the importance of achieving customer delight (e.g. Von Hippel et al 1999, Schneider and Bowen, 1999, Keiningham et al, 1999, Mather, 1999 and Frayling, 2003).

1.3 The Research Approach - focus, objectives and questions.

The focus of the research was determined by both the industrial context and a diverse review of the literature (to be presented in Chapter 2). The literature contained no research that considered the naturalistic occurrence of product-based customer delight and none that sought to identify the customer's perspective of this phenomenon. As a result, the following objectives were identified for the research;

- *explore the nature of customer delight reactions during the evaluation of tangible products;*
- *identify and describe the antecedents of customer delight reactions in terms of the product characteristics that evoke them;*
- *define delight from the customer's perspective, rather than on the basis of existing theory; and*
- *comment upon the appropriateness of the industrial approaches proposed for achieving customer delight.*

Implicit in these research objectives was the need to understand the complexity of the customer delight reaction and its product-basis. Whilst the existing empirical literature that specifically considered customer delight was very limited, the literature that considers emotions in general was not. Emotion researchers in the fields of Psychology, Marketing and Consumer Research generally align themselves with either the Cognitive or Affective perspectives depending on which they believe to be more important in the experience of emotions. The Affective perspective (e.g. Zajonc, 1980, Frijda, 1988, Mittal, 1988 and Elliot, 1998) considers the feeling components of emotions to have primacy, that their study is limited by constructs of our language, and therefore tends to propose general laws of emotion. The Cognitive perspective tends to dominate both the academic and prescriptive literatures because its assumption of the primacy of the thinking components of emotions facilitates the use of quantitative methodologies and the study of specific emotions and their relevance to consumption behaviour (Lazarus, 1982, Oliver, 1980, Westbrook, 1987, Spreng et al 1996, Oliver et al 1997, Wirtz and Bateson, 1999, Rust and Oliver, 2000 and Vanhamme, 2000). The basic assumptions made on both sides of this debate are that emotions have both cognitive and affective components, that by definition they motivate behaviour and that they are always the result of a stimulus appraisal (Arnold, 1970, Zajonc, 1980, Lazarus, 1982, Plutchik, 1980, Russell, 1980, Frijda, 1988). This theoretical background to the research therefore necessitated an integrative approach to understanding customer delight. The research would need to pull together the affective, behavioural and cognitive complexity of this emotion with an understanding of its product basis. As a result the research questions were framed as follows;

1. *How do products delight customers?*
2. *Do 'delighter' features exist in products?*
3. *Is there a pre-purchase role for customer delight?*
4. *Are functional innovations and exceeded expectations the only route to delight?*
5. *What does customer defined delight look like?*
6. *Is the disconfirmation of expectations always a component of customer delight during product evaluation?*
7. *What is the nature of the affective and cognitive components of delight?*
8. *What behaviours are associated with customer delight?*

The Objectives and Research Questions outlined above then guided the development of a phenomenological research methodology (described in Chapter 3). To achieve the level of integration desired, whilst maintaining the feasibility of the research, it was decided to study customer delight within a single product category. Whilst this approach would offer the depth of insight required to understand the

complexity of customer delight, it necessarily limited the scope of the enquiry. To mitigate against this limitation a product category that has previously been used as an exemplar of technological products (Clark et al, 1987, Womack et al, 1990, Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, and Ludvigsen, 1996) and used as such in customer satisfaction research (Westbrook, 1987, Westbrook and Oliver, 1991, Oliver, 1992, Oliver and Mano, 1993, and Oliver and Westbrook, 1993) was chosen. It has been said that designing to delight the customer is the most poorly understood factor in new product development (Nussbaum, 1993) and the limitations of general theories of consumption emotion and the methods used to investigate these phenomena have previously been recognised (Orlander, 1993, Rosenberg, 1996, Woodruff, 1997, Parasuraman, 1997, Richins, 1997 and Keiningham et al, 1999). By taking the car as an example complex product, this research assumes that the integrative understanding of the delight it produces can be generalised for the benefit of product developers working in other consumer durable product sectors.

1.4 Summary of the research process

Previous research into customer delight has used predominantly quantitative methods to investigate this subjective phenomena (e.g. Oliver et al 1997). Definitions of delight have been adopted from the field of Psychology without the nature of delight in consumption situations first becoming the focus of enquiry. In the field of Manufacturing, a product's impact on customer satisfaction is modelled in terms of the participants' reactions to researcher-defined product features (Kano, 1995, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998, Shen et al, 2000). Both approaches to understanding the product basis of customer delight use closed questions and numerical scales, incorporated within survey methodologies that fail to investigate delight in naturalistic settings and avoid collecting the customer's interpretation of the reaction.

The research questions guided the development of a mixed-method research process designed to address these limitations of previous research. Customer delight reactions were investigated *in situ* and the customer's interpretation of their delight reaction was actively sought. Triangulation was designed into the methodology with the use of multiple methods to investigate customer delight, the use of multiple consumption settings from which to collect data and the use of additional researchers to collect and interpret these data.

The research to be presented therefore follows a two stage process. An initial Exploratory Pilot Study used multiple observation and interview methods to ground the research in a naturalistic consumption setting. The insights gained then steered the progression of the research into its descriptive phase. The Descriptive Study sought to collect both confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence from similar and dissimilar consumption settings using self-report and interview methods.

1.5 Novelty and contribution to knowledge

This research aims to generate new knowledge in the form of an integrated theory of customer delight and its product basis. The purpose of the research is therefore to generate theory rather than to test it. To achieve this aim the research required the use of a new approach to the study of customer delight. The research demonstrates novelty in the following ways;

- A phenomenological approach is applied to the study of a specific consumption emotion.

- Instead of testing existing theory the approach focuses on identifying new insights outside of the constraints of current theoretical standpoints.
- The naturalistic experience of delight by customers, and their real-time interpretation of it, is the focus of the enquiry, rather than the measurement of pre-defined components of the reaction based on participants' memories of it.
- The scope of the research is also novel. Previously customer delight has been studied as a post-purchase phenomenon within the context of service consumption. This research focuses on a previously neglected pre-purchase product consumption setting.

As a result this research aims to contribute a descriptive theory of customer delight that provides an integrated understanding of its affective, behavioural and cognitive components and its product basis.

1.6 Guide to thesis structure

This thesis presents the research across eight chapters. This introduction to the thesis will now conclude with an overview of the thesis content. The research is presented in four stages. Firstly, the research is introduced through a review of the literature, the specification of the methodology and the rationale used for its selection. Then the processes of data collection and analysis for both the exploratory and descriptive stages of the research are presented. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the research findings and the framing of their contribution in terms of the existing literature.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter has provided an overview of the thesis and the nature of the research it presents.

Chapter 2 - A review of the literature

This chapter presents a diverse review of the current literature that considers delight, both as an emotion and a consumption phenomenon. The importance placed in customer delight by business practitioners is discussed and the empirical research that supports their beliefs is presented. Our understanding of emotions, including delight, are outlined in the perspectives taken by the disciplines of Psychology, Consumer Research and Manufacturing. The current best-practice prescriptions for the achievement of customer delight are then reviewed. The chapter concludes by highlighting the specific gaps in our knowledge that this research seeks to address.

Chapter 3 - Methodological approach

Chapter 3 outlines the selection and justification of the methodology used to answer the research questions. The Case Study methodology selected is described, the epistemology and assumptions of the researcher are specified and the consideration of validity throughout the study is made explicit.

Chapter 4 - Stage one of the research - The Exploratory Pilot Study

This chapter presents the Exploratory Pilot Study in its entirety. The detailed application of multiple research methods is described and the analysis of the data collected is presented. The findings are discussed in terms of the emergent theory and the direction of the Descriptive Study is specified.

Chapter 5 - Stage two of the research - The Descriptive Study

The Descriptive Study is presented over two chapters. In this, the first, the detailed application of research methods in two dissimilar consumption settings is described. The size and nature of the data sets collected are presented and a descriptive quantitative analysis is conducted. Initial findings are then framed in terms of the emergent theory.

Chapter 6 - The Descriptive Study - findings of the qualitative analysis

Chapter 6 concludes the Descriptive Study. The qualitative analysis process used to interpret the data is presented. The emergent theory is grounded in the data and the findings of the Descriptive Study are presented. The chapter concludes with the synthesis of a descriptive model of customer delight during product evaluation.

Chapter 7 - Discussion of the research findings and their contribution

Chapter 7 brings together the findings of the Exploratory Pilot Study and the Descriptive Study. The findings of each are discussed and the final integrated theory of customer delight is presented. The contributions to knowledge it makes are then discussed in terms of the existing literature.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis. The thesis and its findings are reviewed as a whole. The strengths and weaknesses of the research are discussed and the chapter concludes with suggestions for future research and practice.

Chapter 2

A review of the literature

Aim

To bound the research through a discussion of its context within the literature and to frame it in terms of its novelty and contribution to knowledge.

2.0 Chapter Summary

The efforts and attention of many disciplines have touched on 'delight' and the review of these various literature sources here aims to demonstrate the current state of our knowledge of this phenomenon. This chapter grounds the research in the literature and it bounds and defines the gaps in our knowledge.

Before the literature is considered it is important for the author to state the motivations underlying his research and the potential audience for its contribution. This thesis is the result of a research grant awarded to a School of Industrial and Manufacturing Science under the UK-Government's Innovative Manufacturing Initiative. The audience for this research is therefore the Manufacturing Industry, whilst its contribution is aimed squarely at the international Manufacturing, New Product Development, Consumer Research and Marketing literatures.

In this chapter literature has been drawn from various source types, (Popular, Prescriptive and Empirical), and from multiple disciplines, (Design, Manufacturing, New Product Development, Psychology, Consumption, Marketing, Consumer Research, and General Business). The literature reviewed in this chapter makes two types of contribution to our understanding of customer delight and its importance. A first body of literature suggests, and attempts to demonstrate, that many traditional indicators of business success are dependent upon the achievement of customer delight (i.e. that in business terms there is *a need to delight customers*). The second body of literature contributes to the definition and understanding of this goal (i.e. it contributes to our understanding of *the nature of delight*). Implicit in both sets of literature are prescriptions concerning the best way to delight customers.

The following conclusions are drawn from this literature review. Firstly, that despite the wariness of a few authors, the need for businesses and other organisations to satisfy and delight their customers has been frequently stated and empirically supported. Secondly, that our articulated understanding and definition of customer delight is limited by the approaches used to study it, the contexts within which it has been researched, and the perspectives taken during this research. And finally that, since they are based upon limited conceptualisations of delight, the prescribed ways to delight customers may be inappropriate.

2.1 A need to delight

"It will not suffice to have customers that are merely satisfied."
W. Edwards Deming¹.

¹ Taken from Aguayo and Deming, (1991).

“...we must take quality beyond customer satisfaction to customer delight.”
Colby H. Chandler, CEO, Eastman Kodak².

During the late 1980's, and throughout the 1990's, there were continued calls for organisations to shift from competing on the basis of customer satisfaction, and to begin striving to delight customers. In the first years of the 21st century the popularity of this edict continues. Experts and opinion leaders continue to cite its importance, (Dekker, 2002 and Frayling, 2003), practitioners are urged to achieve it, (Anon, 2000, Casey, 2000, Kelso, 2000, Plesk, 2000 and Shen et al, 2000) and researchers continue to study it (Vanhamme, 2000 and Rust and Oliver, 2000). Indeed there is a great deal of empirical evidence to suggest that this is a prudent shift in business strategy. The fields of Consumer Research and Marketing have come to the conclusion that merely satisfied customers feel no loyalty to brands, (Fornell, 1992 and Oliver et al 1997, Thomas, 1998, Schneider and Bowen, 1999, Zalud, 1999, and Jones and Sasser, Jr., 1999).

Meanwhile, many of today's manufactured goods find themselves competing as commodities in stagnant or even shrinking markets. Many complex product sectors are now categorised by large numbers of product offerings competing with very similar specifications and features, and it is becoming obvious that the Manufacturing strategy of matching the best in class is now failing to capture new customers, (Ealey and Troyano-Bermudez, 1996). The shift is mirrored in the Consumption field which describes post-modern consumers that no longer make purchase decisions solely on the basis of logical product comparison. People signal, reinforce and create their identity through the goods they buy, (Gabriel and Lang, 1995 and Shankar and Fitchett, 2002) and are motivated to consume for much more profound reasons than rational product appraisal, (Belk et al, 1989). It is now recognised that people buy for pleasure, (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) and on the basis of the subjective feelings evoked by products, (Mittal, 1988). It seems then, that to capture and maintain the loyalty of customers, companies now need to lift their offerings above their competitors by differentiating them and making customers covet them by competing on the basis of emotional appeal.

2.1.1 Calls from Business Leaders

In the business world the most common way of framing this need to appeal to customers emotionally is to talk in terms of delighting customers. One source of insight into our current understanding of customer delight are the prescriptions of business leaders. It is the beliefs and motives of these people that have influenced the direction of scientific research into this phenomenon, (Gurney, 1999 and see, Oliver et al, 1997).

“...Going beyond satisfaction to customer delight will provide a distinct advantage to the company that does it first and does it well consistently. Would you rather be satisfied or delighted by the products and services you buy?”, (Chandler, 1989).

“To prosper in the 1990's... [companies] have to go a step further, to delight customers with wonderful products, outstanding value, and superlative service. Genuine delight stems from giving a customer something wonderful that they didn't even know they wanted until they saw it.”, (Schumann et al, 1995).

² Quote taken from Chandler, 1989

"In today's hyper-competitive market, it is no longer is enough to have satisfied customers. Companies need loyal customers.", (Middlebrooks, 1999).

"Good is no longer enough. And neither it seems is satisfaction. Delight is better than satisfaction.", (Gurney, 1999).

"Products must excite customers or be banished.", (Buitoni, 1999).

"It should be the ultimate goal of any company to achieve 100% customer delight.... It should become an obsession.", (Falmer, 1999).

"If we hope to recapture market share we can only do it by exciting our customer. One of the ways to do that is by giving him more than he expected. Value excites customers.", (Unnamed General Motors engineer quoted by Ludvigsen, 1996).

"Designing to surprise and delight the customer is the least understood factor in designing for hit products. But that extra delight may provide just what is needed to push a good-selling product into the stratosphere.", (Nussbaum, 1993).

"Customers must experience delight and surprise, and that means delivering what they want which does not necessarily mean what they think they want.", (Randle, 1998).

"There is always room for delight, whatever that may mean we are dealing with subjective judgements here We are not trying to measure, we are trying to raise awareness..... in education and health buildings it is an absolutely fundamental economic benefit - a good, well designed school enables kids to be more social and provides a better environment for learning [whilst] the least-cost projects leave long-term cost consequences.....", (Robin Nicholson, chairman UK Construction Industry Council, quoted in Kelso, 2000).

"Making customers happy - or even delighting them and surprising them. Sounds pretty obvious as a business goal. If all businesses didn't do that, most would go to the wall wouldn't they?", (Harry Rich, Director - Business, The Design Council, quoted in Dekker, 2002).

Business and opinion leaders seem adamant that customer delight is a business imperative. They see it as the key to both selling more products and maintaining the loyalty of customers, across both consumer durable and service sectors. The quotes presented above suggest that business views delight as an extension of satisfaction. Customers are delighted when they get the unexpected or more than they expected. Delighted customers are surprised, happy and excited, and as a result buy from companies, or remain loyal to them. Some business consultants claim that the successful companies they work with define delight as 'exceeding customer expectations', (Rogers, 1999 and Malecki, 1999). The President and CEO of Ferrari North America, assures us that any company can create a dream product or service because dream products are not just about exclusivity or luxury, (Buitoni, 1999). The key to designing dream products is to 'interpret the spirit of the time', to create offerings that are specifically 'designed and engineered to convey intense emotions' and to seize every chance to 'magnify the customer's perceived added value'. He suggests that such 'dream products' must surprise and challenge us by connecting

with our imagination. Buitoni suggests that this is the only way products can avoid becoming commodities. He argues that customers are saving money when they are merely satisfying their needs, so that they can spend it on dreams. He stipulates that touching peoples' emotions lets you influence their perception of value and can therefore provide companies with greater pricing power, (Buitoni, 1999). Others are more sceptical, suggesting that delight is a buzzword and that solely focusing on customer delight is a slippery slope, (Gurney, 1999). Instead, it is proposed that companies should marry opportunity and delight, striving to delight the customer on special occasions such as during a complaint, rather than trying to delight the customer continuously and routinely, (Zalud, 1999).

The Design Council in the UK, argues that companies have yet to realise that product design is the key to customer delight. In a national survey conducted in 2001, 85% of businesses approached by the Design Council said they *"aimed to delight their customers by surpassing their expectations"*, (Dekker, 2002). When the same businesses were asked whether, as customers, they were delighted by their suppliers, 61% said they were. Whilst 15% of businesses are not even trying to delight their customers, a further 24% (in business to business situations) are trying but failing. The literature shows that customer delight is seen as important in sectors as diverse as banking, (Albro, 1999) construction and architecture, (Anon, 2000 and Glancey, 2000) car design, (McNealy, 1994, Ludvigsen, 1996) industrial equipment and consumer durables, (Finkelmann and Goland, 1990) and car servicing, (Falmer, 1999).

2.1.2 Empirical support for the drive to delight customers

Practitioners from all quarters seem to take the idea of maximising customer satisfaction and achieving customer delight for granted. Indeed, empirical evidence from the field of Marketing Science lends support to these practitioners' efforts.

Perceived quality, customer satisfaction and economic returns

In the early part of the 1990's many firms began to question the efficacy of customer satisfaction programs, (Anderson et al, 1993). In an attempt to prove the worth of customer satisfaction initiatives, Anderson et al investigated the links between market expectations, product or service quality, customer satisfaction and profitability in 77 Swedish firms, competing in both product and service sectors. Anderson et al used partial data from the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer, an annual survey that measures customer satisfaction, perceived quality, value, and expectations. The telephone survey used; three measures of customer satisfaction - overall satisfaction, distance from ideal level of satisfaction and confirmation-disconfirmation of expectations; two measures of quality - reasonableness of price given quality and quality given price; and a single measure of expectation - remembered pre-purchase level of quality expectation. The study compared these customer based variables with a single economic variable - Return On Investment (ROI), taken as the return on assets held in Sweden. The overall conclusion of the study was that quality boosted customer satisfaction, which in turn boosted profitability. The research showed that customer satisfaction positively influenced long term economic indicators like ROI. Anderson et al conclude that, according to their data, the average Swedish firm could realise a 166% cumulative increase in ROI by raising customer satisfaction scores by one point (on a 10-point scale) each year for five years³. They suggest that for the typical Swedish firm in the sample, such an increase in customer satisfaction levels could net \$76.52 Million in returns. By comparing year on year customer satisfaction

³ The authors do not explain what happens once customers get to 10 out of 10 satisfaction.

scores with the companies' market shares these authors also showed that customer satisfaction and market share are inversely related. Causality could not be established from the correlation data used however the authors suggested that increasing market share reduces satisfaction rather than increasing satisfaction reduces market share, (Anderson et al, 1993).

In an associated piece of research using the same survey data, Fornell, (1992) demonstrated a link between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Higher levels of customer satisfaction increased the length of time customers remained with the firm, reduced their price sensitivity and insulated them against competitors, (Fornell, 1992). And further to Anderson et al's linking of quality with ROI, a survey of the marketing and quality literature conducted by Capon et al identified 20 empirical studies that demonstrated a positive relationship between quality and economic returns, (Capon, et al, 1990).

The study of customer added-value and its effect on customer intention is a popular way for marketing academics to spend their time, (Keiningham et al, 1999). The effects of customer satisfaction, quality, price, perceived value, perceived degree of customer-focus, perception of market leadership, and specification on consumers' intention to purchase, re-purchase and to recommend have all been studied using quantitative statistical methods. Definitional debate, assumptions made, and the particular statistical model applied to the data seem to determine whether or not any of these variables, whether measured absolutely or relatively, have statistically significant effects on customers' actual behaviour or reported intentions, (see for a review and as an exemplar Grissafe and Kumar, 1998). The current progress along this paradigm's line of enquiry is; i) that customer value is multidimensional and not just the trade off between price and quality (the latter of which is multidimensional itself); and ii) that depending on what is measured how, product quality, customer satisfaction, and many other elements that may make up a person's evaluation of a brand and its offerings all have demonstrable effects on whether that person will buy or recommend. Apart from trying to dive headfirst into the quagmire that is Psychology's attitude to behaviour debate, this line of research is held back by its measurement of multidimensional things, determined by multiple subjective individual judgements, and its confidence in proposing facts about whole populations of people generalised from data taken from different product and service contexts and at different stages of consumption⁴.

"...emotional elements paralleling satisfaction may be related to value. Our research suggests that consumers do not make purely rational (cognitive) price-quality trade-offs..... Affectively based variables may be important sources of customer value beyond the perception that high quality goods have been obtained at a fair price. Thus we see a need to tie up the value literature with the satisfaction literature, especially since both are streams of research with many of the same sets of variables." (Grissafe and Kumar, 1998).

The importance of customer satisfaction, in terms of business success, has been demonstrated in the American automotive market where close correlations between customer satisfaction scores and the competitiveness and growth of companies have been observed, (Ludvigsen, 1996). The market success of the Japanese Lexus, Infiniti and Acura brands during the 1990s, and their regular Top-10 rankings in

⁴ The researchers conducting this hypothesis testing research tend to find support for evermore expanded frameworks and models based on the statistical validation they find for their multiple hypotheses. Quality in the Grissafe and Kumar research is measured on single item numerical scales, "how do you rate overall quality?". They claim this is standard practice in the customer value literature.

annual industry-wide customer satisfaction surveys, such as the J.D. Power Customer Satisfaction Index, are central to the belief of American industry in general, that customer satisfaction drives sales, and therefore business success, (Ludvigsen, 1996). In the 1993 J.D. Power customer satisfaction survey, 96% of Toyota owners said they were satisfied with their car, whilst only 87% said they would remain loyal to Toyota. The most common reason given for changing brands in the same survey was *"to try a different style"*, emphasising the fickleness of 1990s consumers and the importance of design and styling in influencing this brand switching in the automotive market place. Owners of one particular car, the Lexus LS400, reported almost unanimous satisfaction with their car, yet 20% of them will consider another brand next time they make a car purchase, (Ludvigsen 1996).

Further support for the idea of delighting customers has come with the identification of a non-linear relationship between satisfaction scores and loyalty rates, (Finkelman and Goland, 1990). Xerox found that customers that rated themselves as 'totally satisfied' were six times as loyal as those that rate themselves as 'merely satisfied', only two scale points down the satisfaction metric, (Jones and Sasser, Jr., 1995). Xerox's customer satisfaction survey indicates that 'merely satisfying' customers is not enough to engender their loyalty. British Telecom (BT) recognise a similar link between the highest levels of satisfaction and profitability, (Danon, 2001). BT present data linking customer satisfaction to the loyalty of its eight million most valuable customers, each providing £70 per annum pre tax and interest earnings. Only 33% of customers with satisfaction scores of 1 to 3 intended staying loyal to BT, compared to 95% of customers with satisfaction scores of 9 and 10, who intended to remain loyal to BT alone, (Danon, 2001). Having analysed and compiled a raft of statistical data, BT modelled the drivers for customer satisfaction and identified the following mathematical weightings for the components of its offering that influenced customer satisfaction scores.

- Products and services (including phones, call quality, directory enquiries and billing) 0.31
- Contact and experience (including events such as faults and complaints) 0.46
- Price and Value -0.06
- Image and reputation (trust, reliability, care for customer needs) 0.42

Delight and the bottom line

Recognition of the impact of increasing customer satisfaction has led to the study of the specific impact of customer delight, hypothetically the highest level of satisfaction, on indicators of business success. Extreme customer experiences such as delight and disappointment have been found to influence customer judgements and future intentions, (Oliva et al, 1992), and extremely positive customer reactions have been shown to result in heightened arousal, strong purchase intentions and to be typically followed by increased loyalty levels, (Oliver et al, 1997, Bitner et al, 1990 and Bolton, 1998).

One feature of delighted customers that is particularly relevant to businesses trying to engender the loyalty of customers is the finding that they spread the good word about the company that delights them. Albro, (1999) reports an American Banking Association survey that found positive word-of-mouth recommendations were only given by customers reporting satisfaction levels at 4 and over on a 6-point scale. The database of customer satisfaction scores from 814 banks also showed that to buy other service products, existing customers had to be reporting satisfaction scores of 5 and over on a 6-point scale, (Albro, 1999). McNealy, (1994), during work with Toyota in the U.S., cites data that suggest every delighted Toyota customer tells at least five

other people about their car. Customer loyalty and retention are compelling motivators for companies because existing customers do more business than new ones, and have lower sales costs. Existing customers create more profit because they cost less to keep than new customers cost to attract. They provide the company with more income, and provide free marketing through word-of-mouth recommendations, (Thomas, 1998). This has lead authors such as McNealy to state that the defining nature of a delighted customer is their loyalty and propensity to recommend, (McNealy, 1994). The benefits of maintaining the loyalty of customers are clear. In the automotive sector for example a single customer who buys a new car every three years, invests £250,000 between the ages of 20 and 65, (John Towers, Rover Group Chief Executive, quoted in Ludvigsen 1996). Companies are now even using these findings in their promotional materials.

"More people are satisfied with First Direct", "85% of our customers were extremely or very satisfied with the service we provide", "our customers are so loyal and enthusiastic that they recommend us every 8 seconds⁵", (First Direct Bank, 2002).

Who should be delighted?

Whilst both product and service sectors recognise that customers need to be delighted, debate about exactly which customers these should be continues. Logically the customer loyalty that results when existing customers are delighted is important to those working in the service sector. However in consumer durable sectors more emphasis is placed on delighting new customers.

In a book devoted to the achievement of customer delight, Schumann et al identify three types of customer that need to be delighted if businesses are to succeed, (Schumann et al, 1995). Current customers are fine for maintaining market share, but have only limited potential to increase market share by word-of-mouth recommendation. Current customers are also more likely to be delighted by relatively small improvements in the offering in terms of its performance, cost and reliability. What delights current customers is to see the organisation continuously improving. Major innovations may not be welcomed by these people because these may disrupt their current consumption behaviour or activities. Schumann et al cite Gillette as an example of a company that has dominated its market sector by making incremental improvements over a period of 60 years, (Schumann et al, 1995). But these authors also point to the dangers of focussing on just delighting existing customers with the goal of maintaining their loyalty. Firstly, in the long term gradual loss of market share is inevitable due to attrition. Secondly, if organisations are very closely aligned to existing customers there exists the possibility of a sudden mass exodus due to the arrival of a disruptive innovation. IBM experienced this having developed long term and close relationships with its customers. These customers liked IBM, and for fear of hurting their feelings failed to inform the company when they recognised their offerings were no longer relevant, (Schumann et al, 1995). Identified potential customers, on the other hand, represent an opportunity to increase market share. These customers are likely to be similar to the organisation's own current customers but will tend to have existing relationships with competitors. These customers are unlikely to switch between suppliers as a result of small advances. This group are therefore only likely to be attracted by significant improvements over competitors present offerings - 'distinctive innovations'. As with current customers, identified potential customers are unlikely to be attracted by disruptive innovations which may require them to make significant behaviour changes. Finally, unidentified potential

⁵ Being this satisfied sounds like hard work for these customers.

customers represent the potential to expand existing market share and create new markets. These customers are likely to be attracted by disruptive or breakthrough innovations which offer something significantly different to existing offerings, (Schumann et al, 1995).

In the automotive sector the concept of loyalty has been described as flawed, outdated, misleading and obsolete, (Ludvigsen, 1996). This is despite the sector's apparent obsession with the idea of tying customers to brands for life. Ludvigsen quotes a Ford executive as saying *"One point of loyalty is worth \$100 million in profits."* He goes on to quote customer loyalty figures that suggest despite intensive marketing effort on behalf of manufacturers, customer loyalty is very hard to increase (in the years 1985-92 automotive customer loyalty levels were between 30 and 35%, and in 1994 customer loyalty was 36%). Furthermore, the industry analysts see the future for achieving loyalty as even bleaker because younger customers are less loyal. Today's customers just want a change, something new and different and the idea that customers will remain loyal to a brand because it satisfies them is defunct.

Ludvigsen is suggesting that customers are fundamentally disloyal and variety seeking and that the fact that businesses make a distinction between new and existing customers is misguided. Succeeding is about attracting more customers than your competitors, whether they are currently your customers, your competitors, or nobodies. He suggests that what is needed is a shift from maintaining the loyalty of existing customers, to attracting customers at all stages of consumption. Ludvigsen makes the point that distinguishing between new and existing customers in the automotive sector is meaningless in business terms. The same is likely to be true in any consumer durable sector where market share is less to do with repeat customers and more to do with conquest customers. Definitions of customer delight have tended to come from the service sector where the importance of loyalty is greater and hence delight has been conceptualised as an extension of satisfaction that leads to greater loyalty. This view of delight opens up the 'exceptional service' route to delight for service providers, and the logical conclusion for product manufacturers is to augment their products with outstanding services. However it provides very little guidance for the design of products that must delight.

Customer satisfaction measurement and its flaws

Despite the concern over which customers should be delighted, and the potential futility of trying to achieve customer loyalty, measured customer satisfaction is seen by businesses as a key performance indicator. Customer Satisfaction Measures (CSM), are seen as a means to collect customer input, and typically use surveys asking customers to rate various aspects of satisfaction with the company on numerical scales. Probably the most famous CSM survey is the J.D. Power survey. It employs quantitative survey methods globally to try to understand customer satisfaction and product quality across many product sectors. Across the world large multinational car companies invest millions of \$'s annually to buy into the data this survey captures. The annual release of the J.D. Power Customer satisfaction report often has television shows dedicated to it and receives wide journalistic attention. Car manufacturers (and their customers everywhere) are able to see how they and their competitors perform in terms of satisfying the purchasers of their products. The value, to the businesses involved, of the data captured is huge. The results are doubly attractive since they are presented statistically, and as such in a form that these businesses trust. The recently redesigned survey *"includes an all new battery of 135 questions that takes a system by system approach to the identification and analysis of quality issues"*, (Owens, 2000). This survey was completed by owners of cars made in 1999 across America and Europe, and the full report of detailed results and

analysis was issued to contributing car manufacturers in 2000. The survey measures quality in terms of TGW (things gone wrong) and TGR (things gone right). TGW is measured in terms of the number of problems reported by car owners per hundred vehicles. The survey tells a car company how many and what problems its customers notice compared to its competitors' customers. TGR uses APEAL (Automotive Performance, Execution And Layout) and tells car companies at the level of each area of the car what customers liked. One survey respondent (also the GM representative on the International Automotive Taskforce) said *"it not only asks whether the climate control system is working properly, but also whether I am happy with the access and how it functions"*, (Bransky, 2000). The report undoubtedly influences market expectations, via customers who have read or seen the results, via the popular media or via sales-staff. And the successful companies it is claimed are those that *"tend to meet the TGW/TGR expectations of their buyers"*, those with high quality and high appeal, (Owens, 2000).

The J.D. Power survey emphasises the link between the customer's perception of quality and the level of satisfaction they report. This link, as reported earlier, has also been empirically supported by users of another CSM survey, the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer, (Anderson et al, 1993). It is customers' perception of the quality of the services and products they buy that drives their satisfaction levels and hence the success of the company, (Anderson et al, 1993) and their loyalty, (Fornell, 1992).

CSM tools are widely accepted but they are not without their critics. Many companies are now caught in a conundrum; despite improving customer satisfaction scores, customers leave every day, (Thomas, 1998). CSM systems have been labelled as 'doomed' because they are manifestations of five common misconceptions managers hold about customer satisfaction and its measurement, (Rosenberg, 1996). The spurious assumptions upon which CSM systems are based are that;

- Customer satisfaction is objective
- Customer satisfaction is easily measured
- Customer satisfaction is accurately measured
- Customer satisfaction is quickly and easily changed
- Its obvious who the customer is

A common problem with CSM systems is that they ask customers to quantify their attitudes and feelings towards a company, its products, services, reputation, buildings and people, at a single point in time. This reliance on a numerical understanding of satisfaction tends to lead to quick-fix solutions that fail to address the deeper values that determine a customers experience of satisfaction with an organisation over time. *"Supersatisfying and retaining customers requires more than just their input; it also requires their involvement"*, (Thomas, 1998).

Striving to continually increase customer satisfaction often leads to companies falling into the 'Be-Better Trap', because that which is measured as satisfaction is incorporated into continuous quality improvements and benchmarking exercises, the performance of which is assessed using quantifiable measures, (Middlebrooks, 1999). Vast amounts of money are siphoned into such schemes as every year the satisfaction bar raises and the drive to be best in class continues. Customers leave nonetheless because, despite satisfying them, the improvements do not matter to them. Middlebrooks identifies some of the symptoms of being ensnared in this trap as; fixation on operating cost reduction rather than growth, automation to increase standardisation, obsession with benchmarking against the competition, over-emphasising speed to market, copy-cat and low risk products. Sometimes there is

nothing an organisation can do to avoid the trap. External forces may lead to a market that has become commoditized in which customers perceive all providers as nearly identical. Here the 'wow-factor' diminishes as customers come to expect dramatic changes in products or services. Middlebrooks argues that what is needed is something completely separate from competing on the basis of customer satisfaction. The answer he proposes is to compete on the basis of 'unique value', differentiating the product or service in terms of 'customer benefits'. If this can be achieved companies can realise accelerated growth, increased customer loyalty, increased employee motivation and innovation. He cites the success of America's number one car rental company, Enterprise, as the result of identifying an under-served market and creating an entirely different product and service experience to serve its needs, (Middlebrooks, 1999). This move towards understanding customers rather than measuring them is reiterated elsewhere. *"Most truly revolutionary new products and services come out of understanding latent needs. Because latent needs...are so subjective it is essential for every function to participate directly in gathering and interpreting them"*, (Rosenberg and Thompson, 1993). These authors claim that poor customer focus leads to inefficient and costly drives to increase customer satisfaction, and 'technology creep' where expensive technology pushes the design without consideration of the perceived value to the customer, leading to high costs and poor return on investment.

Mature markets and the focus on quality

It is said that in the late 1970's the marketplace for automotive transportation changed from a seller's market to a buyer's market, (Bransky, 2000)⁶. The result was a shift towards competition on the basis of meeting customer requirements. In the 1990s the mature automotive market was competing on the basis of cost and striving to maintain customer loyalty through a service augmentation strategy. An example was the launching of manufacturers' own credit cards, the use of which rewards customers with discounts off their next car purchase, (Lorenz, 1996). The personal computer is also a good example of mature or commoditized market. During the 1980s and early 1990s the development of PCs was driven by expert or lead users, (Finke, 1998). No one cared about the appearance of a PC; they all looked the same, they just did more things faster or better. What really mattered for the growth of the PC market was the ease of use for non-expert users. Apple (only just) survived by designing friendly boxes that were easy to use and Microsoft and IBM had to follow suit. Apple's recent success comes from their realisation that there was no reason computers had to look ugly and be difficult to use. Launching the iMac they learnt that making computers *"look cool... sells bucketloads"*, especially to the people that previously found computers unfriendly, (Finke, 1998).

"Customer satisfaction is becoming more important in many economies. Firms in developed countries commonly face slowing growth, mature markets, and increasing foreign competition, forces that are often exacerbated by deregulation and the lowering of trade-barriers. In these situations, customers become an increasingly scarce resource pursued by an increasing number of suppliers. Domestic businesses can respond by lowering price or raising quality to attract and retain buyers. However, cost structures often make price competition difficult for these firms. Quality competition - satisfying customers by providing superior goods and services - is therefore an attractive alternative", (Anderson et al, 1993).

⁶ Ludvigsen, (1995) puts the date later and identifies different dates for this change in American and European markets.

Competition has traditionally been seen as a major driver motivating organisations to strive for customer satisfaction, (Hirschman, 1970). The very existence of such institutions as the UK's Monopolies and Mergers Commission is testament to the fact that in such low competition environments customer satisfaction, and therefore product quality, comes a distant second to profit. Organisations operating within a monopoly situation simply have little or no incentive to improve quality. Recent financial difficulties experienced by major UK monopolies, such as Railtrack and Consignia, may now be predicating the end of this view. As the number of organisations competing in the market place increase so too does the motivation to improve quality; only one organisation can claim victory in the competition for lowest price, (Estelami, 2000). This relationship between market competition and the drive for quality has been widely supported but may be non-linear since threshold effects of competition have been identified, (Potter, 1994). Increased competition also tends to instil organisational focus on customer loyalty. Competitive markets tend to require increased marketing effort in the form of advertising, sales and promotional budgets. This in turn dictates a high cost for customer acquisition making the retention of existing loyal customers, that cost less and spend more, a far more attractive strategy, (Estelami, 2000).

Summary

The background to the popularity of striving for customer delight lies in the assumption that delighted customers are the most satisfied customers, and that as such they remain loyal. However, the debate over which customers should be delighted continues. The different sides of this argument are illustrative of the backgrounds of the authors. It seems those authors with a service focus espouse the virtue of achieving customer loyalty, whilst those with a product and manufacturing focus see loyalty as less important. In the product sector the key to customer satisfaction is seen as product quality. This dichotomy seems not to be fully recognised with the great majority of customer satisfaction literature coming from the service perspective and with a general assumption that the same applies for products (e.g. Estelami, 2000 and Oliver et al, 1997). Services as intangibles rely on repeat customers and as such customer loyalty becomes a greater determinant of success. Logically, the services that augment durable products are subject to similar influences as stand alone services. But loyalty to a manufacturing company, whose profits are driven by the sale of tangibles, becomes less important because the attractiveness of new tangibles in the market place might override any loyalty effect. Customer loyalty as a concept seems contrary to the idea of innovation. The customer loyalty argument for delighting customers seems to only be appropriate to the service sector and fast moving or commodity goods. Whilst this service route to delight and the loyalty it engenders is taken as read, the link between product quality and customer delight is less clear.

2.1.3 Quality Literature - shifting definitions of quality

Whilst the service sectors have tended to define customer delight in terms of customer loyalty and word-of-mouth behaviour, practitioners in product sectors have tended to define it as a type of product quality. Definitions of product quality have shifted over time so that they now make explicit the link between product attributes and customer satisfaction and delight, (Kano, 1995).

In 1989 at the 4th American National Quality Forum, Colby H. Chandler, then CEO of the Kodak Eastman Company, identified quality as a critical national issue. *"The avenues to continuous quality improvement are not always clear or immediately effective.... But the need for improved quality is critical. It is without question a matter*

of survival for American service and manufacturing companies"; (Chandler, 1989). What this meant to Chandler was that every company *"must build quality into every step of the process, creating services and products that satisfy customer needs."* He went on to say that quality must now be taken *"beyond customer satisfaction to customer delight."* The importance of product quality in terms of business success is clearly recognised. *"The stakes in product quality are enormous. Not merely in the huge sum involved in product failure, in downtime and in recalls. The biggest stakes are in the share of the market, in the very existence of the companies that produce the goods and services"*, (Juran, 1988).

Anderson and Sullivan, (1993) identify that the degree to which the design of a product or service meets customer needs is more important in determining customer satisfaction than the product's reliability. In marketing and economics quality is *"viewed as being dependent on the level of product attributes"*, (Anderson et al, 1993). In the field of Operations Management⁷ quality is the two dimensional product of fitness for purpose, including features meeting customer needs, and reliability in use and production, (Juran, 1988 and Anderson et al, 1993) Both perspectives suggest product quality is at least partly a feature based construct. When products have the features that meet customers' needs and they are reliably built, they are considered to be high quality by practitioners. *"Top companies define quality as 'high-end customer value with zero defects'"*, (Rommel et al, 1996). These authors suggest that zero defects quality is theoretically not hard to achieve in itself by continuously monitoring and improving processes. However, winning companies recognise that such a gradual approach could hardly keep up with constantly shifting customer requirements, (Rommel et al, 1996).

Taguchi defines two types of quality 'customer quality' and 'engineered quality', (Taguchi, 2000). 'Customer quality' refers to *"the characteristics customers are looking for.... including features and styling"* whilst 'engineered quality' refers to *"robustness.... failures, defects and reliability."* Customers pay for customer quality when they choose products. 'Engineered quality', on the other hand, plays its role during ownership when customers expect perfect 'engineered quality' in the form of *"no failure, no defect and good reliability"*. Taguchi defines poor quality as *'loss to society'* in the form of time and money spent by consumers, customer dissatisfaction, wasted natural resources, lost market share, warranty costs, repair costs and so on. The loss to society is essentially equated with poor 'engineered quality' and can be measured in \$'s. Taguchi assigns responsibility for 'engineered quality' to product and process engineers. 'Customer Quality' on the other hand, is the job of concept designers. Design for Robustness optimises the 'engineered quality' performance of the concept once it has been selected. This approach recognises that all quality problems are, in engineering terms, ultimately just *"symptoms of variability of energy transformation"*. The key is coming up with good concepts in the first place, or as Taguchi puts it, fire prevention rather than fire fighting, (Taguchi, 2000).

The Kano Model is the preferred customer satisfaction model used by manufacturing practitioners, and it makes explicit the non-linear link between perceived quality and customer delight. Since the 1990s, the popularity of Kano's method of defining customer perceived product quality for manufacturing is demonstrated by the number of practitioners, across sectors, that have adopted it (e.g. Vasilash, 1995, Hofmeister et al, 1996, Ungvari, 1997, Jacobs, 1999, Plsek, 2000 and Garside et al, 2002) and the number of times it is portrayed as the definitive model by Engineering academics and Manufacturing guru's, (Clausing, 1994, Bergman and Klefsjo, 1994, Matzler et al, 1996, Dimancescu and Dwenger, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998 and Shen et al, 2000). This model is the first that does not assume a one dimensional relationship

⁷ Sometimes referred to as Manufacturing Science in the UK.

between quality and customer satisfaction. Instead it models the different impacts product quality can have on customer satisfaction, depending on the expectations and needs of customers. It categorises product attributes (or as Kano calls them Qualities) on the basis of whether or not the customer expects them, wants them, or would be surprised by them. In this respect the model is similar to the Services Marketing definition of quality as an assessment based on gaps between expected and delivered performance, (Parasuraman et al, 1985).

The Kano Model of Product Quality

Noriaki Kano's original work as a Professor of Quality Engineering at the Tokyo Rika University was published in Japanese and is difficult to obtain translations of. However most authors date the introduction of his thinking into American industry, along with other Japanese approaches to Total Quality Management (TQM) in general, as 1984, (Clausing, 1994). After his work with multiple industries in Japan, Kano began implementing TQM methods in America, (Kano, 1993). The literature refers to Kano's three category typology variously as a model of customer needs, (Berger et al, 1993, Clausing, 1994, Dimancescu and Dwenger, 1996, and Shen et al 2000), customer satisfaction, (Bergman and Klefsjo, 1994 and Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998) or product quality, (Kano, 1995, Hofmeister et al, 1996 and Plsek, 2000). Not only has it been put forward as the key model of how customers evaluate tangible products, but it is also seen as a practical tool for achieving high levels of whatever it is that it models (answers to customer needs, satisfaction or quality). Over time the three categories and two dimensions it incorporates have been translated from the Japanese in a number of ways. The one constant in all Western prescriptions based on Kano's Model is the retelling of the method he used to generate it, (Clausing, 1994, Kano, 1995, Matzler et al, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998, and Shen et al 2000).

Starting with his work with Konica and Juki, a sewing machine manufacturer, Kano began to recognise that certain product attributes had a greater impact on customer satisfaction than others, (Kano, 1995). Kano used interviews with customers to identify the product features and attributes that were salient and then incorporated these into a simple questionnaire design. For each attribute the questionnaire contained two questions. The first asked customers to rate how they felt about the presence of the attribute in the product using the response scale below;

1 - satisfied, 2 - it must be that way, 3 - indifferent, 4 - I can live with it, 5 - dissatisfied

The second question asked customers to rate how they felt about the absence of the attribute in the product, using the same scale. By comparing responses to the functional and dysfunctional question forms for each attribute, Kano produced a typology of product qualities reflecting their impact on customer satisfaction⁸. His final model is presented overleaf.

⁸ For a more complete description of Kano's methodology see Kano, 1995 or Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998.

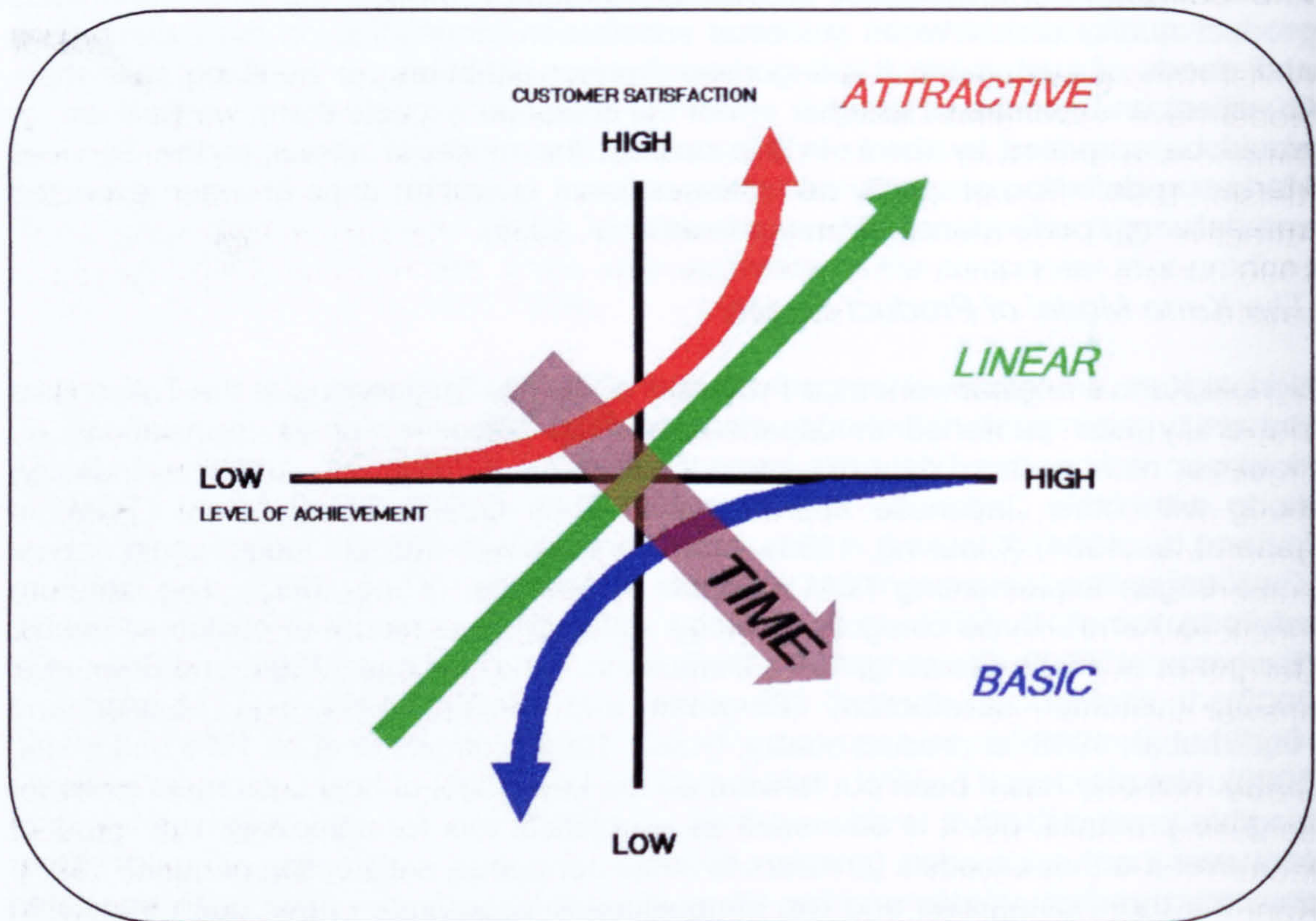


Figure 2.1 - The Kano Model of Product Qualities.

The model plots the level of achievement of a product quality against the level of satisfaction experienced by the customer appraising it. The first type of product quality modelled is the traditional one dimensional impact of quality on customer satisfaction. Labelled Linear Qualities, increased levels of these scalar qualities in the product, increase the level of satisfaction felt by the customer. Kano suggested that these are the qualities of the product that customers want more or less of, and as such the better a company performs in answering these desires the happier the customer is. In contrast, Kano identified a group of attributes that customers were indifferent to when present, but dissatisfied with when absent. Kano suggested that these Basic or Must-be Qualities are the product attributes that people expect. The key implication of this proposal was that manufacturers could be wasting valuable resource striving to continuously improve these basics, because once a certain level of achievement is reached, further improvement fails to increase customer satisfaction. Finally, Kano identified a third group of product qualities that satisfied customers when present in the product, but that failed to dissatisfy customers when absent. Kano labelled these product attributes Attractive Qualities, proposing that these are unexpected by customers. When they are absent customers are not dissatisfied because they do not expect them. However, the mere presence of these qualities can surprise the customer, thereby raising their satisfaction level. Kano's model makes it clear for companies how to maximise customer satisfaction through the design of products. Once companies have identified and included all the basic product qualities, they should endeavour to give customers more, both of what they want (Linear Qualities), and of the unexpected (Attractive Qualities). The final component of the Kano model accounts for the shifting of customer expectation levels over time. Kano suggests that the Attractive Qualities of today will soon be copied by competitors, becoming the Linear and Basic Qualities of tomorrow.

The 'delighter' feature - Western interpretations of Kano

Whilst Kano never uses the word himself, many people that promote the use of his model have substituted Attractive Quality with the term 'Delighter' (Clausing, 1994, Dimancescu and Dwenger, 1996, and Plesk, 2000), or excitement, (Bergman and Klefsjo, 1996, Ungvari, 1997, and Hofmeister et al, 1996). Others make clear that Attractive Qualities are those that surprise or delight the customer (Matzler et al, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998, and Shen et al, 2000) or use delight instead of satisfaction as the y-axis title, (Berger et al, 1993).

Attractive Qualities are called 'exciting experiences' by Bergman and Klefsjo, (1996). These authors see these as the source of opportunities to delight the customer by providing surprises. It is proposed that technology development is the key to generating these unexpected experiences because *"it makes it possible to satisfy the needs that the customer is not even aware of"*, (Bergman and Klefsjo, 1996). Other authors and expert practitioners specifically link Kano's quality typology with the functionality of the product, (Berger et al, 1993), whilst Attractive Qualities or Delighters are almost exclusively talked of in terms of new product features that answer customer needs, (Clausing, 1994, Kano, 1995 and Hofmeister et al, 1996).

Some authors have identified limitations with the model primarily the result of confusing results using Kano's questionnaire method and the fact that product features cannot always be neatly categorised using his typology, (Berger et al, 1993). Kano himself recognises that different customers may react to the same feature in different ways but that it is the most common categorisation that should be taken (Kano, 1995). Most authors recognise that Kano's mapping of the product-basis of customer satisfaction and delight is a considerable advancement over the previous view that increased quality results in increased satisfaction. As a result the Kano model is widely used and accepted in Western manufacturing.

The model proposes two ways in which customers can be delighted by products, both of which involve customers' expectations. Firstly a product can provide higher than expected levels of attributes that customers want (Linear Qualities). Secondly the product can provide unexpected functions and features that surprise the customer (Attractive Qualities). Most interpretations of Kano's model imply that the organisation that can innovate by uncovering customer latent needs, design more of the functional innovations that surprise the customer, whilst at the same time keeping ahead of its competitors catch-up strategies, will be the one that realises the benefits of customer attraction, retention and loyalty. If a company gets the basics right, delivers high levels of what customers want, and includes features that people never knew they needed, then the product will maximise the satisfaction of customers.

Examples of 'Delighters' in the literature

"Designs of current products which rely on trends and uniqueness are wearisome and will soon be a thing of the past. It is necessary to predict new technologies over the next 10 or 20 years and carefully study what new functions the product will require and how to add them to the original product.", (Inagaki, 1993).

Many proponents of the Kano model give examples of the kinds of features that products can include to delight customers. In nearly every case the examples of Attractive Qualities given are functional innovations;

- "programmable suspension" and "auto-unwrapping paper feeder", (Clausing, 1994).
- "navigation systems for car driving", "built-in camera flashes" and "camera auto-focus", (Kano, 1995).
- "car radio that automatically tones down when the phone is lifted", (Dimancescu and Dwenger, 1996).
- "separate car stereos for kids", "cup-holders" and "televisions that find the remote control", (Hofmeister et al, 1996).
- "in-flight telephone service", (Matzler et al, 1996).
- "power rear-view mirror" and "remote door locks on ignition key", (Shen et al, 2000).
- "a camera that records memories not just in the form of pictures but also as sounds" and "cameras that empathise by capturing the mood of the photographer and imprint this on the images captured", (Plesk, 2000).

Other authors, though not specifically referring to Kano's model, echo the functional and linear routes to customer delight it contains, both in product and service offerings.

- "Airline flights departing and arriving on time every time", "delivery or repair services that can give an appointment time to within one hour and keep to it" and "Clothes that look as good after the first wash as they do in the shop", (Chandler, 1989 - personal examples of what would delight him as a customer).
- "The ability to order a PC via a freephone number, charge it to a credit card and have it delivered the next day via courier", "Sound quality and convenience of the Sony Walkman", "American Airlines frequent flier rewards", "Federal Express guaranteed next day delivery", "Separate stereo and headphone jacks for kids in Mini-vans", "Cupholders that really work", "Table ready pagers in restaurants", "Televisions that find the remote control" and "Electronic 35mm cameras ease and good picture quality", (Schumann et al, 1995).
- "1 year property check ups by builder (Shea Homes, San Diego)" and "a custom home design centre (Breakstone Homes, Florida)", (Anon, 2000).

Almost universally, delight is seen to be the result of going beyond customer expectations. TQM practitioners now claim customer delight should be the ultimate goal of all quality managers, viewing it as an extension of satisfaction, (Radder, 1998).

The more features approach to customer delight

The importance of the more features approach to product improvement is manifested in marketing research that has been conducted into the effects on brand choice of adding new product features, (Nowlis and Simonson, 1996). This study in particular demonstrates that the impact of adding a new product feature, in terms of price sensitivity and choice and hence market share, is dependent on certain characteristics of the product the feature is added to. Specifically this study statistically establishes that a new feature adds greater value (determined by the perceived \$ cost estimation and participants' comparisons) and increases choice share (determined by participants' choices between two products) of a brand when that brand;

- 1) has relatively inferior existing features
- 2) is associated with lower perceived quality

- 3) has a higher price
- 4) is both high-priced and high-quality.

However, in this research study, the closest participants came to the products they were evaluating, was a specification list. This experimental assessment of the effects on business indicators of adding new features, used current features available in the market place at the time of the study and were listed as presented by the brands concerned. This is to say that the features constituting the basis of comparison were specified by the researcher/manufacturer and not by the customer/participant. Participants were asked to react to the addition of various features matching Kano's Attractive (features adding new functions) and Linear (features increasing specific levels of performance) categories. Features used in this study were "Fuzzy Logic camera focus system", "new heating process in Microwaves", "Supra teflon frying pan coating", "Double coating VCR tables", "Quicker Clicker propelling pencil feed", "Super elector beam technology PC disks", "Senso even heating toaster system", "Auto-focus on binoculars", "Video scope on TV for home theatre experience", "SP-AR mechanism cassette tapes", "Additive Z-& motor oil", "C178 sunscreen ingredient for UVA and B", "New alloy in batteries", and "new technology light bulbs". Indeed adding features of this type does seem to have effects on business-relevant consumer variables such as perceived value and choice, the strength of which depends on a multitude of other factors associated with brands and products. However this research, like other product focussed studies such as Kano, whilst prescribing features as the basis of differentiation, fails to study the characteristics of the features that make them appealing to customers, (Nowlis and Simonson, 1996).

The fact that such findings are generalised to real world purchase decisions from a situation that barely resembles any consumption situation, save reading the packaging or spec sheet for a given product, is another common limitation of existing product focussed customer and quality research. Situations in which the Nowlis and Simonson study might be applicable include buying from catalogues, over the internet, or in business consumables markets. It is presumably rare that individuals buy products like those used in this study (cameras, binoculars, microwave ovens, televisions and sunscreen) without seeing, let alone physically touching, the products before they hand over their cash. But these are the conditions under which this experiment was run, and are similar to those used to develop the Kano model. For the sake of experimental method these approaches are reductionist to the point that what is studied bares so little resemblance to the real world that the findings become non-applicable, despite their undoubted objectivity.

Though widely accepted and commonly practiced the more-features approach to product improvement aimed at increasing customer satisfaction has come in for some harsh criticism recently, since it results in *"feature-rich rubbish"*, (Richard Seymor, quoted in Dekker, 2002). Similarly, marketing philosophers have questioned the sanity of forever offering more to customers, both of the things they want and the things they never knew they needed, (Brown and Paterson, 2000).

2.1.4 Quality pays

The Kano model seems to make clear the relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction. However the model is only a theoretical proposition based upon customers' scored responses to product features presented in writing by researchers. The Kano Model is not based upon any real-world product appraisals by customers. But there is empirical evidence that suggests that maximising product quality is a prudent business strategy.

The German offices of McKinsey & Company, a global consultancy firm, conducted a four year long-term study of the automotive supplier industry called 'Excellence in Quality Management', (Rommel et al, 1996). This study, in collaboration with the Technical University of Darmstadt, categorised 167 automotive supplier firms (122 in Europe, 25 in the US and 20 in Japan) into four groups according to their measurable quality performance. Two types of quality were measured, similar to those identified by Taguchi, (2000). Design Quality was defined as the ability of the company to meet the demands of its customers with the product or service developed. In this case 'customers' included the internal manufacturing customers (i.e. production), and the end customers. The Design Quality Indicator was determined by each company's performance on a scoring model based on customer orientation, world-class benchmarks, manufacturability targets and the use of quality tools such as Quality Function Deployment (QFD). Process Quality was defined as the company's ability to manufacture and deliver the product as designed and scores were determined taking into account defect parts per million, complaint levels, logistics and delivery performance, and internal process control such as reject rates and rework time. Taking into account differences in requirements and complexity, companies scores on these two indicators resulted in their classification into the following groups.

- Level 1 Quality Performance - Inspection (25% of companies studied)
Quality through inspection and defect elimination
- Level 2 Quality Performance - Quality Assurance (36%)
Process Stability management and worker involvement
- Level 3 Quality Performance - Prevention (26%)
Production customer orientation in design and supplier involvement
- Level 4 Quality Performance - Perfection (13%)
End customer orientation, superior products and 'Quality Culture'

The McKinsey study then measured the business performance of the supplier firms over a four year period (1987-1991) according to measures of return on sales and sales growth. The high level conclusion of this study was that quality performance is essentially measurable straight from the companies balance sheet. Performance varied strongly according to the level of categorisation. Level 4 companies, focused on adding value for customers and designing superior products, enjoyed an average of 16% growth and 9.1% average annual return on sales. This compared with Level 1 companies who struggled to achieve an average of 5.4% growth with only 0.6% annual return on sales. The study also identified different effects on returns and growth according to levels of Design Quality and Process Quality performance. Process Quality had the greatest impact by increasing returns on sales since stable processes reduce costs, thereby increasing margins. On the other hand, Design Quality had the greatest impact on sales growth, attracting more customers by designing products that better meet their requirements with superior features, (Rommel et al, 1996).

In contrast to the findings of Rommel et al, other authors have found empirical evidence that product quality does determine customer satisfaction, but that satisfaction and market share are negatively related, (Anderson et al 1993, Fornell, 1992 and Griffin and Hauser, 1993) These authors see the relationship being more complicated. Increased market share can increase customer satisfaction via a corporate image effect, but when market shares become so high that service performance suffers, then customer satisfaction will be negatively influenced.

In support of Kano's view of product quality Rommel et al, (1996) declared the companies that mastered Design Quality the real winners. By focusing outwards, on customer requirements, they grew twice as fast as the market, won significant market

shares and earned at least double the industry average. Since companies had tended to evolve through the stages of Quality Performance the study also found that contrary to popular business opinion quality did not cost. Companies that excelled in Design Quality did so whilst enjoying both cost and time to market advantages. The McKinsey & Company study involved a huge variety of automotive supplier companies producing products ranging from raw materials to whole vehicle systems or modules. As such the authors felt confident in generalising their findings to the manufacturing sector in general. The study identifies the key to success in Design Quality is the early focus on customer requirements so that both end customers and the internal production function *"have every reason to be satisfied with the product..... customers are evidently so impressed by the products that they even prefer them to competitor's offerings despite higher prices: quality companies steadily increase their market shares"*, (page 55). These companies strive *"to understand the requirements of the end customer better and to translate them into product features"*, (page 56). The study particularly cites the use of QFD to translate requirements into features and identifies the business advantages of concentrating on adding-value for end customers as 6.9% return on sales (versus the average of 4.0% for all companies) and 12.9% sales growth. The study provides particular examples of the features that constitute added-value to the end customer and result in the 12.9% growth as; air conditioning cooling features, glass sliding sunroofs, and heated vibrating wing mirrors.

Summary and Conclusions

Empirical and anecdotal evidence has demonstrated that there is a non-linear relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty rates. This has resulted in a widespread belief that customer satisfaction is no longer enough to sustain business success. Practitioners are therefore beginning to stress the need to go beyond satisfaction to its logical extension - customer delight. Whilst the service sector emphasises the benefits of achieving delight in terms of increased customer loyalty, the product sector has focussed on the impact product features can have on increasing customer satisfaction. Both fields see the key to delight to be exceeding customer expectations. The most recent definitions of product quality clarify the different influences expected, wanted and unexpected product attributes can have on customer satisfaction. The implications of these proposals is that products can delight customers appraising them in two ways. Firstly, they can exceed customers' expectations by containing exceptional levels of the qualities customers want. And secondly, product features that answer latent customer needs can be included so that the customer is surprised by the unexpected functionality of the product. The business benefits of increasing the customer-focussed quality of products have been empirically demonstrated in the form of increased growth and profitability.

2.2 The nature of delight

The previous section has introduced the practitioner's view of customer delight. The service perspective defines delighted customers as loyal advocates, and the product sector defines delight in terms of the features that can be designed into products to surprise and excite customers. But short of all the benefits that result what is this thing called 'delight' that everyone is calling for? This section aims to introduce the existing academic conceptualisations of delight both as an emotion and a consumer reaction.

Customer delight has only recently become the specific focus of Consumer Research. To this date the author is only aware of a single empirical study that specifically considers the nature of this consumption emotion, (Oliver et al, 1997)

although others have identified it during the study of customer satisfaction in general (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991 and Oliver and Westbrook, 1993) or have studied specific hypothesised components of it, (Vanhamme, 2000). Common elements of this stream of research are its adoption of definitions of delight from the Psychology literature (e.g. Plutchik, 1980 and Russell, 1980) and its use of emotion measurement scales based on these (e.g. the DES-II⁹ scale based on the work of Izard, 1972, 1977 and the PAD¹⁰ scale based on the work of Russell and Mehrabian, 1977). These scales are used to measure the hypothesised components of customer delight with the goal of correlating them with satisfaction scores and desirable customer behaviours such as intention, word-of-mouth recommendation and loyalty. Another characteristic of this research is the predominantly cognitive perspective taken. This research is essentially an extension of satisfaction research which considers satisfaction and delight to be the result of customers' comparison of performance with expectations.

The following sections will consider the progression of research into the emotions up to our current understanding of customer delight as the result of the surprising disconfirmation of expectations, (Oliver et al, 1997). As the previous sections have shown this view of delight is mirrored in the service and product prescriptive literatures and has been incorporated into the mainstream of Marketing literature (Kotler et al, 1999). Here customer delight is defined as the result of exceeding customer expectations by delivering exceptional levels of the qualities people want in products and services, and the things people do not expect or never realised they needed.

2.2.1 Definitions used by practitioners

Delight, as an emotion, belongs to a class of experience that has defied adequate definition to this date, (Reber and Reber, 2001). The Latin route of the word we use to describe this class of experience suggests that emotions (or at least their results) should be externally observable (*emovere - to move, to excite, to stir up or to agitate*) and a great deal of our understanding of this class of states is based upon studying their overt components, (e.g. facial expressions Izard, 1972, Ekman and Friesen, 1969 and infant behaviour, Bridges, 1932). The very route of the word 'emotion' suggests that delighted customers behave in desirable ways. In contrast, to be satisfied means to have desires and expectations filled. The word 'satisfy' comes from the same root as the words 'sad' and 'sated', the feelings you have once all your desires have been filled. To be delighted is to take joy or pleasure from something and includes an element of surprise. Delight comes from the same root as 'delicious', 'delectable' and 'lasso' (Hoad, 1996). So the business implications of these two words seem to be tied up in their roots and popular meanings; satisfied customers feel sated because their expectations have been filled but delight enlightens customers to new possibilities. By surprising them and meeting their unrecognised needs you can lasso or capture customers.

In a complete book on delighting the customer this is the only explanation of what Delight is - 'surprising joy and pleasure', (Schumann et al, 1995). In fact customer delight is typically defined by practitioners and researchers alike as an extension of satisfaction. Delightful experiences are *"characterised by outstandingly high levels of satisfaction"*, (Estelami, 2000). Delight means *"very satisfied", "excitement quality, wow's, pleasant surprises", "it implies a completely fulfilled latent need"*, (Hofmeister et al, 1996). *"Customer delight is the delivery of products and services that exceed expectations. Customer delight represents excellence in every respect. It could be*

⁹ Differential Emotions Scale

¹⁰ Pleasure Arousal Dominance

faster delivery, longer life, lower cost, clearly perceived value, consistent performance, or higher resale value. In short its anything you can do for your customer... To make him or her say: 'I am absolutely delighted', (Chandler, 1989). Chandler tries to define delight by giving personal examples. Summarising he says, "Customer delight is the reaction of customers when they receive a service or product that not only satisfies them but provides unexpected value or unanticipated satisfaction.", (Chandler, 1989).

Ludvigsen states that in 1996 the North American motor companies and their advisers were beginning to talk about 'delighting customers' and that within this industry delight was commonly described as *"a step beyond mere 'satisfaction'..... profoundly pleased, indeed ecstatic"*. It had been recognised that delight could be achieved via product features or service experiences (and ideally both) that surprise customers in a positive way. However, Ludvigsen questions the adequacy of this 'surprising pleasure' definition. He puts forward his own definition that incorporates the assumed importance of delight as a driver for word-of-mouth recommendations;

"The delighted customer is one who feels so satisfied that they will actively proselytise to others on behalf of a product and/or service", "delighted customers become your cheering section. They are so happy with your brand that they will seek out others and endeavour to convince them that they should consider a similar purchase", (Ludvigsen, 1996).

Other authors have reiterated the importance of word-of-mouth recommendation when defining customer delight;

"A delighted customer is likely to become a loyal 'apostle' for the firms good service deeds. Having experienced the firm's superior service and apostle has faith in the firm and will spread the good word through unsolicited advocacy", (Schneider and Bowen, 1999).

2.2.2 Psychology literature - theories of emotion

The definitions used by Consumer Researchers and practitioners are grounded in the study of the emotions within the field of Psychology. Those that today study customer delight make this explicit in the framing of their research and the hypotheses that they test, (Oliver et al, 1997).

The Psychoevolutionary perspective

'Delight' is the name we give to a particular reaction or feeling we experience, a feeling that psychologists would refer to as an emotion or affect. Psychologists have spent the last 130 years struggling to define, explain, measure and operationalise human and animal emotions. The route of all these decades of psychological research lies in Darwin's theories of evolution, (Plutchik, 1980). Plutchik explains that Psychology's interest in emotion stems from the desire to understand what evolutionary biological functions emotions serve for humans and animals. Darwin identified that emotions served a survival function and saw the expression of emotions in animals as evidence that humans were descended from lower forms of animal life, with the emotional traits persisting down the evolutionary chain exactly because they served a survival function. With this cornerstone set firmly in place Psychology as a discipline spent the better part of a century separating out the sequence of events that result in the experience of an emotion and the different purposes served by different emotion types. The Psychophysiological School believed that emotions were the result of people (and animals) perceiving the body's

autonomic response to external stimuli. So for example; a predator is encountered, automatically the gut contracts and the pulse quickens, then the emotion of fear is experienced. The Neurological School disputed this theory having observed emotional reactions in cats and dogs that had had the feedback loops feeding information from their bodies to their brains severed. The Neurologists pinned down the seat of emotions to an area of the midbrain called the optic-thalamus¹¹. It was the activity of this area of the brain that produced both emotional feelings and bodily changes simultaneously. The Psychoanalytic School's study of emotions is based upon Freud's explanations of emotions, which he referred to as 'affects', within his theory of drives. Freud worked in a clinical setting and his discussions of emotion concentrate predominantly on anxiety and depression. He saw these affects as the result of internal or external conflicts between the ego drives (hunger, thirst, aggression etc) and the sexual drives. Freud defined 'affects' as a combination of a cognitive process (the thoughts surrounding the recognition of a conflict) and the feelings that result from this process.

This is not the place to exhaustively review the history of psychological research into the emotions (for an extensive review see Plutchik, 1980). Suffice it to say that these late 19th and early 20th century theoretical musings set the tone and context for the next 80 years of emotion research. Throughout the last century debate raged on over the sequence of stimulus, affective and cognitive and behavioural processes that constituted an emotion and this debate is ongoing. The majority of researchers studying emotions in Psychology and Consumer Research align themselves according to their belief in the primacy of either the Cognitive or Affective components of emotions. This dichotomy came to the fore in the early 1980s in the form of a heated debate between the principle proponents of the two camps; Zajonc who believed in the primacy of the affective components of emotions (Zajonc, 1980, 1984 and Zajonc and Markus, 1982) and Lazarus who believed in the primacy of the cognitive components, (Lazarus et al, 1970 and Lazarus, 1982). The argument essentially boils down to the different way psychologists define the term 'cognition' and whether or not conscious mental activity is a prerequisite for the experience of affect. The issue of semantics has troubled research into the emotions for many years and has motivated many researchers to attempt to define a dictionary of emotional terms. The current conceptualisations of customer delight however, fall firmly on the cognitive side of this debate. Customer delight is seen as the result of conscious cognitive activity in the form of expectation disconfirmation, (Oliver et al, 1997). Generally, this cognitive perspective dominates both Marketing Research and Consumer Research. None the less both perspectives consider emotions to be reactions to stimuli made up of affective, behavioural and cognitive components. Within the Psychoevolutionary perspective these stimuli and behaviours are assumed to have survival relevant functions.

¹¹ Now known as the hypothalamus.

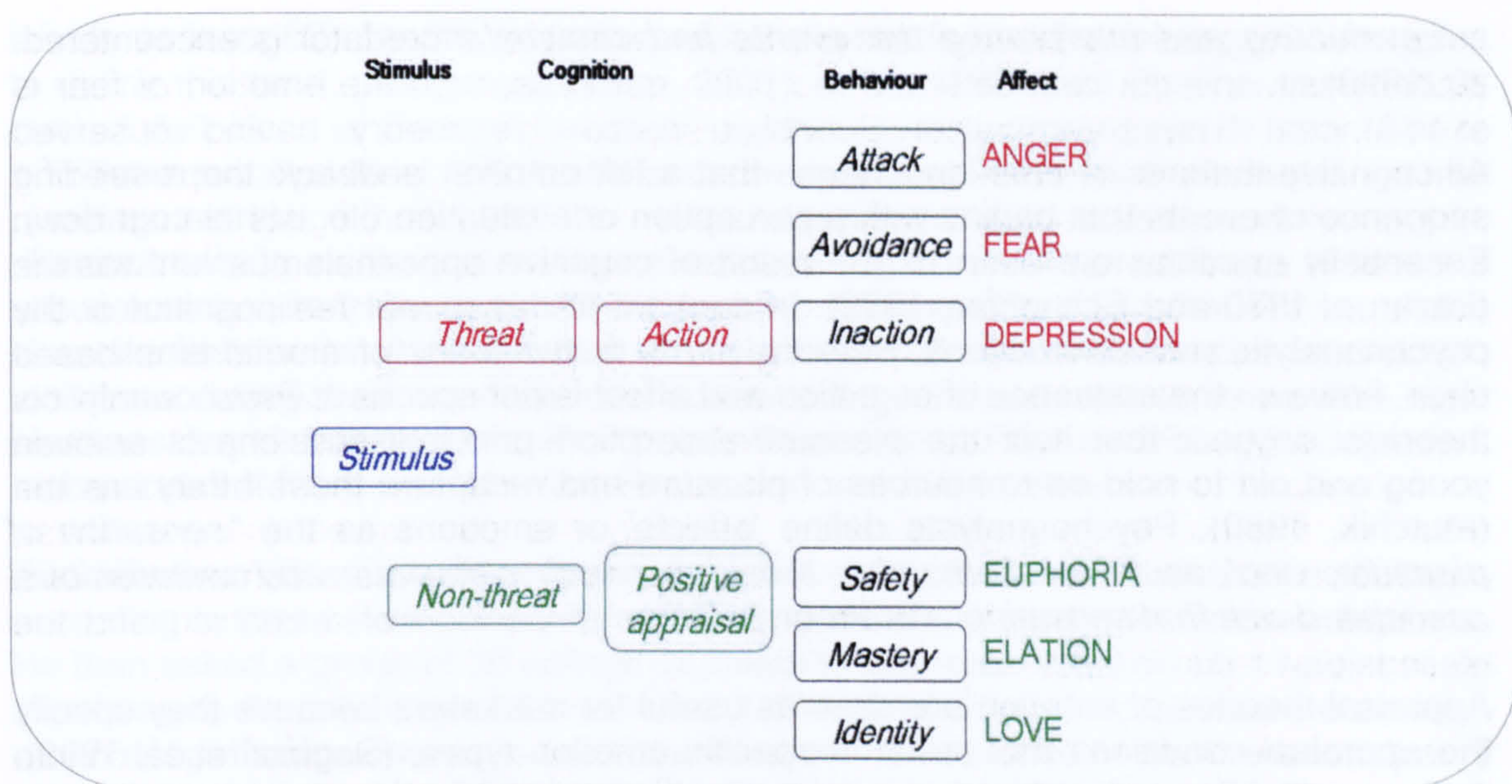


Figure 2.2: A Psychoevolutionary perspective of emotions (adapted from Plutchik, 1980)

Cognitive Appraisal theories of emotion

Implicit in Plutchik's psychoevolutionary perspective is the framing of emotions as appraisal processes. This Appraisal Theory of emotions is an approach that is logically relevant to consumption situations. Arnold, (1960), working within the same general bounds of sequenced feelings, behaviours, and cognitions, framed emotions in terms of the feelings that result from an appraisal situation and the resulting motivation to approach or avoid the object of appraisal.

"Emotion is the felt tendency toward anything intuitively appraised as good (beneficial), or away from anything intuitively appraised as bad (harmful).", (Arnold, 1960).

One of the emotions Arnold identifies as relevant to positive appraisals is Delight, and this is said to be the emotion felt when the object of a positive appraisal is present, (Arnold, 1960). Over the years Appraisal theorists have moved away from bounding emotions purely in terms of survival relevant stimuli, recognising that emotions are specific to the individual experiencing them and their interpretation of events and situations that they deem personally relevant (Fridja, 1988 and Bagozzi et al, 1999). Appraisal theories of emotion therefore frame emotions as having personally relevant functions, synonymous with motivations, and explain why different people react in different ways to the same stimuli. People will only experience the same emotional reaction to the same stimuli if they have the same appraisal rules (Fridja, 1986). Likewise this approach explains the situational relevance of emotions. Whilst the same stimulus might be appraised negatively in one context, it may well be appraised positively in another.

The appraisal process central to this theory of emotions marks it out as a cognitive perspective, a fact that often results in criticism, (Scherer, 1993). By definition, appraisal theorists see emotions to be the appraisal of one's own thought processes (Bagozzi, 1999);

"It is not the specific events or physical circumstances that produce the emotions but rather the unique psychological appraisal made by the person"

evaluating and interpreting the events and circumstances", (Bagozzi et al, 1999).

All cognitive theories of emotion assume that a felt emotion is always the result of a sequence of events that begins with a perception or evaluation (i.e. with a cognition). Essentially emotions are seen as the result of cognitive appraisals of event stimuli, (Lazarus, 1970 and Schachter, 1970). In contrast to this primacy of cognition is the psychoanalytic view of emotions. Here the same motivational function of emotions is clear, however the sequence of cognition and affect is not specified. Psychoanalytical theorists suggest that it is the pleasure-absorption principle that impels animals young and old to hold on to sources of pleasure and recapture them if they are lost (Plutchik, 1980). Psychoanalysts define 'affects' or emotions as the "*sensation of pleasure, unpleasure, or both, plus the ideas, both conscious and unconscious, associated with that sensation*", (Brenner, 1974).

Appraisal theories of emotion are seen as useful for marketers because they specify the appraisal conditions that result in specific emotion types, (Bagozzi et al, 1999). And appraisal theory has been recognised as the basis of extreme positive customer appraisals including delight, where the customer reacts emotionally to marketing stimuli appraised as beneficial, specifically on the basis of expectation disconfirmation, (Kumar and Oliver, 1997).

Taxonomies of emotion

One of the recurring stumbling blocks of emotion research is the field's continued failure to arrive at a single definition of the term 'emotion' and of the various emotion words that occur in English and other languages, (Plutchik, 1980, Reber and Reber, 1991). As a result numerous researchers have attempted to identify taxonomies of emotions. These taxonomies attempt to establish the basic or prototypical emotions and the relationships between them. Various bases have been used to justify the inclusion of basic emotions ranging from survival functions, relevance to appraisal action tendencies, to facial expressions, (Ortony and Turner, 1990);

- *Plutchik* - Acceptance, Anger, Anticipation, Disgust, Joy, Fear, Sadness, Surprise
- *Arnold* - Anger, Aversion, Courage, Dejection, Desire, Despair, Fear, Hate, Hope, Love, Sadness
- *Fridja* - Desire, Happiness, Interest, Surprise, Wonder, Sorrow
- *Izard* - Anger, Contempt, Disgust, Distress, Fear, Guilt, Interest, Joy, Shame

As can be seen, despite its relevance to practitioners, delight is not considered to be a basic emotion. However, it is on the basis of these taxonomies, particularly those of Izard and Plutchik, that customer delight has been operationalised and empirically studied. The following sections cover the development of these taxonomies and rival dimensional views of emotion, (e.g. Russell, 1980) which have been adopted by Consumer Researchers.

Plutchik's Circumplex of emotions

Plutchik was motivated by the semantic, subjective, and definitional limitations of emotion research, to develop a dictionary of emotions, (Plutchik, 1980). He also emphasised the fact that the prior fixation on the behavioural role of emotion in evolutionary survival and its study in predominantly clinical settings had led to a disproportionate amount of research interest in the negative emotions such as anger, fear and anxiety. In his attempt to arrive at a more complete understanding of both positive and negative emotions, Plutchik recognised the lack of a consensus definition of the term 'emotion' and the huge array of words and synonyms used to

label emotions. Despite the frequency of its use, the field of Psychology still struggles to define this term, (Reber and Reber, 2001). In his 1980 book Plutchik identified 28 distinct definitions of the term 'emotion' used in psychological research from 1884 to 1977 and required over 150 words to define it himself. Plutchik built on the work of previous authors by studying the various words used to identify emotion types, research participants' agreement on their meaning, their relative strength in terms of arousal and the similarities and differences between them. In his review of the literature Plutchik attempts to arrive at a 'dictionary of emotions' categorising emotion words according to the evolutionary functions they are assumed to serve. The eight functions he identified were; Protection, Destruction, Reproduction, Reintegration, Incorporation/Affiliation, Rejection, Exploration and Orientation.

Plutchik then identified 54 commonly used emotion words and clustered these according to these evolutionary functions on the basis of his theoretical assumptions. He then asked a group of 30 college students to rate each word on an 11-point scale according to the intensity of the emotion it described. Plutchik clustered the emotion word 'delight' as relevant to the Reproduction function based on the evolutionary principle that mates would be positively (or negatively) appraised, leading to such positive emotions as delight, joy, elation and ecstasy and hence a motivation to approach such a mate. 'Delight' was scored by students as having an intensity of 7.56, placing it above 'Gratification' (6.00) and below 'Joy' (8.10) and 'Elation' (8.43).

Plutchik then identified, according to the eight functional clusters, emotion words that were given approximately equal intensity scores by the students. These words were taken as the prototypes for each function (Primary emotions) at high medium and low intensity levels, resulting in a 3-level, 8-spoked Circumplex model of emotion. The circumplex is formed on the basis that emotions have the characteristics not only of intensity, but also of similarity (adjacent emotions in the circumplex are more similar to each other than opposing ones) and bipolarity (opposing emotions in the circumplex are opposites of each other). Words with outlying or atypical intensity scores were assumed to be Complex emotions resulting from combinations of two or more Primary emotions.

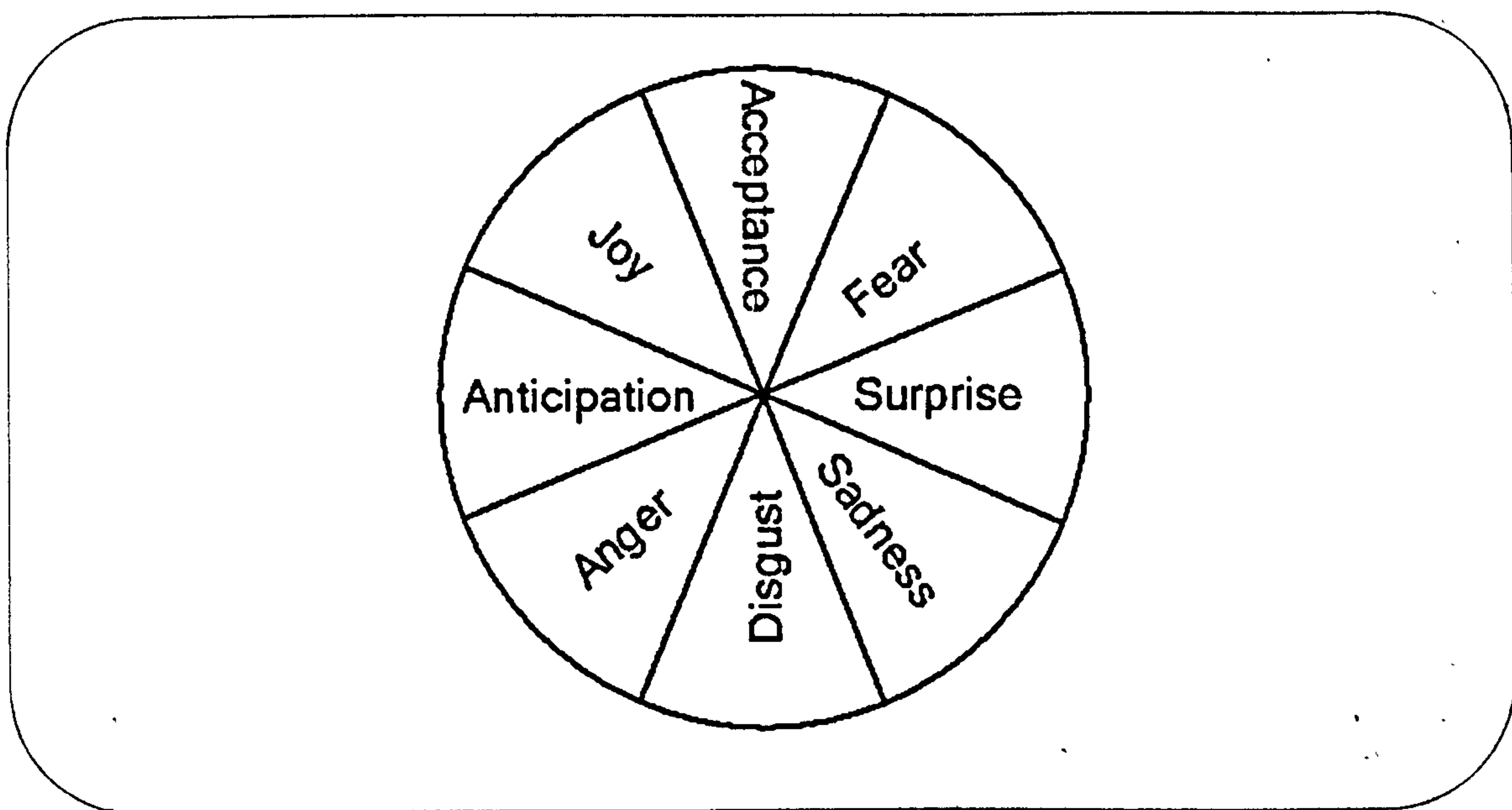


Figure 2.3: Medium intensity emotion words forming an 8-spoke circumplex, (Plutchik, 1980).

Plutchik then asked 34 judges to identify which Primary emotions were constituents of a long list of emotion words gleaned from the work of previous authors. The

agreement of judges on the constituents of certain emotion words allowed Plutchik to identify three types of Complex emotions that result from combinations of Primary emotions at different degrees of separation on the circumplex.

- Primary Dyads (mixtures of two adjacent Primary emotions)
e.g. JOY + ACCEPTANCE = LOVE, FRIENDLINESS
FEAR + SURPRISE = ALARM, AWE
- Secondary Dyads (mixtures of two Primary emotions, once removed)
e.g. ACCEPTANCE + SURPRISE = CURIOSITY
FEAR + SADNESS = DESPAIR
- Tertiary Dyads (mixtures of two Primary emotions, twice removed)
e.g. JOY + SURPRSE = DELIGHT
SURPRISE + ANGER = OUTRAGE

Plutchik recognised that all emotion dyads were not subjectively imaginable, or logically possible, and that that these illogical dyads were most common in tertiary dyads. For example what would we call the combination of Disgust and Joy? This led Plutchik to state that tertiary dyads are 'less stable' or 'disorganised' because of the conflict that arises when two almost opposing Primary emotions are mixed. Logically the experience of both Sadness and Joy cancels out resulting in a conflict and behavioural inaction. Along with the other tertiary dyads, Plutchik labels Delight as a more "clinical or pathological" emotion, (page 164).

Comparison with other dictionaries of emotion

Plutchik discusses his proposed dictionary of emotions with reference to two other previous attempts. Davitz, (1969) used Roget's thesaurus to identify 400 words that might be used to label an emotion and his participants reached agreement with him on 137 of these. Davitz then intuitively picked 50 of these word to use in his 'dictionary'. Russell and Mehrabian, (1977) also attempted to arrive at a dictionary of emotion resulting in a list of 151 emotion terms. Plutchik suggested that 'dictionary' is a somewhat optimistic name for these lists of emotion words. Firstly neither is exhaustive; the longer 151 item list omits 21 of the terms in the shorter 50 item list. Secondly these dictionaries contain at best limited definitions of the emotion terms and are simply lists of words that participants agree are commonly used to describe human emotion states. One of the 21 words identified by Davitz, but omitted by Russell and Mehrabian, is 'delighted'. In summary it seems that up to 1980, delight had been variously identified and omitted by Davtiz, Russell and Mehrabian and later Plutchik, who labelled it as 'disorganised', 'pathological' or 'clinical' (as a tertiary dyad), and proposed a role for it only in terms of reproduction. Plutchik's resulting framing of delight is presented below;

Delight = SURPRISE + JOY - impulse to welcome or be with - to embrace or mate

Behaviours associated with delight

Despite a relative lack of specific attention, the result of the generally high-level approach taken to the study of emotions within Psychology, the behavioural components of delight as a distinct emotion have been described in detail, (Bridges, 1932). However, to the author's knowledge this is the only naturalistic study of delight in the literature. In a classic study of the emotional development of 62 Canadian infants, Bridges identified and classified emotion types on the basis of her observations of orphans in the first two years of life. Before three weeks of age Bridges observed only a single generalised (non-valenced) emotional reaction, that of general excitement. At three weeks negative emotions began to be expressed. When

it came to the development and expression of positive emotion types, 'positive delight' seems to have been Bridges' prototype positive emotion. She observed the comparatively late onset of positive emotions¹²; at the age of two months she observed occasional 'smiling', and at three months 'crooning', in response to rocking, tickling, nursing and patting. She defined the delight she observes from the age of three months onwards in terms of its behavioural characteristics;

Free as against restrained movements, open eyes and facial expression forming smiles, approach movement, audible inspirations, quickened breath, soft low pitched vocalisations, rhythmic arm and leg movements, prolonged attention to object of interest and the cessation of crying, (Bridges, 1932).

Bridges describes the continued development of positive delight expressions in infants through laughter at four months, 'crowing and cooing' at six months, and babbling and self-initiated laughter at eight months, to the formation of affectionate attachments to individuals in the second year of life.

Dimensional vs. Taxonomic measures of emotion

The idea that emotional experiences are the product of combinations of basic and distinct primary emotions has also been reached by psychologists defining emotions on the basis of facial expressions, (Izard, 1972). Izard also identified distinct emotion types, similar to those identified by Plutchik on a psychoevolutionary basis, but excluded surprise considering it a non-valenced state responsible for amplifying valenced emotions. Izard's basic emotion types, the mixing of which create all others, are Anger, Contempt, Disgust, Distress, Fear, Guilt, Interest, Joy, Shame.

In contrast to these taxonomic views of emotion¹³, other psychologists have proposed a more fundamental dimensional structure to emotion. Russell, (1980) suggests that the space within which all emotions lie can be defined by two basic dimensions; pleasantness and arousal. Russell used self-report techniques to map emotions in this two dimensional space and demonstrated their circular arrangement around the space based on their relative levels of pleasantness and arousal. He considers that the circular arrangement he discovers using multiple modelling methods explains the circumplex arrangements derived by Izard and Plutchik but contends that all these uni-dimensional primary emotions can be explained in terms the two more basic dimensions of Pleasantness and Arousal. Unlike Plutchik and Izard, Russell includes delight and satisfaction in his analyses. In fact, Russell explains 28 emotions in terms of their position in the two dimensional emotion space. In all of Russell's modelling methods Delight is characterised by high levels of pleasantness and moderate levels of arousal. In comparison satisfaction is relatively less aroused and with equal (Regression analysis) or slightly greater pleasantness (Principle Components Analysis, Unidimensional Scaling and Multidimensional Scaling). In contrast to delight, satisfaction was most often modelled as having low or negative arousal (depression), (Russell, 1980).

These three authors' conceptualisations of emotion are important because they have formed the ontological basis for the next 20 years of research into emotional phenomena within the fields of Marketing Research and Consumer Research. The implications of this body of work have been incorporated into the subsequent research methodology of these applied fields in the form of the measurement

¹² Because she did not deem the cessation of negative emotional expression, observed in the first 2 months of life to constitute 'positive delight'.

¹³ Distinct unidimensional emotion types with fuzzy boundaries and interactions.

instruments used to detect and quantify emotional reactions in customers, and to establish their role in consumption situations. The DES-II scale is based upon Izard's nine basic emotions plus surprise and asks respondents to rate the frequency of occurrence of each emotion type on a 5-point scale from 'never' to 'very often'. The scale uses three questions for each of the ten emotion types and asks respondents to consider a consumption situation and rate each emotion type accordingly, (Laverie et al, 1993). The PAD scale is similar in concept and uses questions that load onto Russell's Pleasure and Arousal dimensions¹⁴. In customer satisfaction research one or both of these scales, or sections of them, are frequently used, (e.g. Oliver et al 1997 and Wirtz and Bateson, 1999).

Throughout the subsequent years of consumer research the roles of affect, cognition, and behaviour have always been considered crucial in terms of the generation, formation and consequences of important marketing variables - satisfaction, preference, intention, value, positive word-of-mouth and loyalty. The aim of this research has generally been to sort out the antecedents, sequence and consequences of these phenomena by testing the fit (or explaining power) of hypothesised mathematical models with the captured measurements of the cognitive, affective and behavioural constructs measured. The work of Plutchik and Russell has also provided the definitional basis for the constructs investigated by consumer researchers, specifically satisfaction and delight, (e.g. Oliver et al, 1997)

Plutchik - DELIGHT = JOY + SURPRISE
Russell - SATISFACTION = high PLEASURE + moderate/no AROUSAL
 DELIGHT = high PLEASURE + high AROUSAL

Positive affect is most commonly measured in modern-day consumption research using numerical scales of joy, surprise, pleasantness, and arousal. But despite this reliance on such definitions they have not been without criticism. Wierzbicka, (1992) considers taxonomic emotion research as limited by the circularly defined terms it uses. She sees most emotions being defined in terms that themselves are emotional. She believes that not everything can be defined without some indefinables and that in the field of emotion this requires the development of a meta-language of basic non-emotional terms with which all emotions can be defined. Wierzbicka also goes to lengths to define emotion terms from the perspective of the person experiencing the emotion. As such she defines delight in the following way;

X feels something
Sometimes a person thinks something like this:
 Something very good happened now
 I didn't know: this will happen
because of this, this person feels something good
X feels like this

Wierzbicka characterises delight as a transaction specific feeling evoked by a complete lack of prior expectations. In contrast to Wierzbicka, most researchers and practitioners conceptualise and model delight, defined in terms of other emotion words (such as joy, surprise, pleasure, arousal and satisfaction), intangible constructs (such as cognition, expectations, disconfirmation and affect) and circular logic (specifically its relationship to market variables, its importance and its consequences).

¹⁴ The third dimension included in the scale but frequently omitted in customer satisfaction research is Dominance.

2.2.3 Affect vs Cognition in Consumption

Another major influence on the last 15 years of research into satisfaction and delight has been the general broadening of concepts of consumption put forward by proponents such as Holbrook, (1986) and Peterson et al, (1986).

As described above, the sequence debate has been raging in the study of emotion since the earliest days of Psychology and it can still be seen to colour even the most recent research, (Vanhamme, 2000). This debate centres on the argument over which comes first in the experience of an emotion (or preference) - the affective (feeling) component or the cognitive (thinking) component. In reaction to the dominant cognitive theories of emotion, Zajonc, (1980, 1984) claimed primacy, both in terms of sequence and importance, for the affective components of emotion in preference formation and change. In contrast Lazarus, (1982) claimed that both cognitive and affective components were both concurrent and interwoven and as such they could not be meaningfully separated and sequenced when studying the formation of emotional responses. The debate hinged on the two authors' differing definitions of cognition (Lazarus's being the broader and including sensation, perception as well as the conscious thought that Zajonc considered definitive). The result of this somewhat self-indulgent argument was that consumption researchers began to recognise that the 'customer as information-processor' view, dominant in Marketing and Consumer Research up to that point (since the work of Howard and Sheth, 1969) neglected the affective dimensions of consumption that were starting to be recognised as critical by marketing practitioners. It was apparent that the discipline of Customer Research was lagging ten years behind that of Psychology in the study of affective phenomena, (Peterson et al, 1986). The idea that people acted as 'decision-making' consumers following cognitive-affective programmes towards their choice/purchase behaviour did not match the evidently highly emotional personal and social worlds within which people consume, (Holbrook, 1986). This well established and supported cognitive paradigm had to be supplemented with a broader view of consumption. The new paradigm had to incorporate both rational (cognitive) and hedonic (affective) paths to the creation of customer perceived value at all stages of consumption from initial purchase, to ownership and usage, (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Holbrook and Hirschman issued a call to consumer researchers, not to reject the 'information processing' model of the 'cognitive consumer, but to supplement it with research focussed on the nature and consequences of the experiential components of consumption. They suggested that human behaviour cannot be reduced to a single model and that the full complexity of consumer behaviour can only be understood by asking questions from multiple perspectives - positivist, phenomenological, cognitive and affective, (see Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, p.138).

Motivation was provided by the demonstrated importance of the affective components of successful advertising campaigns that tapped into the emotional role that products play in people's lives, (see Holman, 1986). Using similar approaches to emotion researchers in psychology (including Russel, Plutchik and Izard) products were defined in terms of the dimensions of rational-symbolic, tangible-intangible and utilitarian-hedonic, (Holbrook, 1986) allowing practitioners to identify the relative importance of the cognitive and affective components in the consumption of their products.

The traditional reductionist, quantitative approaches to studying and modelling consumption were cited as responsible for the neglect of affect as a subject for research (it is complex and hard to measure objectively) and the strengthening and continued adherence to the restricted cognitive consumer paradigm, (Holbrook, 1986

and Peterson et al, 1986). Mixed method exploratory approaches to studying the full holistic nature of consumption experiences were called for, (Holbrook, 1986, Peterson et al, 1986, and Cacioppo et al, 1986) and still are, (Anderson, 1992, Richins, 1997 and Fournier and Mick, 1999). These authors suggested that self-report, facial expressions and other behavioural indicators are good, but not individually sufficient methods of capturing emotional reactions in consumers. They implied that a mixed method approach using multiple indicators for an emotional reaction was the most appropriate.

"The question arises as to why consumer behaviour researchers have been able to derive numerous sources of support for a cognitively based decision process in the laboratory. The answer is straightforward. The importance of affective influences on the decision-making process has been significantly underestimated in laboratory studies because researchers have consciously designed research that is void of affective information." (Peterson et al 1986, p.142).

As a result, during the last 15 years of the 20th century the field of Consumer Research was dominated by the goal of incorporating affective components into the existing theories of consumer behaviour. Unsurprisingly this research was still motivated by the desires of practitioners and so addressed the variables believed to be important determinants of the bottom line; satisfaction, surprise, delight, positive word-of-mouth, intention, and others. Somewhat more surprising is the fact that the subsequent 15 years of consumer behaviour research almost systematically ignored the methodological criticisms levelled at its traditional approach to research (as cited above, Peterson et al, 1986). The progress of this stream of research towards our current understanding of satisfaction and delight will be described in the next section. As will become apparent, proponents of consumer behaviour research over the last 15 years have continued to adopt predominantly model testing, quantitative and positivist research approaches in their effort to incorporate affective components into their traditionally cognitive models of consumer behaviour. This research stream has tended to justify itself on the grounds that by simply addressing affect in post-purchase contexts they have been answering the prior call for a new direction and diversity in consumer research. Undoubtedly this research has confirmed the importance of affect in commercially important aspects of consumer behaviour but it has systematically failed in its aim to provide the definitive model of the nature and implications of emotional consumer reactions such as satisfaction, surprise and delight. The research stream is marked by self-awareness of the limitations of its own approach, (see Oliver et al, 1997), and continues to be criticised by authors who reiterate Peterson et al's call for more diverse approaches, (e.g. Anderson, 1992, Richins, 1997 and Fournier and Mick, 1999).

2.2.4 The Disconfirmation Theory of Satisfaction and Delight

Authors have identified two ways of thinking about satisfaction. Transaction-specific *"customer satisfaction is limited to a post-choice evaluative judgement of a specific purchase occasion"*, (Anderson et al, 1993). Here satisfaction is viewed as a one-off, post-purchase reaction. Most early consumer research undertaken from a Behaviourist perspective considers this transaction-specific form of customer satisfaction, (Anderson et al, 1993). This behaviourist research is typified by the early work of Richard Oliver and the development of the Disconfirmation Model of Customer Satisfaction, a cognitive view of satisfaction resulting from the comparison of pre-and post-purchase expectations, (Oliver, 1980). Within this view, the satisfaction people feel with the products and services they buy is said to be the result of their comparison of the experience they receive with their prior-expectations. People's

position on the continuum from dissatisfaction to satisfaction is determined by the extent to which the product or service that they have purchased meets their expectations. Average levels of satisfaction are the result of meeting customers' expectations. Low levels of satisfaction are the result of failing to meet customers' expectations and high levels of satisfaction are the result of exceeding customers' expectations. Satisfaction is seen as the evaluation of products or services characterised according to three forms of cognition; confirmation, negative disconfirmation and positive disconfirmation. Together the evaluative cognitions that make up consumers' satisfaction judgements are labelled, Expectation Congruency, (Fournier and Mick, 1999). Here satisfaction is seen as a single post-purchase evaluation of each thing a person buys dependent on its congruency with their expectations.

Customer Satisfaction is also commonly viewed as a cumulative evaluation of a product, service, (brand or any other marketing phenomenon) over time. Viewed from this stance, customer satisfaction is essentially an attitude formed by customers as a result of their "*total experience of purchase and consumption of a good or service over time*", (Anderson et al 1993, page 9). Satisfaction is still seen as an evaluative appraisal of how experience compares with expectations, but now satisfaction and expectation levels are seen as dynamic, changing over time as a result of the experiences of the consumer and the impact of the market environment. Since the views of Peterson et al and Holbrook were aired in the 1980s, viewing customer satisfaction as a cumulative construct has been the favoured ontology of both researchers and business practitioners. The reasons for the occurrence of this belief system in both academia and business lie in their common motivation - to identify the drivers for economic business performance. Another possible reason for its prevalence is the fact that Cumulative Satisfaction is easily measured, (usually using single item scales such as "given all your experiences as a {product such and such} owner how satisfied or dissatisfied are you" from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 10 (Very Satisfied), (taken from the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer in Anderson et al, 1993), and has been shown to have a direct influence on the bottom line in terms of increased market share, growth and customer loyalty, (*Ibid*). Businesses measure it because its easy to measure and academics measure it because it suits their methodological experience. This more holistic view of customer satisfaction is nonetheless defined only in post-purchase terms and on the basis of expectations. Neither the transaction-specific, nor the cumulative view sees any pre-purchase, pre-expectation role for satisfaction.

Incorporating the Affective with the Cognitive

It seems that the first Marketing Researcher to heed the calls of Holbrook, (1986) and Peterson et al, (1986) was Westbrook, (1987). Making his stance on the sequence debate explicit, Westbrook investigated the post-purchase role of positive and negative affects in the generation of satisfaction and favourable consumer behaviours such as intention to repurchase and frequency of word-of-mouth recommendations. Adopting the Disconfirmation view of satisfaction (from Oliver, 1980), Westbrook tested the following model in cable TV subscribers and car owners using the DES-II scale measuring Joy, Interest, Surprise and seven negative affects;

Stimulus > Disconfirmation > Positive and Negative affects > Behaviour

Implicit in this model is the fact that feelings of emotion result from the cognitions surrounding the disconfirmation of pre-existing beliefs, meanings and expectations. Westbrook defines these non-affective evaluative cognitions as satisfaction.

"Satisfaction is usually regarded as the central mediator of post-purchase behaviour linking pre-choice product beliefs to post-choice cognitive structure, consumer communications and repurchase behaviour", (Westbrook, 1987).

From the survey results of 154 cable TV subscribers and 200 car owners Westbrook demonstrated that levels of measured affect (both positive and negative) correlated with the level of satisfaction measured. This is to say that the strength and valence of the emotions felt by customers was indicative of how satisfied they rated themselves. Westbrook also demonstrated that it was measured affect rather than satisfaction that drove post-purchase behaviours with satisfaction actually being negatively correlated to word-of-mouth recommendation rates. He also demonstrated that the link between affect and satisfaction and behaviour was not mediated by the disconfirmation of beliefs and expectations. So despite his prior belief that satisfaction was a cognitive evaluation of expectation congruency Westbrook presented data that demonstrate a direct role for purely affective feelings in the generation of both satisfaction and the favourable consumer behaviours that result. Using DES-II measures he identified that Surprise can be associated with both positive and negative affects and that Joy and Interest were frequent emotional responses in car owners. 65% of all affective judgements across the two product categories were attributed by customers to specific named product attributes. For the benefit of helping practitioners, Westbrook called for future research to investigate the links between affective responses and the product attributes that evoke them, (Westbrook, 1987, p.268).

In a direct attempt to balance the cognitive consumer view of decision making with the consideration of the affective, Mittal, (1988) conducted research into the different decision making styles used by consumers. Based on the previous work of Zajonc, (1980) and his belief in the primacy of affect, Mittal proposed the Affective Choice Mode. Mittal hypothesised that when making choices between expressive products consumers would be more likely to make decisions on the basis of subjective feelings than on the basis of cognitive comparison of product attributes. Whilst expressive goods would be chosen on the basis of feelings he hypothesised that utilitarian goods would be chosen via the cognitive information processing route. Whilst the cognitive choice mode is characterised by the consumer comparing between products on the basis of their levels of certain important attributes, Mittal characterised the Affective Choice Mode as being the result of immediate holistic judgements, focused on the self, and inexplicable¹⁵. Mittal proposed that the holistic affective appeal of expressive products would occur before consumers could attend to specific product attributes. To test his hypotheses, Mittal used a questionnaire incorporating numerical scales measuring the degree of information processing and affective based choice strategies. He then issued the questionnaires to 192 participants whilst asking them to imagine the hypothetical purchase of certain utilitarian and expressive products. Mittal demonstrated that, as he had expected, expressive products were more often chosen on the basis of immediate feeling based holistic appraisals. In contrast utilitarian products were more often chosen on the basis of cognitive comparisons between them. However, Mittal identified that often the two choice strategies often occurred together and he suggested that more naturalistic research settings should be used to uncover the interactions between them, (Mittal, 1988).

¹⁵ In contrast to the cognitive choice mode where customers would be able to explain their choices in terms of the attributes they used to compare products.

The empirical discovery of customer delight

In a similar study to Westbrook's 1987 work, Westbrook and Oliver, (1991) identified that in car owners it was not just the valence or direction of affective feelings that drove satisfaction judgements but also the nature of these emotional responses. They identified five types of satisfaction characterised by different patterns of affect as measured on the DES-II scale. The five types of (dis)satisfaction identified in terms of increasing satisfaction score were;

Angry/upset - very high levels of negative affects including Distrust and Contempt + moderate levels of Surprise and Interest.

Unpleasant surprise - high levels of Surprise and negative emotions including Sadness. Low levels of Joy

Unemotional - general low levels of all emotion types measured especially Joy and Surprise.

Happy/content - high levels of Interest and Joy. Low levels of Surprise and all negative emotions.

Pleasant surprise - Low levels of Interest but high levels of Joy and Surprise. Absence of negative emotions.

The character of this final group, and the similarity of its nature with Plutchik and Russell's definitions, led Westbrook and Oliver to call this group of customers 'delighted'. They identified 29 delighted car customers (23% of their sample n=125) and showed that they had the highest satisfaction scores. In view of the roles of different affect types they had observed in this post-purchase context these authors recommended the use of taxonomic (like Izard and Plutchik) rather than reductionist (like Russell's dimensions) approaches to studying the diversity of emotional consumption responses, (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991, p.86). They also found that whilst satisfaction was bipolar it was best measured as a unipolar dimension because of the unipolar nature of many of its constituent affects.

Westbrook and Oliver's research also led them to propose a central role for Surprise in the generation of the highest and lowest levels of satisfaction, acting as a non-valenced magnifier of underlying affect. Despite Westbrook's earlier findings separating affect from disconfirmation, this research seems to be the route of the idea that the surprising disconfirmation of expectations plays a central role in the formation of delight reactions as researched in detail more recently, (e.g. Oliver et al, 1997 and Vanhamme, 2000).

The next steps in this stream of research were to shed light on the route of the observed direct effect of emotions on satisfaction scores. Following from Westbrook's first initial findings that the majority of affect was related to named product attributes, and in direct contradiction to Mittal's Affective Choice Mode, Oliver attempted to empirically demonstrate the attribute-basis of various affect types, (Oliver, 1992). Oliver identified 19 salient vehicle attributes and modelled the affective patterns of consumers' reactions to these properties of their cars. He categorised satisfaction responses along two dimensions; i) evaluations of constant attributes (features, price, safety, quality etc) and ii) evaluations of dynamic attributes (performance, image, service etc). Oliver found that emotions such as enjoyment, tended to be the result of the dynamic product attributes experienced during ownership of the car, whilst negative emotions were generally experienced due to the constant attributes that

would have been assessed during the decision to buy the car. As a result, Oliver proposed that consumption emotions are context specific and that positive emotional reactions are of most relevance to the post-purchase contexts of ownership and usage. One exception was the finding that Surprise was most common in reaction to constant attributes where negative emotions were expressed as a result of surprisingly poor levels of vehicle attributes such as quality, safety and size. Despite not observing the reaction in his data, this lead Oliver to propose that Surprise could have the same effect in a positive direction leading to the experience of delight and excitement as a result of the 'surprisingly good' performance of constant product attributes early in the consumption process, (Oliver, 1992).

Oliver, (1993) then demonstrated the separate influences of Disconfirmation and Affect on Satisfaction by studying survey respondents' reactions to 19 functional elements of Cars and University Courses. Disconfirmation accounted for only 35% of the variance in Satisfaction scores but when affect ratings were included in the model 85% of the variance was explained. Oliver demonstrated different roles of affect in the two product categories further supporting the context-dependant nature of consumer emotional responses. It was also postulated that positive affective reactions to products were doubly powerful because, whilst negative affect only increased dissatisfaction, positive affect both increased satisfaction and reduced dissatisfaction, (Oliver, 1993). Further evidence of the context dependant nature of affective responses was provided by studying the differences in consumers evaluations of hedonic versus utilitarian products (as proposed by Holbrook, 1986). Using Russell's two dimensional emotional space, Oliver and Mano identified that satisfaction evaluations of Utilitarian products (breakfast cereal, soap, toothpaste facial tissues) were categorised by high levels of Pleasure, whilst those of Hedonic products (cars, personal computers, clothing, choice of college) were categorised by high levels of Arousal. Oliver and Mano concluded that the satisfaction response is not easily tied down having multiple determinants and behaving as both an affective and cognitive construct. They specifically called for more research aimed at exploring the complexity of customer satisfaction, (Oliver and Mano, 1993).

In 1993, Oliver and Westbrook bemoaned the lack of research, other than their own, addressing the nature of the positive and negative affects evoked by product attributes and characteristics. The stated aim of the research they then undertook was to specify *"the product or usage characteristics which give rise to specific emotional profiles."* (Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, emphasis in the original). Their study used Izard's DES-II scale to detect and measure the emotional profiles of 177 car owners. Traditional measures of satisfaction towards nine car attributes were collected and demographic data were the basis of comparison. The car owners were categorised on the basis of their measured emotion profiles. Mirroring their earlier findings, (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991) five emotional profiles were identified, with 24% of customers being Contented (moderate Joy & Interest, low Surprise) and 11% being Delighted (high Joy, Interest and Surprise). Delighted customers reported the highest satisfaction scores and tended to attribute their delight to the aesthetics of cars. They also tended to be owners of smaller, older, imported vehicles from manufacturers with a good reliability history. Oliver and Westbrook also demonstrated the role of surprise in the Delight response finding a strong role for the disconfirmation of expectations (and matching Russell and Plutchik's prior definitions of Delight as Pleasant Surprise or Aroused Joy). Moreover the study identified some key relationships between product attributes and the type of satisfaction felt by consumers. Attractive Appearance lead to increased levels of Joy and Surprise, Drivability, Quality and Reliability did not evoke feelings of Joy and Interest, and the greater the number of positively evaluated product features mentioned the greater the overall level of satisfaction reported. They surmised that it is the combination of the appearance of cars and the disconfirmation of expectations leading to surprise that

evokes delight in their owners, and that the more positively appraised features that the vehicle contains and the greater the cars reliability and quality the higher the level of satisfaction the customer reports. Oliver and Westbrook concluded by reiterating their belief that emotional reactions form part of a causal (and therefore sequenced) chain from experienced outcomes (stimulus), affective experiences and the cognitive evaluation of them leading to satisfaction. Their rather limited description of the attributes that evoke different emotional profiles led them to call for research into specific emotional profiles so that their originally stated aim is answered in a level of detail that is more useful for practitioners, (Oliver and Westbrook, 1993). Oliver and Westbrook's findings in this study seem to support Kano's ideas. Their best description of delighting car features are the appearance and pleasant surprises of small, imported, older cars. Like Kano their descriptions of the attributes are primarily researcher-defined and are not identified via a free-elicitation.

Problems with Disconfirmation

Anderson and Sullivan, (1993) present data that call into question the appropriateness of the Expectation Disconfirmation model of satisfaction. They empirically demonstrate a direct influence of product quality on satisfaction and repurchase behaviour. Their analysis of the Swedish Satisfaction Barometer data indicates that to increase customer satisfaction levels, organisations should maximise product quality whilst reducing the negative disconfirmation of expectations. Anderson and Sullivan found no role for the positive disconfirmation of expectations in increasing customer satisfaction. This is the first empirical evidence for a direct link between product quality judgements and satisfaction levels not subject to Expectation Congruency. These authors also found evidence that negative disconfirmation hurts companies more than positive disconfirmation helps, (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993).

In light of Anderson and Sullivan's findings, Spreng et al, (1996) proposed an extension of the expectation congruency model of customer satisfaction to include the concept of Desires Congruency. Further to Anderson and Sullivan's data, Spreng et al, identified logical inconsistencies, particularly the fact that the Disconfirmation of expectations model predicts that a customer that expects and receives poor performance will be satisfied. They also commented on the fact that the Disconfirmation model ignores Social Judgement Theory, (see, Sherif and Howland, 1961) where peoples' expectations have been shown to colour their judgement of ambiguous situations and would predict that higher expectations of quality would lead to higher judgements of quality when the objective level of quality is ambiguous. To alleviate these logical problems Spreng et al proposed a Desires Congruency model where the important determinants of a customer's level of satisfaction are not just what she expects but what she wants or desires. Spreng et al provided evidence for the dual roles of Expectation and Desire Congruency in 219 church goers' reported satisfaction with camcorders. Their data also demonstrated that overall satisfaction in a pre-purchase experimental situation was made up of both satisfaction with the camcorder attributes and satisfaction with the information given about the product.

The specific study and modelling of customer delight

In accordance with the accruing calls for research into the positive emotional forms of satisfaction and the business world's mounting interest and belief in the importance of customer delight, the concept became the specific focus of empirical research, (Oliver et al, 1997 and Rust and Oliver, 2000). With mounting acceptance of the 'service economy' argument, whereby all organisations essentially provide services and experiences, customer delight was identified and modelled in two service

contexts; theme park visitors and concert goers, (Oliver et al, 1997). This methodological choice was made on the basis that the findings would be relevant to both product and service providers, and that it constituted research into the more experiential stages of consumption responsible for influencing cumulative satisfaction and its demonstrated consequences such as word-of-mouth recommendation, intention to repurchase and loyalty (as espoused by Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, Holbrook, 1986 and Peterson et al 1986). In constructing the theoretical model to be tested, Oliver et al assumed that in the post-purchase contexts studied experienced service performance levels would be compared with pre-purchase expectations and that the comparison of the two would generate disconfirmations resulting in satisfaction levels depending on the desirability of these expectations. By modelling delight in this way Oliver et al were incorporating Spreng et al's Desires Congruency Model, within their own Expectancy Congruency Model. The fact that they were studying two post-purchase situations led them to incorporate this extended cognitive disconfirmation activity as the first step of the causal model they were to test. Adopting Russell and Plutchik's definitions of delight and incorporating their previous research (Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, and Westbrook and Oliver, 1991), Oliver et al considered the key components of delight reactions as Surprise/Arousal and Joy/Pleasure. They proposed a predominantly cognitive causal sequence whereby the surprising disconfirmation of expectations provides arousal and that the customer's realization that a surprisingly good event has occurred generates the emotional experience called delight. Within the model Oliver et al also include a behavioural intention component, postulating that, according to the ideas of Holbrook and Hedonic Consumption, the experience of delight will encourage consumers to seek it out all the more so. So in post-purchase situations delight should lead to increased intention to repurchase. A survey was issued to 93 wildlife park visitors and 104 symphony concert goers leaving each service encounter. The survey measured their level of disconfirmation, surprise, arousal, the frequency of 11 positive emotion types (including Delight), Satisfaction, Positive Affect and Intention (the participant's likelihood of re-patronising the service in question). The theoretical model that they tested is presented below, and the hypothesised causal relationships it contains were assessed in terms of their fit with the variables measured.

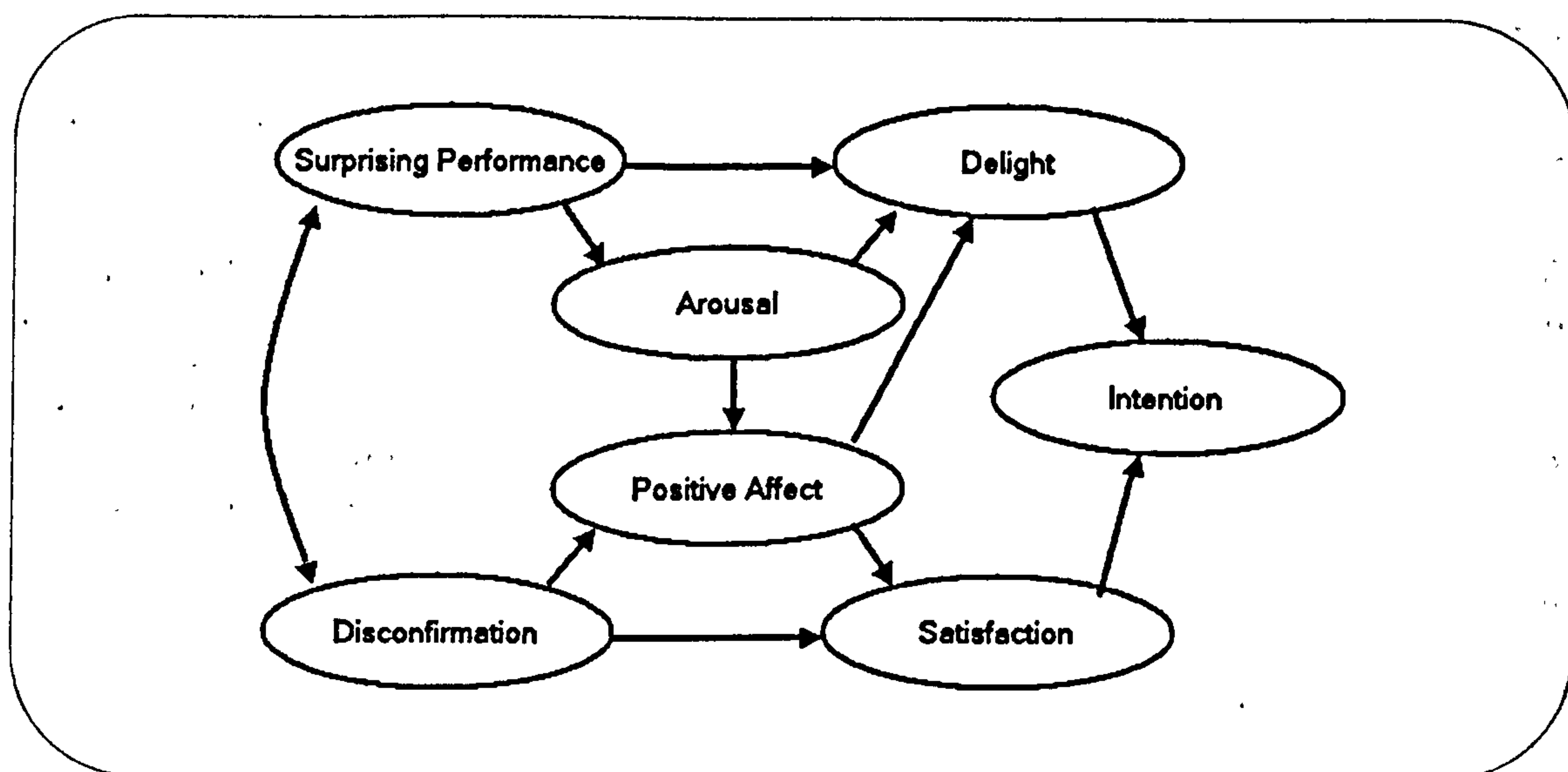


Figure 2.4: Theoretical causal links in the customer delight reaction as tested by Oliver et al, (1997).

In general, Oliver et al's findings provided further evidence of the context-specific nature of consumption emotions. The wildlife park data fitted all but one of the hypothesised effects in the delight model. Delight was found to be a function of its

hypothesised components - Surprise, Arousal and Positive affect. Satisfaction was the result of both Disconfirmation cognitions and Positive Affect. However in the wildlife park Delight had no impact on Intention to re-patronise the park but Satisfaction did. In the concert data on the other hand, both Delight and Satisfaction had significant impacts on Intention but in this case Delight was not formed as hypothesised. Delight with the concert was only directly related to Positive Affect with Surprise only having an indirect affect via Arousal's hypothesised impact on Positive Affect. Oliver et al put the differences in the formation of Delight in the two data sets down to the differential wording of their survey questions or possible context-specific effects. However they contend that both data sets support the basic causal sequence;

Surprise>Arousal>Pleasure>Delight

The cognitive disconfirmation component of both Surprise and Positive Affect that they demonstrated led Oliver et al to conclude that the surprising disconfirmation of expectations is the key to evoking customer delight. What they were unable to do on the basis of their data was identify which form of exceeding expectations had the greatest influence on delight; was it the exceptional levels of expected and desired functions (e.g. politeness of hotel staff) that lead to delight or the addition of completely unexpected new functions (e.g. hotel car repair service for travellers)? Oliver et al concluded that the pivotal role of disconfirmation and surprise that they identified suggests that the more surprising a function the more likely is the delight reaction. Finally, Oliver et al, recognising the context dependant structure of delight, made a call for research to investigate the meaning and nature of delight in different consumption contexts and contexts in which delight occurs and has important impacts on consumer behaviour. The authors alluded to the spiralling costs of continually exceeding customer expectations in sectors where improvements are easily copied by competitors¹⁶. Oliver et al conceded there may be routes to delight other than the surprising performance of products and services but their data demonstrates that this is an important strategy for practitioners to consider, and that the relevance of others should be investigated.

Summary

Oliver et al's conceptualisation of customer delight is, to this author's knowledge, the only empirically supported model of customer delight to date. The model bares striking resemblance to the beliefs of the practitioners that motivate Oliver's research, but he is right to raise questions of the appropriateness of delight strategies. Within Oliver's model delight and its antecedents and consequences are operationally and causally linked. However the nature of delight is still only framed in terms of post-purchase surprise and pleasantness. The only cognitions associated with the delight response are labelled as Disconfirmations and it is implied that these take the form of the generation and recall of expectations and their comparison with observed performance. As such Oliver et al's delight model is limited in its description of the detailed nature of delight reactions and their constituent components. As described the great majority of recent research into satisfaction and delight takes place within the discipline of Services Marketing. The motivation to research these concepts lies in the fact that marketing practitioners, the audience for this research, are interested in customer satisfaction only when it affects consumer behaviour for the good of the organisation in the form of retention, recommendation and purchases. The particular interest in customer delight, widely demonstrated across business sectors, stems from the general consensus within the Services Marketing literature that there is

¹⁶ The business case for delight as surprisingly exceeded expectations was investigated later by Rust and Oliver, (2000).

something beyond satisfaction that is even better for business. The theory goes that customers have a 'zone of tolerance' when it comes to customer satisfaction and that it is only outside of this zone that customers' behaviour is influenced to the degree that it effects business performance. Only raising measured customer satisfaction scores above the upper threshold of this zone of indifference creates exceptional results, (Keiningham et al, 1999). Managers define this level of satisfaction as 'customer delight'. The self-fulfilling nature of this definition means that 'customer delight', whatever this is, is now a matter of business survival; by definition it is the only thing that enables business success in today's markets. By defining delight only in terms of its benefits this circular argument essentially defines delight as 'important to services marketing'. As Keiningham et al suggest, just identifying delight as important doesn't help you understand it to the extent that you can start trying to achieve it. This stream of research has succeeded in quantitatively modelling customer delight but has done so only in post-purchase settings.

2.2.5 Is striving for customer delight a good or bad idea?

It is with exactly this business motivation that 'customer delight' has been mathematically modelled to determine whether or not it makes commercial sense *"based on assumptions gathered from the customer satisfaction literature"*, (Rust and Oliver, 2000). In this study these authors adopt a definition of customer delight that they themselves had previously developed, (Oliver et al, 1997); *"refer(s){-ing} to a profoundly positive emotional state generally resulting from having one's expectations exceeded to a surprising degree."* As a mathematical construct deriving from interactions between the impact of satisfaction on expectation levels and desirable behaviours (purchase, word of mouth, re-purchase etc), consumers' rates of forgetting, and market situations that dictate the ease of capturing customers, and the cost and ease of replication of the 'delight' initiative, striving for customer delight is deemed good business sense only under certain situations. All else being equal delighting firms suffer from raised expectations in the market place, but not as much as non-delighting firms who lose customers by attrition to the delighting firm. If the delight initiative is easily replicated (due to market factors) a mutually destructive arms-race situation develops between competing firms. If customers forget delight easily (due to market factors) delighting firms benefit only in markets where it is difficult to capture customers (a cheap repetitive delight initiative will maintain customer loyalty). When customers forget delight experiences and frequently shift brands, costly delight initiatives will doom firms, (Rust and Oliver, 2000).

Conclusions

This mathematical postulation is of obvious value to business practice, however what still remains unclear is how to delight customers if you are lucky enough to be in the right market situation. Rust and Oliver, (2000) and Oliver et al, (1997) are the first authors to operationalise the context-specific nature of delight, and they begin to postulate three kinds of customer delight, assimilated, re-enacted, and transitory dependant on the degree to which customers remember the feeling of delight and the influence this has on their behaviour. This is an enlightening step, but their modelling and operationalisation of delight does not aid our understanding of what it is or how it can be achieved. Their postulation that delight might not make business sense in certain situations sounds like bad news for all of us that consume things. However Rust et al's modelling depends upon the surprisingly exceeded expectations model of delight and Oliver et al, (1997) themselves wonder whether this is the only route to delight.

Oliver et al, (1997) identified problems in separating satisfaction and delight and these may have their basis in the linked definitions they use. Similar arguments about the definition of emotion terms have been put forward by Wierzbicka, (1992). When defined as something that is important to business success, measured cumulative customer satisfaction surprisingly enough correlates well with measures of business success. Both businesses and academics are happily measuring away trapped in their own positive feedback loop. Once the term 'customer delight' is thrown into this mix, and subjected to the same definitional restrictions ("whatever it is, it is only important if it can be measured in \$'s on the bottom line") the bandwagon's name is joyfully and unconsciously changed. 10 out of 10 satisfaction becomes labelled 'delight' and then that too is measured¹⁷. This line of research essentially falls into the traps identified by Rosenberg; (1996).

2.2.6 Critiques of, and alternatives to, Expectation Disconfirmation

In addition to the empirical evidence that has been found to contradict the exceeded expectations route to delight (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993), and the extensions to the theory proposed by Spreng et al 1996, the persistence of thinking of satisfaction and delight in terms of expectations has other flaws. Consider that the average American pays the equivalent of 31 weeks pay for a 25,000\$ car, (Casey, 2000). People spending this much have every right to have high expectations of such products. In fact our expectation levels are only the result of previous failings. We have learnt not to get perfection and the result is that as people we all have quality expectations. By exceeding expectations firms are really just reducing the deficit. In the long term meeting expectations is a futile task because new ones are always created. Surely product quality, as it is defined by Kano, should not always be trying to reach some theoretically ever receding target. Furthermore the attribute basis of both the Kano model and the Disconfirmation model contradict the holistic feeling driven choice process identified and supported by Mittal, (1988).

Further support for the role of affect in consumption situations has been provided by alternative cognitive perspectives. One study suggests that positive affect (presumably including delight and similar feelings) may act as a shortcut for customers striving to reduce the cognitive effort required to make decisions, (Garbarino and Edell, 1997). Negative affect tends to be the result of increased cognitive effort and was found to determine which product option was discarded in a forced choice experiment. The authors of this research concluded that negative effect is a greater determinant of choice behaviour because the cognitive effort that generates it hampers the cognition-minimising motivation of consumers. In the absence of negative affect customers use positive affect as a choice heuristic, (Garbarino and Edell, 1997, p.157). Other researchers identify that cognitive choice processes are motivated by the unconscious desire to minimise the experience of negative affect rather than to maximise the experience of positive affect, (Bettman et al, 1998).

Furthering this Affective perspective, Elliot, (1998) proposes a model of emotion-driven choice as an alternative to the Cognitive information-processing model. Elliot builds on ideas put forward in the Consumption literature (including those of Mittal, 1988, Gabriel and Lang, 1995 and Belk, 1987) that emphasise the social and cultural

¹⁷ This type of thinking has had the micky taken out of it in the film 'This is Spinal Tap' where a rock-god believes his guitar amps are better because their volume knob goes up to 11. Academic: "Hang on people! Customer satisfaction is good - but now we've got that, what we really need is 100% satisfaction." Business leader: "Aahh. You mean what we need is customer delight!... I like it... More, more, more, must make more... More delight please!!!" A: "Yep you're doing well. You're getting up to 10 out of 10 satisfaction... Oops... I mean delight" BL: "Now where? What do we need to get more of?" A: "Loyalty. That's what all businesses need to make more money" BL: "Right then I'll get me some of that please!"

relevance of consumption and immediacy and personal relevance of emotions in choice situations. Elliot's model is purely theoretical and not based upon empirical research but instead ties together the Appraisal theories of emotion (e.g. Frijda, 1988), the primacy of affect (Zajonc, 1980 and Mittal, 1988) and the more social perspectives on consumption as identified above. The model proposes that emotion-driven choice, in contrast to Kano's and Oliver et al's ideas, is primarily self-focused and based on the holistic appraisal of products. As such he proposes that emotion-driven choice is non-linear and non-rational and occurs more quickly than cognitive information-processing based choice. As a non-rational activity, Elliot sees the marketing benefits of emotion-driven choice as the reduction of rational comparison with alternatives. He finds support for his ideas in the current trend of emotionalising products such as coffee and ice-cream that otherwise have no link with powerful emotions.

Other authors call for a complete paradigm shift, citing the context-specific nature of emotions in their critique of research that tries to define universal (or supplementary) models of consumption relevant affects such as satisfaction and delight, (e.g. Woodruff, 1997). Woodruff considers the empirical distinction between such concepts to be arbitrary and blames it for the resulting predominance of Marketing Research that models rather than describes and explores. He cites the continuing failure of organisational strategies for achieving satisfaction (including QFD, drives to exceed expectations and CSM programmes) as the result of their reliance on generalised models of consumer reactions that themselves rely on poorly understood and described phenomena such as quality, satisfaction, surprise and delight. Woodruff sidesteps the debate by proposing that organisations should be attempting to maximise customer value - the customer's *"perceived preference for and evaluation of... product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations"*, (Woodruff, 1997, p.142). Woodruff calls for the development of more diverse and actionable theory of how customer value is generated, and for a broadening of the practical strategies used by organisations to create customer value. Woodruff's calls are echoed by leading Service Marketing academics, (Parasuraman, 1997).

Other authors have questioned the measurement tools used to investigate emotions within Consumer and Marketing Research, (Richins, 1997). As a result of her critique of the DES-II and PAD scales (developed on the basis of Izard's and Russel's views of emotions respectively), Richins develops a new scale specifically for the investigation of consumption emotion. The resulting Customer Emotion Scale contains no items designed to measure or identify delight. Richins is aware of the limitations of the generally quantitative approach to investigating emotions in consumption situations and specifically calls for *"research that examines, in depth, the character of individual consumption-related emotions and that identifies their antecedent states"*. She believes that if practitioners are to gain value from its theories, Consumer Research must identify *"exactly what it means to feel pride [or another emotion] in product ownership, the conditions that create feelings of pride [or another emotion] and the effects of these feelings on other consumer variables"* like intention and positive word-of-mouth. Richins states the best way to answer such research questions is through the adoption of interpretive phenomenological approaches, (Richins, 1997, p.144).

In contrast to the dominant Positivist paradigm in Consumer Research, where the aim is to support, extend or refute existing theory via experimental tests of hypotheses based upon it, Phenomenological enquiries tend to adopt the goal of generating new theory by studying and interpreting the complexity and diversity of phenomena without the constraints of having to control and manipulate variables to test

theoretical propositions. The differences in these two philosophies of science and their translation into research practice will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. In the specific area of customer satisfaction research the approaches of Oliver and colleagues described above are intrinsically Positivist. Surveys are designed and administered to research participants with the goal of measuring proposed components of the satisfaction response and their occurrence according to hypotheses based upon Disconfirmation Theory. These methods are designed in a standardised way so that variables are controlled and quantified facilitating the testing of hypotheses on a statistical basis. This level of methodological control means that the complexity of the phenomena studied is actively controlled by the researcher. In contrast a Phenomenological approach to the study of customer satisfaction would study it as a phenomenon in its own right, considering variables that can be identified and measured objectively but also the reaction's subjective nature, determinants and diversity.

Fournier and Mick, (1999) adopt exactly this interpretive phenomenological approach suggested by Richins, (1997) in their attempt to 'rediscover satisfaction'. They captured the emotional experiences of 16 owners of technological products (including camcorders, answer phones, cars and computers) by conducting longitudinal interviews. The data were analysed in terms of the shifting and often contradictory nature of consumer's satisfaction experiences over time and evidence to support or refute the competing models of satisfaction (including Expectation Disconfirmation, Desires Disconfirmation) was sought. Their research demonstrated the central role that products play in the social and personal emotional lives of people, the extent of which, they suggest, is not represented by the dominant reductionist customer satisfaction models. They identify shifts between different types of satisfaction over time and suggest a critical role for satisfaction-as-novelty and satisfaction-as-awe (described in terms similar to delight) at early pre-purchase stages of consumption that evolves into satisfaction-as-contentment, satisfaction-as-trust or satisfaction-as-love, dissatisfaction-as-resignation or dissatisfaction-as-helplessness during ownership. Fournier and Mick also specifically identify emerging problems for the existing expectation based customer satisfaction paradigm. Firstly their findings indicate that consumers do not hold the stable expectations that the traditional paradigm relies on as the basis of comparison implicit in its models of satisfaction. Secondly they present consumer satisfaction stories that explicitly demonstrate a complete lack of expectations providing nothing to be exceeded in the generation of the observed satisfaction. They identify the discovery of new benefits during product ownership as a key driver for satisfaction, a phenomenon that existing customer satisfaction models cannot explain. In summary, Fournier and Mick conclude that multiple modes of satisfaction often occur concurrently within the same customer's reaction to a single product and over time. Like Richins, Fournier and Mick label existing models of satisfaction as limited by their lack of emphasis on the meaning of emotional reactions to products and services. They cite examples where identically coded satisfaction responses can be seen as quite distinct once the subjective meaning of the response is elicited from the consumer's perspective. They call for phenomenological research that identifies, in situ, the multiple paths to satisfaction (p.17). The elicitation of the meanings underlying satisfaction responses and the metaphor used by customers to describe them demonstrated the deficiency of the reductionist models of satisfaction that portray a predominantly cold, cognitive and meaning-deficient form of satisfaction that bears only passing resemblance to the real-world experience of consumers. "*Satisfaction has not only structure, but content as well*" (p.18). These authors propose that consumer research is wasting its time defining evermore specific and all-encompassing models of satisfaction, and that its effort should be directed at describing the context-dependant diversity and meaning of consumption emotions, (Fournier and Mick, 1999). However, research continues extending the Disconfirmation Model of Satisfaction like Wirtz and Bateson, (1999)

who identify disconfirmed expectations as the only driver for positive affect in their data; (Wirtz and Bateson, 1999)

Schneider and Bowen make pains to point out that they are not trying to refute or replace the 'conventional met-expectations model', (Schneider and Bowen, 1999). However, they suggest that greater insights into the emotional reactions of customers, than provided by this model, are needed to take meaningful management actions. They are principally talking from the service perspective but nonetheless they still feel service companies will have difficulty acting upon the implications of this model. They suggest that companies trying to delight customers by exceeding their expectations face problems primarily due to the difficulty in measuring and defining customer expectations. Levels and targets of expectations are not only dynamic, shifting over time, but also vary from sector to sector (e.g. reliability in banking is different from reliability in insurance). Schneider and Bowen also express their doubts over the ability of managers to reliably measure expectations since an individual's expectations are based on an internal and personal set of standards that have no absolute frame of reference. Objectively measuring and exceeding customers' subjective expectations is seen by Schneider and Bowen to be a difficult management task. In light of the shortcomings they identify, they propose a supplementary Needs-Based Model.

"We believe firms cannot understand or manage emotionally charged customer reactions, such as delight and outrage, by merely meeting or exceeding specific service expectations. The rationality of such an approach seems mismatched to the emotionality - even irrationality - of delight and outrage. Thus we need another perspective", (Schneider and Bowen, 1999).

Schnieder and Bowen suggest that the limitations of the reductionist Expectation Congruency model stem from the fact that it is derived from the behaviourist school of Consumer Research that views customers as *consumers* mechanistically striving to meet specific expectations rather than *people* striving to satisfy their fundamental needs in life. They argue that emotional customer reactions such as delight and outrage can be better understood and managed using a model based upon three fundamental needs; security, justice and self-esteem. These authors place needs and expectations at different ends of a continuum from the fundamental to the specific. Whilst external service (and product) attributes may satisfy specific expectations (i.e. expectations are based on external things), needs are more fundamentally tied to internal states and as such their gratification and violation lead to more strongly emotional reactions such as delight and outrage. Schneider and Bowen criticise the met-expectation model because it focuses on the external attributes of services (and products) rather than the internal states of the customer that it tries to explain. This same criticism can also be levelled at the Kano model which is also expectation based despite claiming to be needs based¹⁸. They argue that focussing on needs provides the opportunity to delve more deeply into the internal states that constitute delight and outrage, and offers more useful insights for managers than focussing on expectations.

- Security - the need to feel unthreatened by physical or economic harm
- Justice - the need to be fairly treated
- Self-esteem - the need to maintain and enhance one's self-image

Schnieder and Bowen propose that the key to evoking delight is to gratify customers' need for self-esteem. They suggest that delight will result if companies enhance

¹⁸ Or at least the Kano model's focus can be seen as the specific end of Schneider and Bowen's continuum since it ultimately address and categorises product features.

customers feelings of self-worth (by acknowledging the customer's perspective, self-image, importance and rights) and control (making customers feel the situation centres around them). They believe that customers do not want to be delighted, this is merely a side effect of getting what they do want, which is need gratification. As such companies should not be aiming for delight but rather for the gratification of fundamental needs. If this can be done outrage will be avoided and delight might be achieved, (Schneider and Bowen, 1999).

The traditional research into satisfaction has also been criticised on methodological grounds. Kempf, (1999) identifies that the survey methods used in such research rely on respondents' ability to recall emotional reactions, a process that is subject to memory biases. She proposes that to avoid such limitations consumption reactions should be measured during product trial rather than by recall after the fact. Her specific research supports the proposals of Mittal, (1988) and concentrates on the sequence of affective and cognitive components in the evaluation of Hedonic versus Utilitarian products. She demonstrates that hedonic evaluation results in arousal leading to affective feelings such as delight, whilst utilitarian evaluation results in purely cognitive appraisals characterised by a distinct lack of arousal and affective components. Another methodological criticism comes from Olander, (1993), who suggests that the problem with most consumer research is that it is not usually done for the sake of the consumer, but rather for the sake of practitioners. Olander suggests that this leads to most Positivist consumer research starting with existing theories rather than with actual consumption phenomena that are of interest to consumers. This is certainly the case with the research that has been carried out to date into customer delight.

Finally, and most recently, the critical role of disconfirmed expectations in the formation of delight (as per Oliver et al, 1997) is called into question by research that examines the role of surprise in satisfaction responses, (Vanhamme, 2000). Vanhamme suggests that surprise is logically indicative of expectation disconfirmation and hypothesises that delight, (defined as the highest levels of satisfaction resulting from the surprising disconfirmation of expectations, i.e. Oliver et al's 1997 definition) should therefore include surprise as a marker of disconfirmation. Vanhamme used multiple indicators of surprise (facial expressions, behavioural indicators and verbal reports) to study the reaction of 54 participants to holiday offers experimentally manipulated to induce surprise and disconfirmation. Her findings indicated that, contrary to her hypotheses, surprise was not always indicative of delight (defined as the highest satisfaction scores) and as such may not be a necessary component of delight reactions defined as such. Vanhamme concludes that, for the practice of marketing, the differentiation and sequencing of the affective and cognitive components in satisfaction responses are not important. Greater benefit would be achieved by exploring their nature and specificity. Her results lead her to change her conceptualisation of surprise, satisfaction and delight as combined phenomena, suggesting instead that they seem to be separate constructs; satisfaction being linked to intention, surprise being purely cognitive and delight being purely affective.

Summary

Delight has primarily been studied as an affect resulting from a cognition. The sequencing and antecedents of the positive feelings that constitute delight have been the predominant focus of research because of the recent recognition that the affective components of customer responses had previously been systematically neglected. Because of its lumping in with satisfaction for the good of marketing researchers - its only worth knowing about if its good for the bottom line - and its empirically

demonstrated effect on satisfaction scores - the only cognitive components systematically researched and accepted as components of delight are those surrounding expectation congruency. Meanwhile the nature of delight has not become the specific focus of research with its defining characteristics being adopted from the field of Psychology. Having adopted the 'surprising pleasure' definition of delight researchers such as Oliver et al have proceeded to measure the occurrence of delight using numerical scales designed to identify these components. In addition to this predominance of quantitative methodologies, with the notable exception of Fournier and Mick, 1999, the author is not aware of any research, since that of Bridges in 1932, that attempts to study delight in a naturalistic setting.

2.3 Conclusions drawn from the literature review

The previous sections have defined the current state of the academic knowledge surrounding customer delight. Despite continued criticism, the Expectation Disconfirmation Model of Customer Delight (as the Pleasant Surprise resulting from the positive disconfirmation of expectations) pervades the academic and popular conceptualisation of satisfaction, delight and other positive consumption experiences, (Kotler et al, 1999). The acceptance of this model is further demonstrated by its implicit incorporation into the industrial literatures. Both product and service sectors are represented by literature prescribing the virtues of 'exceeding customer expectations', 'surprising customers with the unexpected' and 'delivering the wow factor'. The cumulative view of satisfaction and the importance of achieving its highest levels, labelled as delight, is particularly prevalent in the service sector. While the attribute basis of satisfaction has lead the product sector to search for 'delighter features' that can be designed into products, (Kano, 1995).

2.3.1 Summary and critique of the literature

In recent years, business leaders and researchers have identified the need for companies to move beyond satisfying their customers to delighting them. The motivation underlying these moves is not a new more generous business ethic, rather a new means of business survival within saturated markets. Companies are starting to recognise that the loyalty of satisfied customers cannot be taken for granted and that the logical next step is to strive to achieve that which lies beyond satisfaction; delight. The importance of this strategy has been cemented by empirical evidence demonstrating the non-linear relationship between customer satisfaction scores and loyalty rates, with only customers that feel the very highest levels of satisfaction experiencing any motivation to remain loyal to an organisation and its offerings.

Despite the popularity of this edict, supporting academic understanding of delight is noticeably lacking and potentially biased. Psychology has tended to focus on the study of the negative emotions and until recently viewed all emotions as ultimately serving evolutionary survival functions. This has left the study of satisfaction as a consumption phenomenon, and more recently its proposed extension - delight, the reserve of the applied disciplines of Consumer Research and Marketing. Both these fields have customers of their own - practitioners. They are motivated to satisfy these customers' requirements for reliable scientific understanding of the phenomena that impact organisational success in consumer markets. In the cases of satisfaction, delight and loyalty, this has lead to the adoption of traditionally watertight positivist approaches to studying these phenomena. However, it is this same motivation that has resulted in the use of circular definitions where these constructs are framed in terms of the benefits their attainment can realise. In the case of customer delight the concept is defined in terms of its effects on indicators of business success - as the

extension of satisfaction that leads to more loyal customers, more new customers and more business success.

The motivation to please practitioners has also coloured the contexts chosen for study and the manner in which findings are presented. Due to its proposed association with long-term satisfaction and its impact on loyalty, delight is modelled as a cumulative state that motivates people to remain loyal. This focus is reinforced by the oft cited shift towards the service economy and the logical importance of customer loyalty in such markets. The resulting research has therefore studied customer delight within service contexts where it can be identified, measured and correlated with indicators of its proposed effects. Whilst studying the phenomenon in terms of these effects, its nature - surprising pleasure - has been adopted from the field of Psychology without becoming the specific focus of enquiry. Defined as the surprising pleasure that engenders customer loyalty the case for striving for customer delight, despite the conviction of business leaders, is yet to be empirically and definitively made.

The few studies that have empirically studied the nature of delight have succeeded in identifying the occurrence of the affects associated with pleasure and arousal and the cognitions that result in surprise - the disconfirmation of expectations. Although results differ depending on the service context investigated it appears that the highest levels of satisfaction, characterised by surprise and pleasure, are evoked when customers judge their consumption experience to be surprisingly better than they had expected. Whilst this disconfirmation of expectations view of delight is appropriate and useful for the providers of services it has only limited relevance to organisations operating in durable product sectors. These organisations can and do augment their products with service levels designed to maintain the loyalty of existing customers. According to this model, these existing customers can also be delighted when their product ownership experience significantly exceeds their pre-purchase expectations. However this expectation based view of delight has been recognised as leading to an uncomfortable implication - that it is easier to delight customers who have low expectation levels and that by raising expectation levels it becomes harder and correspondingly more expensive to delight customers in the future. This view of delight also flies in the face of empirical evidence that demonstrates expectations are good predictors of perception in ambiguous situations.

By modelling customer delight as a cumulative post-purchase experience that engenders loyalty and results from the exceeding of pre-purchase expectations this body of research has neglected to study any pre-purchase role for customer delight. This seems understandable since pre-purchase delight would have no positive bearing on its post-purchase impact on loyalty. Outside the fields of Consumer Behaviour and Marketing, and away from the dominance of service thinking, the distinction between new and existing customers is deemed less important. Compared to the service sector, durable product sectors are more inclined to strike a balance between maintaining the loyalty of existing customers and the desire to increase market share by capturing new customers. Manufacturing is a discipline that has historically focussed on maximising the quality of product offerings. Definitions of quality have shifted over time so that they now make explicit the relationship between increased product quality and customer delight.

The pinnacle of understanding of product quality and its impact on customer satisfaction is the Kano Model of Product Quality. This model demonstrates how products have three types of constituent quality that influence the way a customer feels about the product. Some things are expected in the product. Customers remain indifferent towards these qualities unless they are absent. Other qualities customers recognise they want more or less of and their level of satisfaction is determined by

the levels of these qualities within the product. Finally products can contain elements that are not expected, the mere presence of which can pleasantly surprise customers. Despite being developed quite separately, this view of product quality and its impact on satisfaction is again expectation-based. Since its transposition from Japanese into Western manufacturing the Kano Model has been frequently cited in the drive to achieve customer delight through the design of tangible products. Both routes to the highest levels of satisfaction that it encompasses involve exceeding expectations in the delivery of exceptional levels of the qualities customers want and in the provision of unexpected surprising qualities. Most Western interpretations of the Kano Model propose that manufacturing companies should identify needs that their customers have not yet recognised and provide the technologies and solutions that address these. The resulting product features will then surprise and delight customers who never expected them. If the product also gives customers exceptional levels of what they want, whilst getting the basics right, then it will maximise the satisfaction felt by its purchasers and owners.

Both streams of research described above are confined by the expectation-based routes to customer delight they adhere to, and are driven by the practitioner's view of the phenomenon. Marketing academics define delight in terms of the advantages it can offer and Manufacturing academics define it in terms of qualities and features that can be designed into products. The resulting implications of their models are that to achieve delight customers have to be given more, both of the things they know they want and the things they never knew they needed. The futility of continuously giving customers more than they expect, which at the same time raises their expectations for the future, has been acknowledged and even mathematically modelled. The resulting conclusion that striving to achieve customer delight only makes commercial sense in certain very limited circumstances does not bode well for any of us that consume.

The prevalence of this cognitive consumer view of customer delight in the Consumer Research, Manufacturing and popular prescriptive literatures fails to take account of more general theories of emotion and consumption. From the other side of the long running Affective vs Cognitive primacy debate in emotion research comes a body of work that calls into question the assumptions of the common knowledge. Psychologists and Consumer Researchers taking this Affective perspective have also emphasised the importance of emotions in consumption. In fact, particular attention has been paid to the role feelings play in product choice. Whilst considering the study of feelings to be bound by the limitations of our language, researchers from this school of thought have tended to emphasise the importance and diversity of consumption related affects in general. The study of specific emotion types such as customer delight is rare. However empirical research has demonstrated that feelings act as short cuts in the choice of products, especially hedonic or expressive goods. The resulting theories and findings of the Affective perspective paint a picture of consumption related affect as overriding cognitive product appraisal, the result of the immediate appraisal of products as wholes based on the product's relevance to the customer.

Neither the prevailing Cognitive perspective, nor the Affective perspective, actively seek to explore specific consumption emotions in naturalistic product settings¹⁹. Both also tend to use quantitative methods to measure proposed components of consumer reactions, choices or intentions. Customer delight seems to be trapped between these paradigms. Those that believe most strongly in the importance of positive feelings during consumption have neglected to specifically study what most people might assume to be one of the strongest. Whilst it has become the specific subject of

¹⁹ See Fournier and Mick, (1999) for a notable exception.

research from the Cognitive perspective, customer delight is modelled in ways that fly in the face of the basic tenets of the Affective perspective.

Our existing knowledge

As an emotion, delight can be thought of as being an experienced reaction to a personally relevant stimulus made up of affective, behavioural and cognitive components. Despite differences in opinion concerning their relative importance, both the cognitive and affective paradigms within Psychology and Consumer Research assume emotions are made up of these four fundamental components; stimulus > affect behaviour cognition. To date, customer delight has only been researched as a post-purchase phenomenon within two service settings, (Oliver et al, 1997). These authors have taken a predominantly cognitive perspective and see customer delight to be the affective result of expectation disconfirmation, a cognitive activity. Their hypothesis testing research has used quantitative measures of those components of customer delight proposed by existing theories of satisfaction and definitions of delight borrowed from non-consumption settings. The resulting understanding of the customer delight reaction is presented in the figure below. The model supported by Oliver et al includes attribute based stimuli and cognitions associated with their comparison with prior expectations. The affective components of delight measured and identified by Oliver et al are surprise, arousal, pleasure and joy and the behaviours associated with the reaction take the form of economically relevant customer intentions.

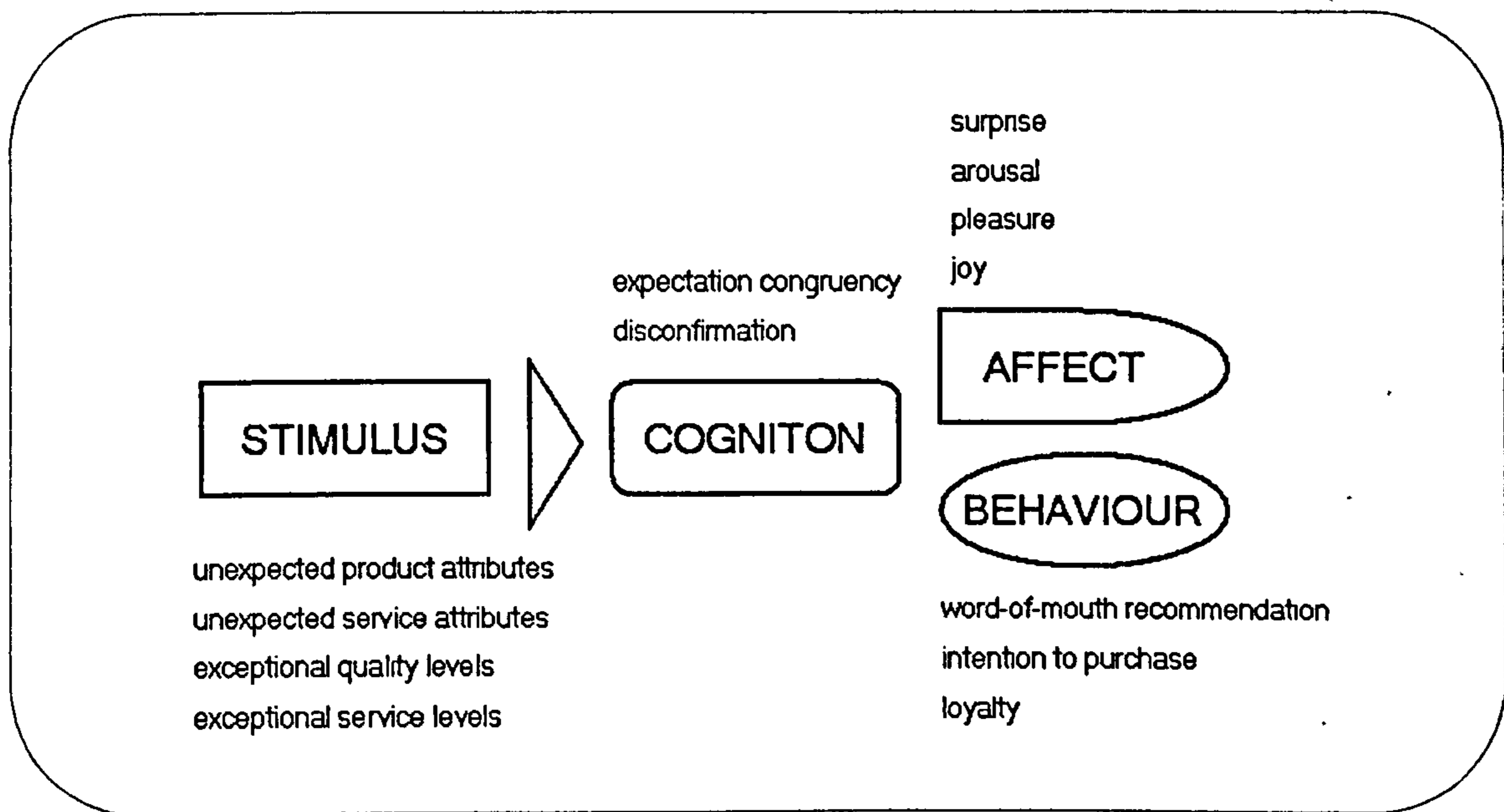


Figure 1.5: A stimulus, affect, behaviour, cognition interpretation of Oliver et al's Expectation Disconfirmation Model of customer delight.

The figure represents the current state of knowledge in the field of Consumer Research. Oliver et al's positivist methodology did not study the naturalistic occurrence of customer delight and the only components of the reaction identified are those that it was hypothesised to contain, and as such were measured in their study. As a result of their study Oliver et al claim a causal link between the disconfirmation of expectations, surprise and arousal amplifying positive affect and the resultant delight reaction.

Our only other understanding of customer delight comes from the prescriptions of the Manufacturing literature. From this perspective customer delight has been modelled

in terms of its product-basis in the form of the Kano Model of Product Quality, (Kano, 1995). Although developed separately this model supports the Expectation Disconfirmation Model of customer delight. The model proposes that customer delight can be the result of two kinds of product attribute. Customers can be delighted when products contain greater than expected levels of scalar qualities. They can also be delighted when products contain unexpected features that had not been foreseen. Again, the methodology used by Kano to develop his model is quantitative and does not attempt to study customers' naturalistic product appraisals. The product-bases of the customer delight reaction are theoretical propositions based upon customers' written responses to product attributes presented by the researcher. The two routes to customer delight that the model predicts are presented in the figure below. Whilst the model does not consider the nature of delight itself²⁰, the model does extend upon the Expectation Disconfirmation Model by specifying two specific ways in which products can delight.

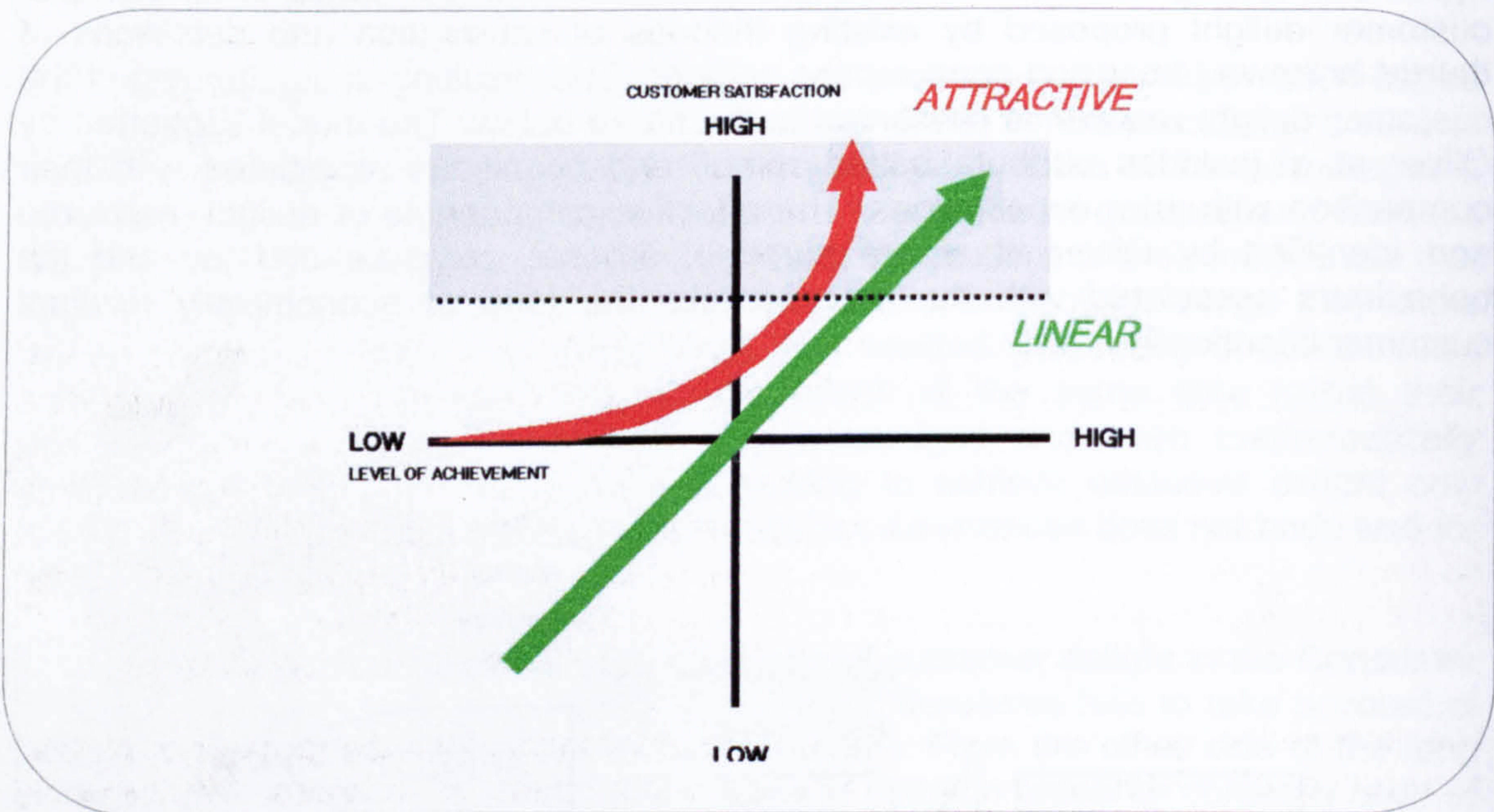


Figure 1.6: The Kano Model - two routes to customer delight.

Both the Manufacturing and cognitive Consumer Research perspectives are at odds with the theories of consumer researchers taking the affective perspective, (e.g., Zajonc, 1980, Mittal, 1988 and Elliot, 1998). These authors believe that cognitive appraisal, such as expectation congruency, is not necessary for the experience of emotion in consumption situations. Instead they suggest that affective judgements are immediate and as such occur before any cognitive appraisal activity. They have demonstrated that affective consumer choices take place on the basis of holistic product appeal, (Mittal, 1988) and consider these appraisals to be based upon the personal relevance of the product as a whole rather than on the basis of objective comparisons of the product with expectations. However, this affective perspective has not specifically considered the customer delight reaction, focussing instead on positive affect in general, and again rarely studies naturalistic consumption situations.

2.3.1 The knowledge gap and research objectives

The literature contains no research that considers the naturalistic occurrence of customer delight in a consumption setting and none that actively seeks to identify the

²⁰ Interpretations of the model assume delight to be an extension of satisfaction.

customer's perspective of this subjective experience. The behavioural components of customer delight have also been neglected save for those with proposed business benefits. The only empirical research that specifically studies customer delight has been conducted in post-purchase service settings and the product-basis of customer delight has only been studied using product features supplied by the researcher. Our empirical understanding of customer delight is also potentially biased towards its cognitive constituents due to the methods with which it has been researched and the ontological stance of those that have studied it. Researchers from the affective perspective have neglected the study of specific emotion types in general. This research will therefore attempt to address this gap in our knowledge. The product-basis of customer delight requires investigating in a naturalistic consumption setting. The product-basis of customer delight also requires investigation in terms of the affective, behavioural and cognitive nature of this reaction. Customer delight also requires definition from the perspective of the customer rather than on the basis of existing theory. The cognitive view of delight also requires integration with the affective and behavioural components of this reaction. The following objectives are therefore set for this research;

- *explore the nature of customer delight reactions during the evaluation of tangible products;*
- *identify and describe the antecedents of customer delight reactions in terms of the product characteristics that evoke them;*
- *define delight from the customer's perspective, rather than on the basis of existing theory; and*
- *comment upon the appropriateness of the industrial approaches proposed for achieving customer delight.*

The knowledge gap requires an integrative approach to studying the naturalistic occurrence of customer delight. This approach needs to address the following specific research questions;

1. *How do products delight customers?*
2. *Do 'delighter' features exist in products?*
3. *Is there a pre-purchase role for customer delight?*
4. *Are functional innovations and exceeded expectations the only route to delight?*
5. *What does customer defined delight look like?*
6. *Is the disconfirmation of expectations always a component of customer delight during product evaluation?*
7. *What is the nature of the affective and cognitive components of delight?*
8. *What behaviours are associated with customer delight?*

Whilst several of these research questions could have been framed as hypotheses, the author has chosen not to on the basis of the current state of theory addressing customer delight. Whilst the customer satisfaction literature is dominated by Disconfirmation Theory, recent research has sought to include customer delight through extension of this theory, (Oliver et al, 1997). These authors have found support for the cognitive basis of customer delight resulting from expectation disconfirmation based on their testing of hypotheses derived from Disconfirmation Theory. Other authors have commented upon the limitations of this theory (e.g., Spreng et al, 1996, Woodruff, 1997 and Fournier and Mick, 1999) and the hypothesis testing approach to studying consumption emotions (Richins, 1997 and Fournier and

Mick, 1999). To date customer delight has only been investigated as an extension of satisfaction governed by Disconfirmation Theory and is yet to be studied as a phenomenon in its own right. The current limited theoretical consideration of customer delight justifies research that aims to generate new theory. Generating hypotheses requires a theoretical base and as such is contrary to the goal of this research to generate new theory describing customer delight as a phenomenon of interest. Choosing to investigate research questions, rather than to test research hypotheses, facilitates the open generation of new theory by removing theoretical constraints from the focus of the enquiry.

The research scope

This research takes for granted that augmenting products with services that exceed expectations is one way to delight customers. Instead, this research will concern itself with other routes to customer delight dependent upon the design of products. Rommel et al, (1996) demonstrated that increased Design Quality performance is linked to business success, primarily in the form of the sales growth that results when companies offer markets superior customer-focussed products. This research will not attempt to define delight in terms of the benefits it realises. However there does seem to be a need to investigate the relevance and occurrence of customer delight during the evaluation of tangible products (rather than services) which might logically provide insights for manufacturing firms striving to design delightful products. This research assumes that 'delightful' products are 'superior', in both the eyes of the customer and the manufacturer, to 'non-delightful' products. This research will not try to demonstrate or replicate the link between product-based customer delight and business success. It will attempt to establish, in specific consumption situations, what it is about tangible products that evokes delight reactions in customers. It will also endeavour to establish the affective, behavioural and cognitive nature of this product-based customer delight reaction in naturalistic consumption settings.

"Perhaps because customer satisfaction is typically presented numerically (usually as survey results) people become seduced by numbers and assume that they represent an objective reality in the same way that production numbers or stock prices do. In fact, customer satisfaction is a psychological attitude, not a physical fact and can only be observed indirectly by asking people their opinions or observing what they do. This doesn't make satisfaction less real, only more difficult to get a handle on." (Rosenberg, 1996).

The context of the research

This research was conducted in collaboration with two automotive companies during a broader government funded research project. Cars have been cited as the prototypical complex consumer durable, (Clark et al, 1987 and Womack et al, 1990) and have previously been the specific subject of customer satisfaction research, (Westbrook, 1987, Westbrook and Oliver, 1991, Oliver, 1992, Oliver, 1993 and Oliver and Westbrook, 1993). The car has also been classified as a hedonic or expressive product, (Oliver and Mano, 1993) and as such is a logical choice for the investigation of customer delight reactions.

2.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented a diverse but inevitably non-exhaustive review of the literature concerning customer delight as an emotion. The perspectives of Psychology, Consumer Research, Services Marketing, Design and Manufacturing

have been introduced. This review culminated in the presentation of two existing expectation-based theories of customer delight; Oliver et al's Expectation Disconfirmation Model and the Kano Model of Product Qualities. The following conclusions were drawn from this critical review of the literature. Firstly, the need for businesses to achieve customer delight is commonly stated and empirically supported. Secondly, that our empirical understanding of this phenomena is limited by the methodologies that have been used to study it and the ontological stance of the researchers that have done so. Finally, that prescriptions for the achievement of customer delight may be inappropriate since they are based upon this limited understanding of the phenomenon. This chapter concluded with the identification of the gaps in our knowledge and set out the objectives and scope of this research. The specific empirical study of customer delight has only taken place in post-purchase service consumption settings. The methods used have neglected to study the naturalistic occurrence of this consumer reaction and have failed to seek the customer's perspective of it. Customer delight has also only been studied from a predominantly cognitive perspective. This research will therefore aim to integrate the affective, behavioural and cognitive components of customer delight by studying its naturalistic occurrence in pre-purchase product consumption settings.

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Chapter 3

Methodological approach

Aim

To describe and justify the research approach taken and to demonstrate its appropriateness through comparison with alternative methodologies.

3.0 Chapter Summary

In the design of any research process three basic methodological choices have to be made. Firstly, what does the research aim to do? This choice will determine the role theory plays in the study - is it to be tested or generated? Secondly, which research philosophy is to be adopted? This epistemology determines the nature of the new knowledge generated by the research, and defines its applicability. Finally, which methods will be used in the research and its analyses? These specifics of the research will determine the validity and reliability of its contribution.

These three choices are inextricably linked and cannot easily be made in isolation. There are no right answers. There may be several appropriate research paths and at the same time, many inappropriate ones (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991). Choices must always be made and justified with reference to the research questions being addressed. So the methodology should not be determined by the preferences or expertise of the researcher, rather its design should only be limited by the goal of providing valid, credible and useful answers to the research questions selected, (Robson, 1993).

The previous chapter justified the specific research questions this study will attempt to address, and the research objectives were framed in terms of the expected novelty and applicability of its contribution. This chapter describes how the research methodology is designed to answer these questions and meet these objectives, outlining and justifying the choices made by the author. Alternative methodologies are evaluated and the basis of the choices made will be specified.

The benefits and limitations of the chosen research methodology are then discussed. The consequences of the methodological choices made will be outlined in terms of the reliability and validity of the research and its findings, and the methodological consideration of these is described. The chapter also identifies the assumptions made by constructing the concepts studied, describing the ontological stance of the author and specifying the theoretical framework used for analysis. The chapter concludes with an overview of the two stages that make up this research and an outline of the author's expectations for it.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe the detailed application of the chosen methodology in the two stages of the research. Chapter 4 describes the exploratory investigation of delight during static evaluation of a single product category. Chapter 5 then describes the detailed descriptive investigation of delight within this product category in distinct pre-purchase evaluation situations.

3.1 Research Philosophy

3.1.1 Epistemology

Research within the social sciences is often defined and differentiated in terms of the epistemology, or 'theory of knowledge', it adopts (see Easterby-Smith et al, 1991 and Hirschman and Holbrook, 1992 for examples). Despite the acknowledgement that most studies contain elements of both, the tendency is to put research into one of two boxes; Positivism versus Phenomenology (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991). These two philosophical positions on the nature of scientific research are briefly expanded upon so that the author's stance is made explicit.

Positivism

Usually credited to the French philosopher Auguste Comte (Reber and Reber, 2001, Woolgar, 1996 and Easterby-Smith et al, 1991), Positivism views the social world as existing externally, and as such asserts that its properties should only be measured through the use of objective measures. This boils down to the positivistic statement that

"there can be no real knowledge but that which is based on observed facts",
(Compte quoted by Easterby-Smith et al, 1991).

The stance that knowledge is only worthwhile if it is based upon observations of external reality, has the following implications for scientific enquiry; (identified by Easterby-Smith et al, 1991)

- The observer must maintain her or his independence from the subject being researched to ensure the objectivity of enquiry,
- Value-freedom is maintained in the choice of research subject, which must be determined by objective criteria rather than according to the researcher's interest or beliefs.
- The establishment of causality should be the goal of scientific enquiry, together with the discovery of fundamental laws and regularities.
- The hypothetico-deductive approach should be taken to develop fundamental hypothetical propositions, and deduce tests of falsification or support for the theory upon which they are based.
- Operationalisation of concepts allows facts to be measured quantitatively.
- Reductionism allows whole problems to be better understood through the study of their constituent components.
- Generalisation allows the formation of universal laws if large enough samples are selected.
- Cross-sectional analyses of the variation across these samples facilitates the identification of universal regularities.

These implications for scientific research have become incorporated into the practice of enquiry across fields as the 'scientific method' (Easterby-Smith, 1991), and this paradigm still dominates science determining what is studied and how. The overarching implication of Positivism is that only those things that can be studied via the hypothetico-deductive quantitative scientific method are appropriate subjects for enquiry (Reber and Reber, 2001). Although still widely adhered to within the social sciences, it is this restrictive or exclusive nature of Positivism that leads many researchers to call for a paradigm shift towards the Phenomenological stance. The major criticism of the Positivistic stance is that it tends to result in existing theory

becoming the starting point of research, rather than a phenomenon of interest (Olander, 1993), and the exclusion of such phenomena if they are not objectively measurable. Within the social sciences and consumer research this leaves a large number of interesting and important phenomena outside the bounds of enquiry. Furthermore, Positivism has been described as 'idealised' since most 'scientific' research that purports to encompass and adhere to its ideals does not actually follow a Positivist process (Woolgar, 1996, p.15) and is often merely reported as if it has.

Phenomenology

The 'new-paradigm' called for dictates a shift in the focus of enquiry away from the external objective reality of the social world. Usually attributed to Edmund Husserl, (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991 and Reber and Reber, 2001) Phenomenology takes the view that reality is not objective and external, as proposed by Positivism, but a social, meaning-laden construct. Phenomenology is often referred to by different terms (e.g. Interpretivism, Constructivism, Naturalistic Enquiry, Qualitative Enquiry, Ethnographic, Post-Positivism, Hermeneutics, and Humanism, Robson, 1993 and Easterby-Smith et al, 1991) or differentiated into separate approaches (see Hirschman and Holbrook, 1992, and Spiggle, 1994). However, the basic tenets of these approaches boil down to the same implications for researchers adopting this stance. This thesis will adopt the generic term 'Phenomenology' for the sake of clarity during reading.

The overriding implication of adopting the Phenomenological viewpoint is a shift in the focus of enquiry. The subjective nature of reality encompassed within Phenomenology dictates that enquiry within the social sciences should strive to study the full complexity of reality, rather than search for objective truths or facts. The goal of such enquiry should be to understand the diversity of people's experiences rather than to explain regularities and establish causality, (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991). Within the field of consumer psychology, the phenomenologist would regard observed consumer behaviour to be the result of individuals making sense of their experience in different situations, and behaving according to these subjective and internal interpretations. A positivist, on the other hand, would regard observed consumer behaviour to be the direct result of external stimulation and the learning history of individuals, rather than their subjective experience.

Another distinguishing feature of phenomenological research is the role of theory in the enquiry. Positivism is defined by its approach to testing theory, using methods designed to support or refute hypothetical propositions that are based upon it. Phenomenology on the other hand tends not to take existing theory as its start point. Instead theory is usually the output of phenomenological research, emerging from, rather than being tested by, the data collected (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Strauss, 1987 and Straus and Corbin, 1998). It is exactly this theory generating role that proponents of this stance find attractive and it tends to form the backbone of their criticism of the Positivist viewpoint, (e.g. Olander, 1993 and Woodruffe, 1996).

Phenomenology also rejects the reductionism that characterises Positivist research. Instead of reducing the complexity of situations to their lowest common denominators, understanding, and hence new knowledge, is the result of considering the totality of experiences within phenomenology. Typically this leads to the use of multiple methods to capture multiple viewpoints, compared to Positivism where single methods tend to be used to investigate the constituent components of the situation being studied. In short, Phenomenology strives to study individual contexts in depth whilst Positivism attempts to identify fundamental rules that explain all contexts. Obviously these different approaches each require distinct means of demonstrating

validity, rigour and the generalisability of findings, and apply quite different standards for the achievement of these.

The Positivist will tend to operationalise hypotheses based on theory and then use quantitative methods to objectively measure variables when testing this theory. Positivists tend to reject the qualitative methods used by Phenomenologists to uncover the depth of understanding they seek, because they introduce unacceptable subjectivity into enquiry. Phenomenologists, although typically users of qualitative methods, have tended to view the mutually exclusive epistemological distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods as unhelpful (Henwood, 1996). Phenomenologists have argued that the appropriateness of methods, both quantitative and qualitative, should be decided on the basis of the situation being studied, rather than by the epistemological standing of the researcher, (Hammersley, 1996). Quantitative methods are appropriate in certain research contexts, and not in others. The same is true of Qualitative methods. Reification is the most commonly cited symptom used by phenomenologists to diagnose the inappropriate use of a Positivist research approach (e.g. Woodruff, 1997). When researchers adhere blindly to the Positivist philosophy of operationalising and measuring all phenomena, they often make the mistake of treating things that do not actually exist¹ as if they can be physically nailed down whilst the tape measure is got out.

It is best to view these two epistemological stances at opposite ends of a continuum. Most research within the social sciences can be identified as either predominantly Phenomenological or Positivist, but rarely is research a pure example of each (Miles and Huberman, 1984 and Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). In fact several authors have called for balanced, middle-ground approaches or entirely new stances (e.g. Critical Theory and Feminist Method, see Woodruffe, 1996). It is not true to say that the epistemological stance of a researcher defines which methodology they must adopt, however these two epistemologies are often referred to as 'paradigms' exactly because they reflect research practice. A researcher's position on this epistemological continuum does not necessarily dictate the methods she uses, rather her methods betray her standing. The table facing outlines the stereotypical features of research practice within these two camps.

Within the Social Sciences, the philosophical debate over the appropriateness of each of these epistemologies has raged for the last half century. Outside of this field these distinctions tend not to have arisen because the nature of the phenomena researched automatically dictates the approach to be taken (e.g., the hard sciences study objective external phenomena, whilst the arts study subjective meaning-laden phenomena). The fact that phenomena studied within the Social Sciences tend to have both objective and subjective determinants (e.g., both the observable behaviours of individuals and groups and the subjective meanings they assign to them) gives rise to the allegiance to, and (often spirited) defence of, the rival epistemologies, depending on what researchers believe constitutes knowledge and appropriate research. The purpose of this chapter is not to enter into this debate but to outline the appropriateness of the stance taken by the author with reference to the objectives of the research, and the questions it aims to address.

¹ Constructs like emotions are exactly that - constructs of human language that aid our communication and understanding.

	<i>POSITIVISM</i>	<i>PHENOMENOLOGY</i>
<i>Assumptions made -</i>	<i>Reality is tangible, external and objective</i> <i>Researchers are independent of the subject of enquiry</i> <i>Science is value-free</i>	<i>Realities are multiple, holistic and subjectively constructed</i> <i>Researchers are part of what is observed</i> <i>Science is driven by human interest</i>
<i>Approach -</i>	<i>Focus on facts and truths</i> <i>Establish causality and identify fundamental laws</i> <i>Reduce situations to simplest elements</i> <i>Formulate and test hypotheses based on theory</i>	<i>Focus on meanings</i> <i>Understand the nature and diversity of experiences</i> <i>Describe the totality of situations</i> <i>Generate theory through induction from data</i>
<i>Methods preferred -</i>	<i>Quantitative</i> <i>Operationalisation and measurement</i> <i>Large samples</i> <i>Generalisation</i> <i>Rigour and Validity</i>	<i>Qualitative</i> <i>Multiple methods/viewpoints</i> <i>Small samples in depth</i> <i>Context-bound understanding</i> <i>Trustworthiness, utility and triangulation</i>

Stereotypical practices of Positivism versus Phenomenology (adapted from Easterby-Smith et al, 1991, and Lincoln and Guba, 1985)

3.1.2 The research objectives and epistemology

“Measurement does not make sense until one has a rational theory of what it is one is measuring.” John A. Wheeler (quoted in Plutchik, 1980).

The objectives of this research, as outlined in Chapter Two, are to;

- *explore the nature of customer delight reactions during the evaluation of tangible products;*
- *identify and describe the antecedents of customer delight reactions in terms of the product characteristics that evoke them;*
- *define delight from the customer’s perspective, rather than on the basis of existing theory; and*
- *comment upon the appropriateness of the industrial approaches proposed for achieving customer delight.*

The traditional epistemological stance taken by researchers studying the constructs of customer satisfaction and customer delight has been hypothetico-deductive Positivism. This may be the result of the dominance of the Behaviourist 'consumer as decision-maker' view held in consumer psychology and marketing since the work of Howard and Sheth, (1969), and the positivist training of the majority of researchers in these fields (Woodruffe, 1996, Easterby-Smith et al, 1991). In the very few studies that have empirically addressed the nature of customer delight, (Oliver et al, 1997, and Rust and Oliver, 2000), hypothetical models are derived from existing theories and tested through the collection and modelling of quantitative data. Customer Satisfaction is traditionally investigated in the same manner (e.g. Westbrook, 1987, Westbrook and Oliver, 1991, Oliver, 1992, Oliver and Mano, 1993, Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, Oliver et al 1997, Rust and Oliver, 2000) and the resulting robust and operationally palatable theory has been incorporated into practice in the form of satisfaction-maximising business strategies.

Delight has been studied from a phenomenological stance, but only in the context of childhood emotional development, (Bridges, 1932) or within a more general framework of positive consumption outcomes (Fournier and Mick, 1999). To the author's knowledge customer delight as a separate construct has not previously been the subject of phenomenological research, despite continued recognition of the appropriateness of such approaches in the field (e.g. Fournier and Mick, 1999, Richins, 1997, Woodruff, 1997, Oliver et al, 1997).

However, it is not with blind obedience that the author chooses to answer these calls by adopting a predominantly phenomenological epistemology. Rather, it is with continued reference to the research questions and objectives, that the research methodology used has been designed. The author's preference for the phenomenological stance is no doubt obvious to the reader. Phenomenology does however, offer the best, if not the only perspective from which to achieve the research objectives. Positivism would (and has) view(-ed) customer delight as a variable to be operationalised and measured in the investigation of the effects product stimuli have on the observable behaviour of customers. The nature of the delight response itself is outside the bounds of Positivistic Empirical research (except for the observable behaviours associated with it), and has to be relegated to a theoretical formulation to be identified quantitatively². A customer's subjective reaction to a product stimulus, including the feelings they experience, the thoughts that enter their head, and the meanings they assign to their reaction, would all be beyond the reach of Positivistic research. It is the author's belief that the lack of an empirical (rather than a theoretical) description of customer delight, despite its successful operationalisation and demonstrated importance, is the result of the purely Positivistic approach that has been applied to researching this phenomenon. This situation can only be addressed by applying a Phenomenological approach to studying customer delight so that the empirically demonstrated importance of this phenomenon can be complemented by an empirical description of its nature.

A Phenomenological approach can also address the research objective of delivering an actionable model of delight by describing the antecedents of the reaction from the customer's perspective. Traditionally the stimuli that are presumed to evoke delight reactions have been operationalised as external objective features, usually given to consumers by researchers to react to (Kano, 1995), or gleaned from single closed questionnaire responses, (Oliver, 1993). The Phenomenological approach to be

² This approach to studying delight has been described in Chapter 2 and is represented by the measurement of the theoretical surprise/arousal and pleasure/joy model of delight using scales such as Izard's DES-II by Oliver et al, (1997).

taken here will investigate the antecedents of delight from the customer's perspective by uncovering customers' subjective interpretations of the objects that delight them.

A Phenomenological research approach has been adopted to allow the previously neglected subjective nature of delight to be uncovered and to investigate the antecedents of delight from the customer's perspective.

3.2 The Selection of the Research Methodology

Having identified the most appropriate epistemology for the achievement of the research objectives the research methodology must be designed to answer the specific research questions. The following sections outline how the research methodology has been designed to answer the following research questions as identified and justified in Chapter 2;

- 1. How do products delight customers?*
- 2. Do 'delighter' features exist in products?*
- 3. Is there a pre-purchase role for customer delight?*
- 4. Are functional innovations and exceeded expectations the only route to delight?*
- 5. What does customer defined delight look like?*
- 6. Is the disconfirmation of expectations always a component of customer delight during product evaluation?*
- 7. What is the nature of the affective and cognitive components of delight?*
- 8. What behaviours are associated with customer delight?*

3.2.1 The role of theory in the research - induction vs deduction

The Phenomenological stance taken, implies that one role of the research will be to generate theory. The research questions echo this implication. This is to say that the general purpose of this research is theoretical induction rather than theoretical deduction or testing. Robson, (1993), suggests that all real world research can be classified according to three purposes that can underlie it;

Exploratory

- To find out what is happening*
- To seek new insights*
- To ask questions*
- To assess phenomena in a new light*
- Usually Qualitative*

Descriptive

- To portray an accurate profile of events*
- Requires extensive knowledge of the situation to guide data collection*
- May be Quantitative and/or Qualitative*

Explanatory

- Seeks causal explanation of a situation*
- May be Quantitative or Qualitative*

These categories are not mutually exclusive and research can pursue one, two or all three of these aims, (Robson, 1993). However, implicit in this classification is the status of research progress in the area being investigated. This suggests a different role must be played by theory in research enquiries serving each purpose. Typically, Exploratory research would be conducted when existing theoretical explanations of a situation or phenomenon are lacking or inadequate. The theory that results might then become the driver of Descriptive research, guiding the collection of the most appropriate data for the accurate modelling of the situation being investigated. Explanatory research could then be conducted to test the theories generated by the Exploratory and Descriptive research.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the extensive research that has taken place into the concept of customer satisfaction, customer delight seems to have been included as an extension of this concept, at the expense of exploring and describing it separately. Chapter 2 specifically identified the limitations of the existing conceptualisations of customer delight when formulating the research questions. The objectives of this research implicitly call for a re-framing of customer delight as an emotional construct, and thereby an exploratory study is required. The research described in this thesis therefore has an exploratory aim; to seek new insights into customer delight and to assess the phenomenon in a new light. Research questions 3 and 6 specifically require the exploration of the bounds of the current operationalisation of delight as the result of the surprising disconfirmation of pre-purchase expectations, whilst research questions 7 and 8 require a move beyond the limited theoretical definition of customer delight as the surprising pleasure that leads to customer loyalty. The result of this exploratory research will be the development of new theoretical propositions surrounding customer delight.

However, the research questions outlined above require more than the exploration of customer delight, they require a useful description of delight (see research questions 2, 4 and 5). This research therefore has a secondary purpose; the accurate portrayal of customer delight in the context of product evaluation. The Exploratory stage of the research will provide the insights needed to conduct the Descriptive stage. The result of this 'dual purpose' research will be the generation of theory in the form of a descriptive model of 'customer delight during product evaluation'. Both stages of the research will make contributions to our knowledge of customer delight, but as Robson suggests, and as is implicit in the research questions posed, this study also aims to provide "*potential usefulness in relation to policy and practice*", (Robson, 1993, p.42).

This research will not contain an Explanatory component. Existing theory will be the basis of comparison but the existing theoretical formulation of customer delight will not be empirically tested. Instead, this research will generate new theory. The process of theoretical induction from the data will be described in Chapter 6 and follows the general process of 'Grounded Theory' generation as originally proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

- *The Exploratory nature of the research reflects the objective to readdress the current theoretical conceptualisation of customer delight.*
- *The progression of the research into a Descriptive stage is required to fully answer the research questions posed and reflects the objective to provide an actionable and useful contribution to knowledge.*

3.2.2 Research Strategy

Traditionally the three purposes of research outlined in the previous section each have a methodological strategy associated with them (Robson, 1993). As such the purpose of the research can be used to guide the selection of the appropriate methodological strategy.

Exploratory research is usually best achieved through the use of the Case Study approach. This strategy can be summarised as the *"development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single 'case', or a small number of related 'cases'"*, (Robson, 1993, p.40). A case can be a situation, individual or group and the deployment of this research strategy usually involves the collection of a broad range of in depth information via a suite of methods including interviews, observation and documentary analysis.

The Survey is a research strategy applicable to Descriptive research where the aim is to model situations and demonstrate the extent of their occurrence within a population. The Survey strategy can be summarised as the *"collection of information in standardised form from groups of people"*, (Robson, 1993, p.40). Positivist applications of the survey approach would typically collect small amounts of information from individuals within a sample that statistically represents a larger population. Collecting the data in a standardised form allows it to be operationalised or quantified and permits the generalisation from the sample to the population as a whole, on the basis of statistical analysis. The methods used to conduct the survey approach will usually involve either structured interviews or questionnaires.

Finally the Experiment is the research strategy traditionally applied in Explanatory research. An experiment is in essence the *"measuring [of] the effects of manipulating one variable on another variable"*, (Robson, 1993, p.40). Experiments are the traditional means of testing theories via the support or falsification of hypotheses derived from those theories. Representative samples are taken from a population of interest and assigned to various experimental or control conditions. The variables of interest are manipulated whilst other variables are carefully controlled to allow the effects of the manipulation to be measured. Statistical methods are then used to determine whether the hypothesised effects of the manipulation have occurred.

Like the different purposes research can serve, these categories of methodological strategy are not mutually exclusive, and there are many examples of research that do not match this partitioning of strategy according to purpose (e.g., Vanhamme, 2000, uses the Experiment strategy in her Exploratory research). Furthermore, mixed or hybrid strategies are commonplace and it is the job of the researcher to select the most appropriate strategy on the basis of the research questions being addressed.

3.2.3 Case Study approach

The research methodology designed and applied here is a Case Study strategy. It encompasses the application of multiple methods in the study of a particular phenomenon of interest, customer delight, within real life contexts. The case study approach has been defined as;

"a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence", (Robson, 1993, p.52).

This definition mirrors Yin's view that Case Study research, in contrast to Survey and Experimental strategies, studies the particular in its own right rather than as part of a larger population, (Yin, 1994). Insights are developed at a context-specific level and the flexibility of the approach allows the capture of in-depth data from cases as theory is generated.

The Positivist Survey approach has been rejected because it does not offer the scope to collect diverse, in depth, qualitative data from research participants and requires a well formed theoretical framework to specify the data to be collected; by their very nature surveys can only capture standardised information. Also, this research does not aim to identify general rules of customer delight that can be identified in a sample of respondents and generalised to the population it represents. Likewise, the Experimental Strategy has been rejected because the objective of this research is to explore the diversity of delight responses in customers rather than to constrain them by manipulating variables under laboratory conditions. Experimental strategies are most suitable for theory testing, not the generation of descriptive theory.

The Case Study approach offers the best opportunity to deploy multiple methods in the exploration and description of customer delight reactions in real-world contexts. This approach has been selected as the most appropriate means of generating the data required for the induction of a Grounded Theory of 'customer delight during product evaluation'. Case Studies offer the means to study the complexity of customer delight in naturalistic settings, whilst the flexibility of the approach allows the tailoring of research methods as the enquiry progresses. As theory is developed during the exploratory stages of the research, the investigation of sub-cases using new methods can be incorporated as the research moves into its descriptive stage.

The descriptive stage of this research adopts survey-like methods but it should be pointed out that these do not constitute the use of the Survey strategy. The objectives of the descriptive stage of the research are to produce a context-bound descriptive model of customer delight during product evaluation, not a mathematical model of delight generated from the standardised responses of a sample and statistically generalised to the population it represents. The descriptive stage of the study will still seek to uncover in-depth insights from respondents to build on the theory generated in the exploratory stage. As such the survey-like methods used must still be considered part of a phenomenological Case Study strategy.

The major weaknesses of adopting the Case Study strategy include defining the boundaries of the cases to be studied, which are covered in the next section, and in establishing the validity of the approach used and the degree to which its findings can be generalised. These concerns will be specifically addressed in the design of the Case Study methodology, and the multiple-methods it incorporates.

3.2.4 Grounded Theory and Case Selection

The Case Study approach has its roots in Psychotherapy and Medicine where individual patients are the subject 'cases'. More recently the Case Study approach has been applied in Management Research where the cases studied are usually individual firms or organisations. This more recent application of the Case Study strategy has led some researchers to label 'cases' as 'sites', thereby referring to the geographic rather than human nature of the cases being studied (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Meanwhile, Robson (1993) suggests almost any real world phenomenon can be a valid 'case';

"The CASE is the situation, individual, group, organisation or whatever it is that we are interested in." (Robson, 1993, p.51, emphasis in the original).

Miles and Huberman (1984) highlight the critical role of identifying the boundaries of enquiry through the selection of cases. They liken this to a process of reducing your expectations as a qualitative researcher. The inevitable depth and quantity of qualitative data that any piece of Case Study research generates means that researchers have to limit their desire to understand everything about their phenomenon of interest. The key means of preventing data-overload and keeping the enquiry realistic yet flexible are to be explicit about the research focus and to use 'purposeful sampling' to identify the appropriate sources of data that can address that focus, (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 37). Miles and Huberman suggest four parameters that should be aligned with research questions in the selection of cases³;

- Settings
- Actors
- Events
- Processes

Obviously the full range of parameters would result in an exhaustive but unrealistic enquiry so they suggest multiple variations of these parameters should be addressed within single case study designs or across multiple case designs according to the process of 'purposeful sampling'. Purposeful sampling is analogous to theoretical sampling as proposed by proponents of Grounded Theory, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The best approach to ensure an adequate mix of parameters within the enquiry is to sample on the basis of the conceptual framework that underlies the research, and to remain guided by the specific research questions being addressed, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 and Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The distinguishing feature of purposeful sampling is that it is guided by the progression of the research, rather than being formulated prior to data collection. As described by Glaser and Straus, (1967) theoretical (or purposeful) sampling is the process of *"generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses data and decides what data to collect next.... in order to develop theory as it emerges"*, (p.45).

This research is conducted within the conceptual framework that tangible products evoke emotional reactions in customers (including delight) during their evaluation. To make explicit the focus of this research the following statement is made based on this framework;

This research concerns itself with identifying the antecedents and nature of customer delight reactions during the evaluation of tangible products.

It is important to note that case boundaries were not specified prior to the start of the data collection. An initial case was chosen as the first setting for data collection in the exploratory stages of the research. Sub-cases were then identified as theory was generated and the research progressed to the descriptive stage. The contexts chosen for the research are to be outlined in detail in Chapters 4 and 5. The initial case was chosen on the basis of product category and a setting previously neglected in customer satisfaction research. Despite this research being conducted in collaboration with a major vehicle manufacturer, and the obvious bias that results, the selection of vehicle evaluation as a case is appropriate in light of the research objectives. Technical products have been selected as the subject of prior research

³ N.B. - Their parameters reflect their organisational research.

into positive customer reactions on grounds that higher involvement levels are exhibited by customers in this class of products, (Fournier and Mick, 1999). Furthermore the car is often seen as the definitive or prototypical complex technical product, (Clark et al, 1987, Womack et al, 1990, Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, and Ludvigsen, 1996) and is often used as such in the empirical investigation of customer satisfaction and other consumption phenomena (Westbrook, 1987, Westbrook and Oliver, 1991, Oliver, 1992, Oliver and Mano, 1993 and Oliver and Westbrook, 1993). Therefore the product category of cars was selected because it offered the possibility to collect diverse delight reactions whilst being of obvious benefit to the collaborating organisation. It was also assumed that the findings from this case would be applicable to the evaluation of other complex products. Investigating the evaluation of cars also allowed direct comparison with prior research into satisfaction responses and their theoretical modelling, (e.g. Westbrook, 1987, Westbrook and Oliver, 1991, Oliver, 1992, Oliver and Mano, 1993, Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, Oliver et al 1997, Rust and Oliver, 2000).

One of the basic assumptions of the existing theories of customer delight and satisfaction is that these are post-purchase reactions (see Oliver et al, 1997 and Rust and Oliver, 2000). In an endeavour to investigate the diversity of customer delight reactions, and with research question 3 specifically in mind, a pre-purchase setting was deemed appropriate for study. The case selected for the research was therefore the *'pre-purchase evaluation of cars by potential customers'*.

After the initial exploration of the case the emergent theory dictated the investigation of further associated cases or sub-cases. These were selected on the basis that they should provide both confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence, thereby facilitating the development of grounded and bounded theory. The search for disconfirming evidence is a key process in the establishment of the validity of Grounded Theory, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Henwood, 1996, and Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The resulting Case Study structure involved the exploration of the general case - pre-purchase evaluation of cars by potential customers - before the descriptive stage of the research considered the two sub-cases - static car evaluation and dynamic car evaluation. This research strategy allowed triangulation to occur through the use of multiple-methods to study the phenomenon of interest in distinct settings that together represent the real world pre-purchase situation. Triangulation is another commonly used mechanism for enhancing the validity and credibility of phenomenological research (Robson, 1993).

A Case Study approach has been selected as the most appropriate research strategy for meeting the Exploratory and Descriptive aims of the enquiry.

3.3 The selection of methods

Case Study research is typified by the use of multiple methods, both qualitative and quantitative, in the uncovering of in-depth case-specific insights (Robson, 1993 and Miles and Huberman, 1984). These methods are specifically designed and deployed to capture both qualitative and quantitative data from multiple perspectives to increase the reliability of the insights gained. When studying organisational and human cases the methods traditionally used are interviews, observational studies and document analysis, (Robson, 1993). The use of these methods in tandem allows the researcher to build up a richly textured pool of data from which to generate theory and stimulate the next round of data collection (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Easterby-Smith et al, 1991 and Miles and Huberman, 1984). This research adopts this multi-

method, multi-viewpoint approach to researching cases. However, the nature of the case to be investigated here, as described in the previous section, is somewhat atypical and as such these three methods cannot be simply taken off the shelf and blindly applied. The investigation of cases in this research incorporates interview and observational methods specifically tailored to the investigation of customer delight reactions. However document analysis is rejected as an appropriate means of capturing delight reactions. Instead a self-report diary method is designed and used to capture customer's subjective delight reactions to products. This method addresses the limitations inherent in the interview and observation methods. Observation provides no scope to uncover the internal subjective reactions of customers, other than through inference from observable behaviours⁴. Interviews are limited by themselves since they impinge on the realism of the situation being investigated. In contrast the diary method allows respondents to record their internal subjective reactions⁵ to products without the interference of a researcher interjecting with questions. Therefore the Observation and Interview methods have been supplemented here with a self-report diary method that provides a comparatively naturalistic means of uncovering the cognitions and affects associated with delight reactions, which can be reported by respondents as, or immediately after, they happen.

The detailed design of these methods and their deployment is described in Chapters 4 and 5. The next section discusses the implications of previous research that have been heeded in the design of these methods, whilst the consideration of validity, rigour and generalisability in their deployment is outlined in the subsequent sections.

Interviews, Observation, Questionnaires and Diary methods have been selected as suitable methods to be used in tandem to uncover the diversity of customer delight reactions from multiple viewpoints.

Document analysis has been identified as unsuitable for the collection of data on customer delight reactions.

3.3.1 Implications for the design and deployment of the research methods

The multiple methods selected for use in this case study research have been designed and deployed with reference to the implications of previous emotion research. This section provides a summary of the methods used to study emotions in the past, and highlights the methodological implications for this research.

A great deal of research has been conducted into the expression of non-verbal behaviour⁶ and its use as an indicator for different emotion types (Plutchik, 1980, Izard, 1972 And Ekman and Friesen, 1969). The general consensus is that non-verbal behaviour is important in both the human and animal world for the communication of emotion states, but that it can sometimes contradict other simultaneous expressions of emotion. Ekman and Friesen, (1969) found that non-verbal behaviours of the same type can often be observed in quite distinct emotional reactions. This suggests that non-verbal behaviour, despite being an important indicator, should not be used as a lone indicator of a specific emotion type (Plutchik, 1980). This implication needs to be remembered when identifying delight reactions

⁴ It can address research questions 5 and 8 but not questions 6 and 7.

⁵ Such as their thoughts and feelings thereby addressing research questions 6 and 7.

⁶ E.g. posture, facial expression - generally what is now called body language.

using observation methods. Ekman et al's findings suggest that overt behavioural expressions of a delight reaction must be backed up by other means. As such during the use of observational methods in this research, non-verbal behavioural indicators of delight are supplemented with additional indicators including the comments and vocalisations of customers. In observations of customer delight reactions the following prototype indicators, (as identified by Bridges, 1932) will be used;

Free as against restrained movements, open eyes and facial expression forming smiles, approach movement, audible inspirations, quickened breath, soft low pitched vocalisations, rhythmic arm and leg movements, prolonged attention to object of interest, (Bridges, 1932).

When interviewing and using diary methods other implications must be considered. The body contains homeostatic systems designed to manage states of arousal such as excitement, panic, and delight. Despite the incorporation of customer delight into cumulative theories of satisfaction most psychologists view emotional reactions as acute or short-lived by definition (Reber and Reber, 2001). The existence of these homeostatic systems, designed to regulate arousal, implies that anybody claiming retention of emotional states, such as delight, is actually referring to memories of arousal. Evidence has been found for the ability of these memories of emotion to trigger emotional reactions themselves, (Levine, 1997) but this means that researchers measuring emotions via self-report mechanisms⁷ are actually measuring the memory of these emotions, rather than the emotions themselves. The exception would be when the measurement instrument is deployed at the time the emotional reaction is experienced by the respondent. This is common when measuring emotions using physiological indicators, but not in the use of self-report mechanisms. Customers self-reporting emotions must be assumed to be doing so on the basis of memory (Rust and Oliver, 2000). The implication is that to understand delight you have to use a methodology that captures it as it happens, or after the shortest possible delay. Taking this implication into consideration observational methods are deployed in natural settings to capture delight reactions as they happen, self-report diaries are deployed in such a way that respondents complete them immediately after the experience of delight, and interviews are conducted during the evaluation of products.

3.3.2 Previous methodologies used to study emotions

The multiple methods used in this Case Study research draw on the ways emotions have been identified and investigated in the past. Emotions have traditionally been researched in one of four ways.

Self-reports of subjective feelings⁸

Emotion research by self-report mechanism typically involves participants rating their current emotional state according to a battery of questionnaire items. These items tend to have been defined by relatively small numbers of 'experts' on the basis of their theoretical propositions. Plutchik, (1980) cites emotion scales developed on the basis of the opinion of 'ten clinical psychologists', (p. 215) 'five clinical psychologists', (p. 210) and many scales based on a single researcher '*picking*' items. This approach to measuring emotions is not so much self-report as self-rating. Multiple scales have been developed and validated clinically and on student populations⁹. This approach

⁷ Such as the use of DES-II scales by Oliver et al, (1997).

⁸ Useful only with adult human participants, (Plutchik, 1980).

⁹ E.g. MAS manifest anxiety scale, POMS profile of mood states, MAACL multiple affective adjective check list, EPI emotions profile index, (Plutchik, 1980).

has identified that measured emotions are relatively stable in terms of their self-reporting, and as such self-report is a valid approach to measuring affective states (Plutchik, 1980, p.218). However these approaches do not capture participants' descriptions of their emotional states, just their agreement or rating of themselves according to theoretically derived and researcher-selected terms. Using self-report methods that incorporate numerical ratio scales is essentially reification when parametric statistical analysis is applied to the data collected¹⁰. To avoid the pitfalls of reification, self-report methods are used in this research primarily to capture qualitative data. When numerical scales are used the data collected is not used for measurement and statistical correlation but only for classification and coding purposes. Numerical self-report items are treated as ordinal scales rather than ratio scales in this research.

*Behaviour Rating*¹¹ - where emotions are judged and rated by a researcher on the basis of observed behaviour

Behavioural Product Rating - where emotions are judged and rated by a researcher on the basis of the product that results from emotional behaviour (e.g., handwriting, drawings).

Both the second and third approaches to measuring emotions rely on the ability of expert observers to *'identify the presence of certain classes of behaviour assumed to reflect emotions'* or *'to make an inference about the presence of emotions without necessarily specifying what behaviour is being observed'* (Plutchik, 1980, p.219). Inter-rater reliability is therefore critical in all such behaviour ratings. In humans the study of emotions in clinical settings has led to a predominance of behaviour scales for the study of anxiety, depression and other abnormal clinical conditions. Plutchik, (1980) fails to mention, and this author is unaware of, any such behavioural scales used to assess positive emotions in adult humans. However such scales have been developed in the study of infant and lower animal behaviour;

- *In school children* - Activity level, rhythmicity, approach-withdrawal, adaptability, intensity, responsiveness, quality of mood, distractibility and attention span. (Birch et al, 1962)
- *In a colony of 25 chimpanzees*
Affective system - touch, cling, hold out hand, approach, silent pout, groom, embrace, pant, mount.
Excitement system - squat-bobbing, rapid 'ohoh', rising hoot, upsway. (Van Hoof, 1973)
- *Delight in 62 Canadian orphans* (Bridges, 1932)

As has been described above, this research incorporates the use of behavioural indicators based on these rating scales, in both observation and interview methods. In both cases indicators are used simply to identify customer delight reactions and are supplemented with other indicators where possible.

Physiological recording - where emotions are judged and rated on the basis of recorded physiological changes in the body.

¹⁰ Treating something intangible like an emotional experience as if it exists tangibly and can be measured as such. An example of this might be when CSM analysis reports a significant shift in mean customer satisfaction scores as a result of an organisational initiative (Rosenberg, 1996, Woodruff, 1997).

¹¹ Useful with adults, children and lower animals, (Plutchik, 1980).

This means of identifying and measuring the intensity of emotions requires the use of separate measures such as self-report or observation. The methods used measure physiological levels of generalised stress and arousal that, on their own, cannot distinguish between emotion types (Plutchik, 1980). Many of the physiological changes that can be measured occur to the same degree in multiple emotions both positive and negative. Measures that have been used include;

- Galvionic Skin Response (the electroconductivity of the skin)
- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- Respiration rate, depth and pattern
- Skin temperature
- Pupillary response
- Salivary activity
- Gastrointestinal motility
- Blood levels of sugar, hormones and metabolites
- Metabolic rate
- Muscle tension
- Tremor
- Eye blink and movement

These means of measuring emotions are based upon the demonstrated importance of the body's involuntary response to emotions generated by survival relevant stimuli, (Plutchik, 1980). The area of the brain responsible for mediating the body's response to such stimuli has been identified as the Amygdala, which does so via the sympathetic nervous system and the secretion of hormones (Rolls, 2001). The resulting physiological changes in the body can be objectively measured to identify the presence and intensity of an emotional response. For example, the lie detector test measures Galvionic Skin Response, heart rate and body temperature to detect the involuntary effects of adrenaline on the body resulting from the stress and nervousness assumed to be experienced by people when they tell a lie. This approach has also been used to investigate the orienting response seen in animals' reactions to the presentation of an unexpected stimulus, where heart rate has been shown to decelerate in response to novelty, and increase in defensive responses such as anxiety and fear, (Graham, 1992). Heart rate has also been demonstrated to increase relative to the intensity of emotional response and to a greater degree in positive emotional reactions than in negative reactions, (Lang et al, 1993). Another observable indicator commonly used to assess internal states has been pupillary dilation (see Steinhauer and Hakerem, 1992 for a review). The assertion that positive affect is characterised by dilation of the pupils whilst negative affect is characterised by their contraction is a major controversy in this field, (Steinhauer and Hakerem, 1992).

This physiological approach to identifying and measuring emotions is deemed inappropriate for this research. Firstly, on its own, this approach cannot distinguish delight from other customer reactions. Secondly, the measurement equipment required in such methods are too invasive for the study of customer delight in naturalistic settings. These methods are a luxury in the laboratory, but in field research their poor power of discrimination is amplified by their cumbersome nature.

The following implications of previous research have been accounted for in the methodological design:

- *Self-reported emotions are reliable.*
- *To avoid reification, numerical measures of emotion must be treated as ordinal scales for coding purposes only.*
- *Emotional experiences are controlled by homeostatic process so self-report methods capture the memory of emotions unless deployed concurrent with the emotional experience.*
- *The same observable behaviours accompany distinct emotion types so behavioural indicators of emotion must be supplemented with other indicators.*

3.4 Benefits and Limitations of the Methodological Approach

3.4.1 What is the research designed to achieve?

Whilst Positivist research is typically used to establish objective facts and establish causal relationships, this Phenomenological enquiry seeks to arrive at a grounded understanding of a subjective phenomenon - customer delight. The research aims to provide insights that can be tested in further research and offer a basis of comparison with existing theory. The research focuses on the perspective of the customer experiencing delight rather than that of practitioners trying to achieve it or demonstrate its worth. Correspondingly this research does not aim to establish a complete theory of customer delight but rather seeks to deliver a descriptive theory of this phenomenon in specific real-world consumption contexts. The emphasis is on uncovering the diversity and nature of customer delight and not the effects of potential mediating variables. The research strives to uncover new insights and generate theory based on empirical observations. Existing theory is used as a basis for comparison but is not empirically tested.

3.4.2 Questions of validity

Case Study research, and other phenomenological approaches, are often criticised by positivists on grounds of the non-repeatability of methods, the subjectivity of findings, and the inability to generalise from resulting theory. Although many new paradigm researchers argue that phenomenological social enquiry should not be judged by the restrictive criteria of the scientific method adhered to in the physical sciences, (e.g. Silverman, 1993, Reason and Rowan, 1981, Yin, 1994) the majority are aware that certain standards must be met. The emphasis, particularly in qualitative methodologies, is on the achievement of credibility and reliability whilst adopting a realist approach to validity (Silverman, 1993 and Hammersley, 1996). Validity, in these terms, is identified as the confidence we have in our knowledge, not our certainty in it, and it must be recognised that our accounts of knowledge are representations of reality, not reproductions of it (Hammersley, 1996). In fact, qualitative research methods have been labelled as more valid than quantitative methods since they allow the researcher to stay grounded in the real world and encourage a closer fit between resulting theory and the collection of unfiltered data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). Yin identifies three forms of validity relevant to exploratory and descriptive research - Construct validity, External validity and Reliability - and the tactics available for their achievement (Yin, 1994). Construct validity concerns the degree of confidence we have that the phenomenon of interest has been appropriately measured or studied. Construct validity can be enhanced by

using multiple sources of evidence, the establishment of a chain of evidence, and the use of multiple informants for the review of data collected (Yin, 1994). External validity concerns the degree of confidence we have that findings can be generalised beyond the immediate case. External validity can be enhanced by using replication in the deployment of methods, adopting an analytical rather than statistical basis of generalisation (Yin, 1994), and the search for disconfirmatory evidence to bound the resultant knowledge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 and Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Reliability concerns our confidence that the research and its findings are repeatable. The reliability of Case Study research can be enhanced by ensuring the transparency of methods and analysis so that they can be operationalised and repeated, (Yin, 1984), replication of data collection from the same case, and the use of multiple researchers in the study. The following section outlines the strategies adopted by the author to enhance the validity of his research and its findings.

3.4.3 Methodological consideration of validity

The Case Study research described in this thesis has adopted the following strategies to increase its validity. Firstly, and most fundamentally, the methods used in this research were designed to study the naturalistic occurrence of customer delight in real-world consumption settings, and not to study the phenomenon under controlled 'laboratory' conditions. Data were also collected during the naturalistic occurrence of delight reactions, rather than by collecting respondents' memories of it. Furthermore, the methods were designed to uncover the customer's perspective of delight rather than the practitioner's. As such the data collected was not restrained by prior theoretical prescriptions nor the limitations of human memory. The detail of how these goals were achieved are presented in the detailed description of the methods, presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The research has also used multiple researchers both to collect and analyse data and to select delight reactions for analysis. The same case was also sampled from over time using similar and dissimilar methods. In an effort to enhance the repeatability of the research effort has been made to make explicit both the methods used to collect data and those used to analyse and interpret it.

Triangulation was designed into the case study from the start. Triangulation by method was achieved by using Observation, Interview and Self-report mechanisms to study the same phenomenon of interest in the same setting. Triangulation by data was achieved by studying the same phenomena in different settings. Triangulation via investigator was achieved by using multiple researchers to collect and interpret data. Finally theoretical triangulation was achieved in the analysis of the data collected by viewing it through different 'lenses' and ensuring multiple interpretations were reached.

In addition to the process of triangulation, the strategy of theoretical or purposeful sampling was followed to enhance the validity of the research findings and to facilitate their bounding. Proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and reiterated by others (e.g. Miles and Huberman, 1984, Huberman and Miles, 2002), this process dictates that emergent theory guides the next iteration of data collection and analysis. Critical to the establishment of validity under this strategy is the search not only for confirmatory evidence but also the deliberate seeking of disconfirmatory evidence. In this research the case studied was first explored using multiple methods prior to a more in-depth descriptive study. During this descriptive phase of the research the case was divided into sub-cases on a purposeful basis with the aim of collecting both confirmatory evidence from a similar setting and disconfirmatory evidence from a dissimilar setting. Further to this effort, the purposeful sampling approach dictated the

choice of research participants which were selected to maximise the diversity of delight reactions rather than to statistically represent a larger population.

3.4.4 Questions of generalisation

As a piece of phenomenological research this work, by definition, does not seek to establish the generalisability of its findings. The aim of this study is to produce an in-depth integrated understanding of a subjective phenomenon within a specific consumption context. Sampling procedures used in the inquiry aim to maximise the diversity and depth of data collected not to collect standardised data from statistically representative groups of participants. Statistical generalisation of the resulting theory is therefore impossible on the basis of the methodology used. However, the fact that the research does not aim for statistical generalisation does not mean that the theory it generates cannot be generalised from. Analytic generalisation (Yin, 1994) and Naturalistic generalisation (Stake, 1995) are still possible on the basis of Case Study research. Analytic generalisation is facilitated through the generalisation from specific findings grounded in a case to the level of theory that may be applicable in other cases. Within this theory its applicability is made explicit through the criteria used for the selection of research settings and the subject studied. As such the theory, in itself, allows statements to be made about when and where it might be expected to be applicable. However Analytic generalisation requires the testing of these propositions through further research. In contrast Naturalistic generalisation takes place in the mind of the reader on the basis of the data and interpretations they are presented with. For this process to occur the researcher is required to provide the depth of understanding required for the reader to identify similar settings in which the findings may apply. It is essentially the transparency in the way the research is presented and the provision of raw data prior to interpretation that facilitates this process (Stake, 1995).

In this research the case selected for study was chosen on the grounds that it could be generalised from. It is assumed that the study of the pre-purchase evaluation of cars will produce findings relevant to the evaluation of similar products. As has been described the car is often taken to be the prototypical complex technical product by researchers (e.g. Clark et al, 1987, Womack et al, 1990, Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, and Ludvigsen, 1996) and has often been the subject of customer satisfaction research, (e.g. Westbrook, 1987; Westbrook and Oliver, 1991, Oliver, 1992, Oliver and Mano, 1993, Oliver and Westbrook, 1993, Oliver et al 1997, Rust and Oliver, 2000). The process of qualitative analysis used means that theory generation takes place at the level of cognitive and affective components of the delight reaction rather than at the level of context-specific data. It is assumed that these processes occur in other consumption settings and their applicability is commented upon allowing their generalisability to be tested by future research.

3.5 Assumptions

The methodology adopted during the research is subject to the assumptions made by the researcher when defining what is researched. This section presents three forms of assumption made by the author; his ontological stance, his definition of the terms he uses and the theoretical framework within which the data are analysed.

3.5.1 Ontology

The following ontological statements make explicit the belief system upon which this research is based. It is assumed that;

- emotional reactions are patterns of cognitive, affective and behavioural activity resulting from the appraisal of stimuli (Arnold, 1960, Plutchik, 1980, Lazarus, 1982, Zajonc, 1984, and Bagozzi et al, 1999)
- delight is a positively valenced uni-dimensional emotion (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991)
- delight is an internal subjective state consciously experienced by an individual
- delight has both cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling) components (Lazarus, 1982, Zajonc, 1984)
- the experience of an emotion can be attributed to a specific stimulus (Arnold, 1960)
- delight has psychological consequences (not limited to the behaviours deemed important by practitioners such as word of mouth recommendation, intention and loyalty, Oliver et al, 1997).

3.5.2. Definitions

The most obvious term that should be defined in a thesis studying 'delight' is the word itself. The author refers the reader to the ontological statements made above. It is one of the principle aims of this research to define 'delight' in contexts relevant to the consumption of tangible products. The principle contribution of this study is therefore to be a descriptive model of customer-defined 'delight' that can be acted upon by practitioners. So, whilst this is not the place to define 'delight' itself, it is important to make explicit the terms that will be used to model this concept, together with those that bound the context within which it is researched. These terms, as they are used in this thesis, are defined overleaf;

- *emotion*

A valenced pattern of cognitive, affective and behavioural activity resulting from the appraisal of a stimulus.

Adapted from Reber and Reber, (2001) and Arnold, (1960).

- *affect*

Any experienced feeling or mood state resulting from conscious, un-conscious or pre-conscious mental processes.

A neuro-biological definition as discussed in Plutchik, (1980) and Reber and Reber, (2001). In contrast to the Concise Oxford Dictionary definition of the term; "*emotion or desire as influencing behaviour*" (Allen, 1992).

- *cognition*

Any acquisition of knowledge via conscious, un-conscious or pre-conscious mental activity.

Adapted from Reber and Reber, (2001). This includes; Sensation, attention, perception, memory, learning. Similar to Lazarus' inclusive conceptualisation, (see Lazarus, 1982), and the Concise Oxford Dictionary definition of the term. (Allen, 1992).

- behaviour

The way individuals or groups act or conduct themselves.

Derived from the Concise Oxford Dictionary definition of the term, (Allen, 1992).

- stimulus

Any antecedent of cognitions, affects and behaviours sensed by an organism.

Derived from Reber and Reber, (2001).

- product

Any tangible component of an organisation's total offering as perceived by existing, potential and non- customers.

Many definitions of products exist, and the author does not seek to enter into this debate. The definition used aims to emphasise the tangible nature of products. As such a product is any object that a person can stub her toe on whilst recognising it as organisationally-sourced. This is narrower than Kotler's definition of a the product "*as anything offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption*", (Kotler et al, 1999) because only tangibles are included. Furthermore, it cuts across the traditional marketing model of the core, actual and augmented product because products defined here, and as perceived by the customer, can be core benefits, actual designed tangibles or the result of their supporting intangible augmentation.

- customer

Any person that has the opportunity to perceive an organisational offering including those that do, or have the potential to, purchase or use that offering.

Customers are made up of owners and users of tangible products and the recipients of intangible services. Potential customers are those people that have the opportunity to evaluate these offerings prior to their acquisition. In this thesis potential customers used as research participants include people within the market for the products concerned, who may or may not have owned the product but had the potential to do so.

- evaluation

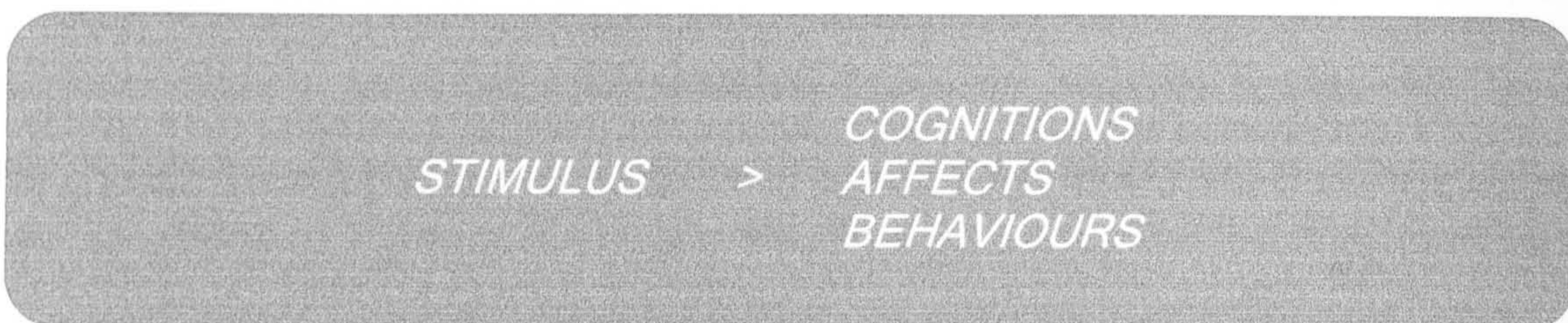
Any appraisal of an organisational offering resulting in a judgement of quality, interest or favourableness.

In this thesis an evaluation is the appraisal of a product stimulus that leads to a customer reaction, be it positive, negative or indifferent. The product may be present

or absent, and as such the appraisal of both the experience and memory of products constitutes evaluation.

3.5.3 Framework for analysis

The presentation of a model of delight during product evaluation constitutes the development of a context-specific theory of the phenomenon, and is the overriding aim of this inquiry. As such the research described in this thesis is exploratory, descriptive, inductive and theory-generating. The generation and development of theory is inextricably linked to the ongoing analysis of the data as it is collected. However, this analysis needs a framework within which to commence. The reader is again referred to the ontological statements above. The framework for analysis presented below represents a distillation of this ontology, allowing the open generation and development of theory throughout the research process. This initial theoretical prologue is derived from those basic assumptions made in the literature which the author accepts as givens. These are the assumptions of the Cognitive Theories of emotion that propose that emotions are the result of stimulus appraisal, (see Arnold, 1960 and Lazarus et al 1970) and the assumptions of the Psychoevolutionary School, that the resulting emotion has behavioural, affective and cognitive components (Plutchik, 1980).



The framework demonstrates impartiality in terms of the sequence debate (or non-entry into it). The framework takes no stance on either side of this debate. In agreement with the arguments of Fournier and Mick, (1999) and Woodruffe, (1996) the framework explicitly excludes any temporal separation of the constituents of delight. This is not a rejection of the idea that different sequences of cognition, affect and behaviour occur, rather it is an assumption that their definitive sequencing is at worst empirically and methodologically impossible, and at best not necessary in the descriptive and actionable modelling of delight for practitioners. The framework also removes the traditional psychoevolutionary caveat applied to the study of emotion within Psychology. It is not assumed that the experience of emotion in consumption situations has to have a survival function, nor must it result from the appraisal of a survival relevant stimulus.

This theoretical prologue is therefore used to guide the collection of data, its analysis and the resulting theoretical development. In the contexts researched here the stimulus is assumed to always be a marketing object (e.g., product, attribute, service, brand, experience, etc.). Other antecedents of delight are not explicitly excluded and the components of the reaction are assumed to be co-occurring, conscious, unconscious and pre-conscious constructs that can be categorised as either cognitive, affective or behavioural. Since the specific emotion studied is 'delight' it is assumed that these constructs are positively valenced, even overtly so, yet their nature is defined by research participants rather than as a result of the author's theoretical standpoint. The initial framework is a prologue to theory and does not pre-define the nature of either the stimuli nor their consequences. It does however categorise these consequences as cognitions, affects and behaviours.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodological approach that the author has adopted to address the research questions framed in Chapter 2. The author's philosophical stance, Phenomenology, has been made explicit and his choice of research strategy has been made based on its aims. This chapter then explained how these philosophies translated into the methodological approach taken. An overview of the resultant multi-method Case Study approach has been provided and justified by comparison with alternative methodologies. The progression of the research from an initial exploration of the case to the detailed description of two sub-cases has been explained in terms of the search for confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence for the emergent theory. The presentation of the selected methodology included the consideration of validity and previous research findings in its design, and a discussion of its advantages and limitations. The achievement of triangulation in the design of the Case Study was discussed in terms of the use of multiple methods, data sources, researchers and interpretive perspectives. The chapter concluded by presenting the assumptions made by the author in the form of a theoretical prologue to be used to guide the research and definitions of its constituents.

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Chapter 4

Stage One of the research - The Exploratory Pilot Study

Aim

To describe the first stage of the research and to discuss the resulting findings through the initial development of theory.

4.0 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 described the basis upon which the case was selected for the research, and summarised the overall methodological approach taken to investigate it. This chapter represents the application of this methodology in the exploration of this case and describes how the research was carried out. The findings generated as a result of this exploration of the case then influenced methods used in the second Descriptive phase of the research, which will be described in Chapters 5 and 6.

This chapter describes the application of the selected methodology in Stage One of the research; the Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS). The EPS is a preliminary multi-method investigation of the case selected for the research - *'pre-purchase evaluation of cars by potential customers'* and this chapter presents it in its entirety. The methods used are described and the methodological consideration of validity is demonstrated. The data collected is summarised and the methods of analysis are presented. Initial findings are then reported and framed in terms of the existing literature. This chapter concludes by presenting the first steps taken in the induction of a descriptive theory of customer delight.

Chapter 5 demonstrates how the EPS and its findings influenced the design of the main Descriptive Study (DS). The DS is presented over Chapters 5 and 6, with the latter being devoted to the presentation of the qualitative analysis of the data it generated. Chapter 7 brings the EPS and DS together through a full discussion of the research findings in relation to the existing literature on customer delight.

4.1 Overview of the approach used to study customer delight during the EPS and DS

4.1.1 Multiple perspectives and triangulation

In both the EPS and DS the objective was to capture the customer's perspective of their evaluation of real products, and specifically to unearth the nature of these customers' delight reactions. As the previous chapter outlined, the research uses a theoretical prologue proposing that delight is an emotional reaction to a stimulus comprising affective, behavioural and cognitive components. Therefore, this research strives to investigate the nature and diversity of delight reactions, their components and their antecedents. To achieve this aim the strategy adopted was to explore the naturalistic evaluation of cars by potential customers from multiple perspectives. This translated into an approach that sampled from the case using different methods, different researchers and across distinct situations in which vehicle evaluation could take place. Two considerations were bourn in mind during the methodological design and execution of the EPS and DS that comprise this Case Study. Firstly, the process of theoretical or purposeful sampling meant that the study grew organically, its

direction being determined by new theory as it developed, and the quest for confirmatory and dis-confirmatory evidence. Exploration of the case generated data, which in turn started the process of theory generation, stimulating the collection of further data in new ways and contexts. Secondly, the principle of triangulation was adopted to enhance the credibility and validity of the Case Study and its findings, guiding the selection of methods, data sources and contexts so that the case was investigated from multiple viewpoints.

Throughout the exploratory phases of the research, adherence to the two principles outlined above resulted in the deployment of the following methods, presented here chronologically;

- *4 semi-structured interviews with car dealers*
To investigate the car buying process
Triangulation via researcher (2) and data source (UK and Sweden)
- *1 Group interview with 4 Spanish car owners*
To investigate car choice and ownership
Triangulation via context (owners) and data source (Spain)
- *Motorshow Vehicle Observation (MVO)*
To capture naturalistic customer vehicle evaluation behaviour, delight reactions and their antecedents in multiple cars
Triangulation via researcher (5) and product (32 cars)
- *Motorshow Customer Observation (MCO)*
To capture naturalistic customer vehicle evaluation, delight reactions and their antecedents in a single car
Triangulation via method and researcher (2)

These four methods constitute a pilot study and serve an exploratory research purpose. They are referred to in this thesis as the EPS and will be described in detail in the next sections. These methods were deployed to gain a triangulated understanding of the contexts that made up the case being studied and to capture the first insights into customer delight reactions and their antecedents in cars within these contexts. The EPS generated initial findings and theoretical propositions that steered the design and deployment of the descriptive phase of the Case Study, described in Chapter 5.

4.1.2 Sampling

The EPS adopted a theoretical or purposeful sampling approach to identify appropriate ways to explore the case. This approach was also used to select the research participants for the methods used, and the contexts to be investigated. As outlined in the previous chapter, the goal of this phenomenological research is not to identify universal facts and theories about customer delight by generalising from statistically representative samples. Instead this research aims to contribute to our understanding of the nature and diversity of customer delight reactions. The sampling procedures used in the selection of research contexts and participants generally followed two criteria. Firstly, the aim was to capture large amounts of qualitative information from relatively small numbers of participants, to provide depth of insight without data-overload. Secondly the contexts researched and the respondents chosen were selected to maximise the diversity of the delight reactions captured, rather than to control variables. Instead of using statistically representative large or random samples, these criteria specify the use of medium sized samples of

participants selected on a purposeful basis¹. Observation methods were deployed in contexts selected to maximise the number of vehicles being evaluated (although other methods examined the evaluation of single vehicles in depth) or used very different vehicle types as the basis of participants' evaluations. In the EPS participants were not pre-selected for the observational research. Instead data was collected on every motorshow visitor that evaluated a particular car within a period of time. Those judged to exhibit a delight reaction were analysed further according to the aims of the research. The aim of studying the diversity of delight logically suggests that the diversity of the research participants themselves should also be maximised. During the DS, a purposeful sampling approach selected participants on the basis of maximising variations in age, interest in the product, sex and background to generate diverse convenience samples.

4.2 Exploratory Pilot Study

Chapter two presented the current industrial conceptualisation of product quality and its impact on customer satisfaction, in the form of the Kano Model of Product Quality (Kano, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998, Matzler et al, 1996, Shen et al, 2000). This theory of product quality proposes that there are two ways in which a product such as a car could delight customers during its evaluation; by providing exceptional levels of the attributes customers can identify they want in that class of product, and by providing the innovative features that customers never knew they needed. It is suggested that the product's provision of the unexpected in these two ways can surprise, excite and delight customers. Also presented in Chapter 2 were the theoretical models of delight as an emotion, both within and outside of consumption settings. The pinnacle of theoretical development within the fields of Psychology and Marketing Research is the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory of Customer Satisfaction and Delight, a theory that sits neatly with Kano's Model. This theory specifies the nature of the Cognitive (Expectation Congruency), Affective (Surprise and Pleasure or Joy and Arousal), and Behavioural (Intention, WOM) components of the delight reactions that the appraisal of stimuli (product and service attributes) can evoke in customers (Oliver et al, 1997).

One objective of the Exploratory stage of this case study was to assess the appropriateness of the theories that have been proposed and supported by positivist research, as described above. The start point of this phenomenological enquiry was therefore to try and capture this process of products evoking delight reactions as they occurred in naturalistic settings. Throughout the EPS, 'delight' remained the phenomenon of interest. However the word 'delight' is merely a construct of our language and this fact had to be taken into consideration when designing the methods used to study the phenomena we label with it. One of the assumptions of this research is that it is the extreme positive nature of delight reactions that makes them desirable from both the practitioner's and the customer's perspective. The EPS uses both interview and observation methods and the sections below explain the methodological effort made to ensure 'delight' is one of the phenomena being captured.

During the interviews used in this stage of the research, 'delight' was taken to be the prototypical word used by English-speakers to describe the phenomena being investigated. Individual and group interviews included specific questioning using the word 'delight', but understanding delight was not their primary aim. Instead the interviews were designed to familiarise the author with the consumption context being

¹ See Miles and Huberman, 1984, Strauss, 1987, and Straus and Corbin for an introduction to theoretical or purposeful sampling and the appropriateness of this approach in case study research.

studied. The observational methods used (MVO and MCO) rely on observable and audible indicators to identify the occurrence of 'delight' during a person's interaction with a product. As such these methods were designed to collect data on observable behaviours associated with extreme positive reactions to cars, and the stimuli that evoke these reactions. The MVO and MCO methods were specifically designed so that data were collected during the customer's evaluation of vehicles. This allowed observers to use both verbal reports and observed behaviour as indicators for extreme positive reactions. The same methodological constraint must be recognised in all verbal reports of 'delight' relayed in this thesis. Self-report methods used in the DS were designed to capture qualitative information on the antecedents and experience of delight, but they all required the use of this word to introduce the research to participants. The reader is reminded that the subject of this research does not tangibly exist and that the subjective nature of delight has to be acknowledged and accepted (in the form of the above constraints on the methodology) if it is to be meaningfully studied.

As alluded to above, careful attention has been paid when designing the methods used in the EPS (and the DS) to ensure that they capture 'delight' at the moment, or as soon as possible after, it is experienced by the participant. This has been done to ensure that data is collected about the experience of delight itself, rather than about the memory of it (this methodological requirement has been recognised by Rust and Oliver, 2000 and was originally proposed by Levine, 1997). The author will come back to the consideration of this constraint as each method is introduced through the thesis. Where discussed in individual and group interviews, delight reactions must be considered to have been relayed from memory.

4.2.1 EPS research questions

The EPS therefore started with the following research questions in mind;

- *How do people evaluate cars?*
- *Does delight occur in this situation?*
- *If it occurs, what does this reaction look like? (i.e., what are the affective, behavioural and cognitive components of delight reactions to cars?)*
- *Do delighter features exist in cars? (i.e., what are the antecedent stimuli of delight?)*

The EPS used three distinct methods to investigate the nature of customer delight and its antecedents during the evaluation of cars. This multi-viewpoint approach provided the author's first empirical contact with the phenomena being studied. Existing theoretical stances became the basis of comparison for the insights gained and this process resulted in the reframing and specifying of the research questions to be addressed in the DS.

4.3 Interviews

Five semi-structured interviews were the first methods deployed, and were designed to familiarise the author with the context of evaluation being studied - *pre-purchase vehicle evaluation*. Implicit in this framing of the case is the fact that this type of vehicle evaluation ends in one of two behavioural outcomes - the person purchases the car or does not. The motivations underlying this research include the notion that delighting customers before they buy a product may make the second of these outcomes more common, either by making the product so appealing that people talk about it, or by directly influencing their behaviour in the purchase environment. However, this research does not try to empirically establish this assumption and its

epistemological stance does not match this research aim. Before this assumption can be tested the reaction itself has to be understood and, as explained in Chapter 3, this is the aim of this enquiry. Pre-purchase evaluation, as framed here, can happen either within the purchase environment or during some other contact a potential customer has with the product. These interviews were designed to provide an understanding of the purchase process, what makes people buy cars, and whether or not delight plays a part in this process. Consumption settings other than the purchase environment were the focus of other methods to be described later. The following sections present the procedures followed for two interview types Car Dealer Interviews and Car Owner Group Interview. The main findings of each, and the implications for the rest of the EPS are discussed together.

4.3.1 Car Dealer Interviews

Procedure

Four car dealers were interviewed, two in the UK (MR and JL) and two in Sweden (LS and KC) in an attempt to gain insights into the car sales process in two distinct European markets. Interviews were conducted by the author with one exception; a Swedish-speaking colleague of the author conducted interview four with car dealer KC. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was guided by the same schedule of questions (presented in the panel overleaf). The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using the questions to prompt discussion. The questions were aimed at capturing the dealer's view of how customers evaluate cars in the purchase environment and how they see customers making decisions there. These interviews were not specifically geared to investigating delight's role in the purchase environment, but aimed to provide general insights into the sales process itself. To ensure that the interviews did not overrun, the interviewees were asked to concentrate on their experiences of selling Car M, a small car all four were currently responsible for selling. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone. Interviews with MR, JL and LS were transcribed by the author. The interview with KC was translated into English by the second researcher mentioned above. Interviews with MR and KC took place within the sales environment whilst those with JL and LS did not. An example interview transcript is presented in Appendix section 1.0. In this example, and in the excerpts presented here, the car dealer's verbatim appears in *italics* whilst car models and manufacturers appear as capitalised abbreviations.

Interviewees

MR was the male dealer principle of a car dealership selling a single make of car in Dunstable, Bedfordshire, UK

JL was a female sales person responsible for selling two makes of car at a single dealership in Winchester, Hampshire, UK.

LS was the male General Manager of the company responsible for the supply of all cars of a single make to dealerships selling that make within the Nordic Market (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Russia, Poland). Part of this role involves setting the specifications of the car sold in this geographical area.

KC was the male dealer principle of a car dealership selling a single make of car in Stockholm, Sweden.

Interview questions

- *Who buys the M?*
- *Who do you think the car is aimed at?*
- *How would you tailor the car to the target customer?*
- *What features clinch/loose the sale?*
- *What do customers focus on in the cars?*
- *Are the customers focusing on specific features, e.g., safety, styling, comfort?*
- *What needs and concerns do your customer's have?*
- *What do you think is important to the customer?*
- *What other vehicles do they consider?*
- *On what basis do they make their vehicle selection?*
- *How do you think customers compare cars?*
- *What extras do customers opt for at what prices?*
- *How much flexibility in purchase price does the customer tend to have?*
- *Do the customers make their own minds up or are they thinking of, or listening to, others? (family, partner, friends)*
- *What do you consider to be the weaknesses of the M?*
- *What features would make the car more saleable?*
- *What features does the perfect b-segment vehicle have?*
- *What delights your customers?*
- *How many customers request a test drive?*
- *Do you believe the car is easier to sell once people have driven it?*
- *How does a test drive change or influence customers' opinions about the car?*
- *What limitations do you think the showroom has?*

4.3.2 Car Owners Group Interview

Procedure

A single group interview was conducted with four Spanish car owners in an attempt to understand how the sales process differed in this particular European market and more particularly how they evaluated the quality of the cars they owned. Four Spanish female car owners studying for post-graduate degrees at Cranfield University were selected as interviewees. Each was the owner of a small Spanish registered car. Their ages ranged from 26 to 34 years and all had been resident in the UK for less than a year. The interview was conducted in English by the author and lasted approximately 60 minutes. As with the car dealer interviews described above, a semi-structured interview process was followed, using the schedule of prompt questions presented overleaf to encourage discussion. These questions were designed to uncover how the interviewees evaluated their cars, what they liked about them and what they would like in their next cars. The interview was recorded using a dictaphone and the tape was reviewed by two researchers. The first researcher produced an electronic text summary of the discussion that had taken place during the interview. The second researcher then reviewed the tape and the text summary together. Points of disagreement and omissions were discussed between the two researchers and a mutually agreed text summary of the group interview was produced. This procedure was required because straight transcription of the discussion was deemed impossible due to the frequent overlapping of several speakers on the interview tape. Excerpts of the interview summary presented below are followed by the initials COGI².

² Car Owners Group Interview

Car Owners Group Interview Questions

- How did you choose your car?
- How do you judge the quality of your car?
- How did the following influence your choice; styling/branding/magazine reviews/the product itself?
- Why did you buy the car you currently own?
- What have you got at the moment in your car that that delights/satisfies you?
- What could they put in your car to delight you?
- What is your attitude towards car salesmen and the way people have to buy cars in Spain?
- Did you test-drive your car before you bought it?
- How does the Spanish climate influence what you want from a car?
- Are there any specific problems caused by the climate in Spain?
- How does the Spanish lifestyle influence what you want from a car?
- What is different about driving in England vs. Spain?
 - speed
 - distances
 - seat belts
 - types of journey

4.3.3 Findings and Discussion

No detailed analysis of the transcripts was conducted due to the exploratory nature of the interviews. Instead they were used, in conjunction with the authors' involvement with a collaborating car manufacturing company and his own experiences, to familiarise the author with the car purchase process. Both car dealers and car owners seemed to paint a similar picture of this process as it occurs across Europe. This section presents the key insights gained in the form of preliminary findings. These can be summarised into the following groups. Each point is illustrated with verbatim taken from the interview transcripts.

1. Customers have often evaluated the product before they arrive at the dealership

It's not fun to go looking for a car to buy, it's not something you enjoy to do. Salesmen are all the same, say that their cars are the best ones. Only go to one or two dealers, as you already have decided roughly which car you want to buy. The boyfriends, on the other hand, want to go to all the showrooms. You would rather test-drive a friend's car, than go to a car dealer to do it. (COGI)

I think it is fair to say most of our customers are repeat really. Between 60 and 70% are repeat. Whether they go out in the market place or not I don't know. Then the others are people that genuinely go out and look at all the models, P the K and so on. And that's where it's crucial, because the fact that they've come in means that they'd be happy, more or less, to have the M, providing it's got all the things, you know....everyone is different but generally those that shop from one make to another are looking at... number one, they've got to like the car and the way it drives etc etc etc...they are very concerned about the consumer offers, the finance packages and things like that. These could swing them to be honest.... What people do generally is create a short list in their own mind. I personally wouldn't put a car on the list that I didn't like. And if you are going to say that people buy based on price, then L would have sold millions of cars and so on, and this is obviously not the case. I think first of all they'll look at the reputation of the car. They pick this up and they've already got this in their mind, they've seen the product so they obviously don't mind the look of it. Then I think it comes down to the dealership the salesman and the consumer offers. Personally that's the process I think people go through. (MR)

Talk a lot to friends and family about which cars they have got and which ones they think are good. (COGI)

Talk to mechanics and technicians you know, as they know a lot about which cars are good. (COGI)

Customers tend to come to the showroom having already judged the car on the basis of styling. The customer will tend to ask third parties for their opinion of the car before purchasing. (JL)

Both dealers and owners suggest that the sales environment is the place that purchase decisions are finally made, but that this is done on the basis of product evaluation that has taken place before they visit a dealer. In Sweden however, some customers have other reasons for not visiting the car dealership;

The relation between the customer and the car dealer.... this is very important... one of the essential factors for sales in Sweden. Some customers don't even go to the show room, but call their car-dealer and trust him to find the right car for him/her. (KC)

2. Customers often focus on features and attributes

Number one is power steering....very very important. They want a sunroof and the rear wash wipe. You'd be better off spending the money on other stuff on that particular car. You know power steering as standard, make sure it's got a sunroof, and a CD player cassette option. (MR)

My car has got a sunroof, which makes the inside of the car look huge. Really like that for a driving in the U.K, but wouldn't have it in Spain, as it would make the car go too hot in summer. (COGI)

The air conditioning is essential. Would not buy a car without it! (COGI)

You can take the radio with you when leaving the car. (But always hides it in the car, anyway). (COGI)

Weight of the car is important, do not want a heavy car, because it is more difficult to manoeuvre. (COGI)

The main priorities for my customers are the design and styling of the car, the ecological friendliness of the car and its economy fuel consumption. (KC)

In that car its got to be air con and power steering. People can get quite excited about these things because they've never had them before. (JL)

When asked what people liked about cars both groups of interviewees mentioned features or specific attributes that are important in cars. This supports the situation as represented in the Kano Model, (Kano, 1995).

3. Customers also often evaluate cars holistically

In my view, all products, all cars, have got to have personality. I think the personality of the car has to appeal to those most likely to buy it. It's a bit obvious really. I think the M has a personality and I think the PATV has a personality. If you say "I want a rugged big 4WD vehicle" you'd consider the PATV because that's its personality. (MR)

You buy the car that's going to suit your lifestyle. One that's got the flexibility to meet all of your needs. (COGI)

Price is not the most important issue, a stylish car to reflect the self- image is more important. The upholstery/ fabric, colours and the overall interior also make a big impact, when the customer evaluates the car. (KC)

I'd say that the person's initial reaction to the car's interior is a good predictor of whether you're going to be successful in selling them the car. (JL)

In addition to the feature-based evaluation evidenced above the interviewees also suggest that car evaluation takes place at a global level. Car dealers seemed to stress the importance of customers' reactions to whole areas of the car as well as their reaction to the individual features and attributes of the car. This situation is not easily explained using the Kano Model.

4. Expectations often play a role in the evaluation process

I think generally people do expect a certain standard of safety and a certain standard of comfort. I think they expect certain standards...you know side impact bars and an air bag. For example if you were to take them off you wouldn't sell the cars. But I don't think they want a second airbag and side air bags. I don't think they need all that. I think there is a certain level of safety that's expected. (MR)

Would rather have an airbag than a glove box. The space is not as important as safety. (COGI)

Reliable. Nice and easy to drive. Enough head room. Comfortable seats. Plenty of boot space, to load things for longer journeys. Good stereo. Safe car. (COGI)

I think it comes down to an individual's expectations based on the class of car they're buying, basically. If they're buying a P and it didn't have ABS that'd be a problem. With an A its border line. People are like "Has it got ABS?", "No.", "Oh I wanted that," but it can be overcome. I think with a M I don't think people expect it. Sure if I said to you its got ABS, electric windows, electric sunroof, air conditioning, central locking - they'd say "bloody hell" but wouldn't want to pay for it. You'd never sell the things. You've got to look at the big picture really, if you're trying to press all the right buttons, you don't want to be giving stuff away if its not expected. (MR)

The customer already knows the car is cheap to own when it comes to fuel consumption. (KC)

In that car its got to be air con and power steering. People can get quite excited about these things because they've never had them before. (JL)

The interviews also seem to support the expectation-based evaluation process represented in the Disconfirmation Model of Customer Satisfaction and Delight (e.g. Oliver et al, 1997). Customers mentioned several features and attributes that they expect in their cars, supporting the idea of Basic features in the Kano Model, and dealers frequently recounted their customers' expectation based approach to choosing a car.

5. Examples of what delights customers about cars

We all want to get on in life, we all want to impress, we all want to be somebody, so we want to drive something that reflects that. It hasn't only got to look like the product. It's got to appeal to people and it's got to make a bit of statement as well. Which is difficult. (MR)

It is easy to drive. (COGI)

The stereo and the speakers. (COGI)

Place to keep coins for parking, water bottle and notebook & pen (on sun-shield). Did not notice these features from the beginning, only after having used the car for a while. (COGI)

Yeah, I've seen people get excited in the showroom usually during the initial moments in the car. Its usually things like the seats or the spaciousness. Sometimes just how easily they can get comfortable. Sometimes people buy the car just because of the visibility and they think its going to be easy for them to drive. (JL)

When asked if anything about their cars delighted them, car owners usually mentioned individual car features or attributes. Car dealers recognised the relevance of delighting customers and reported having seen a delight-like reaction in the showroom.

6. It is difficult to identify what will delight in the future

Difficult to think of anything. A fridge. Radio control on steering wheel (seen in other cars). (COGI)

Difficult to answer. A small table inside the car for long journeys. Being able to move and adjust the backseat. Blinds to block the sun out. Don't want to be seen in the car. Dark windows. A fridge. (COGI)

Styling that will distinguish the M from its competitors, someway of making the car an 'in-thing' that is 'cool' to own. This would make the car appeal to the customers self-image and would be more successful than just trying to sell a really cheap car. (KC)

When car owners were asked if they could identify what would delight them in the future they answered that this was difficult to do, although some were able to suggest things that they had seen elsewhere, or in other cars. Car dealers suggest that distinguishing the car from its competitors would appeal most to their customers. Both types of answer support Kano's concept of the 'delighter' feature as something new or unexpected in the class of product that distinguishes it, (Kano, 1995).

7. Certain car attributes can lose a sale

I think our interiors put people off. I don't think the interiors are ever really that attractive in our cars...I mean the A is dreadful. It looks like that compressed foam...you know that packing foam, that's what it looks like to me. It must cost just as much to make as it does anything else...its bloody awful. People can definitely be put off by the seating...definitely. (MR)

Cars get really hot, you NEED an air conditioner. Wouldn't buy a car without one. (COGI)

Styling is not innovative and exciting enough to distinguish our cars from the competitors and appeal to the target customer. (LS)

The M is not a cheap car in Sweden costing nearly 100,000 SKs. Some Korean cars cost as little as 59,000 SKs. The P has a towing limit of 1,050Kg but in Sweden most caravans weigh 1,250kg. Patterned seat fabric is the first thing people notice in the showroom and loses many sales in Sweden. (LS)

The driving position, seat comfort and seat adjustment are highly important in the showroom because people tend to loose interest if they can't get comfortable quickly. (JL)

Further supporting the expectation-based view of product evaluation implicit in both Disconfirmation and Kano Models were the responses to questions about what would stop people buying the car. Most responses suggest that during evaluation the car may contain features or attributes that do not meet the customers expectations causing them to reject it. Furthermore the absence of expected features can have the same impact.

To summarise, the interviews provided some preliminary insight into the car sales process and seemed to suggest that both car dealers and owners see product features and perceived quality playing central roles in car evaluation, purchases and ownership. Both groups of interviewees considered that evaluation took place on the basis of what was expected and wanted in the car. The interviews also suggest that the absence of some expected features might lead to a customer's immediate rejection of a car, whilst customers were simply pleased to get the things they wanted. The potential implication of this is that negative appraisal could be a strong determinant of product rejection, whilst positive appraisal might be a less powerful determinant of product selection (i.e., bad vehicle attributes could be more powerful than good vehicle attributes). Both dealers and owners cited the positive appraisal of more abstract, emotional and subjective criteria (such as the image of the car and how it matched the customer's lifestyle) as determinants of vehicle selection, and both were able to suggest things that a car could include to delight customers, making them more likely to choose that car. The examples given were most often unique or novel features and exceptional levels of the qualities people desire in cars. It was concluded that Kano's model and the Disconfirmation model could account for the majority of the elements that both owners and dealers saw influencing the appraisal of cars. One aspect that seemed to be salient to all interviewees, and is not accounted for in either model, was a global or holistic type of positive vehicle appraisal. Both models view overall product evaluation to be made up of the individual attribute appraisals they explain. However, interviewees seemed to be suggesting that appraisal might not always occur at the attribute level. Another insight gained was that dealers and owners recognised the fact that very few customers walk through the door if they are not already interested in the car. It is likely that some people are motivated to walk into a car dealership because they have favourably appraised a car beforehand³. This key insight gained from the interviews guided the selection of research contexts for the Observation methods that concluded the EPS. As can be seen the interviews provide relatively little insight into the nature of customer delight. It is to this objective that the EPS now turns.

4.4 Motorshow Observation

The EPS then proceeded with the deployment of two observational methods designed to capture the vehicle evaluation process that interviewees had relayed from memory. The goal was to observe the basis of people's appraisal of cars, as it happened. A suitable setting for the deployment of these observational methods had to provide the opportunity to observe many people's evaluation of cars in a real world context. An initial request to shadow car dealers was rejected on the grounds that the presence of researchers might affect the outcome of the sales encounter, a risk that car dealers were not prepared to take. Instead, a national motorshow was selected as a suitable context within which to observe the diversity of pre-purchase delight reactions and the nature of their antecedents. Motorshow visitors were assumed to be made up of potential customers with a general interest in cars but not actively considering their next purchase and those, interested or not, who were actually

³ Another motivation of course might be the appeal of an intangible such as a sales promotion

considering which car to buy next⁴. This setting did not provide the opportunity to directly observe the car buying process itself. However, it was deemed appropriate on the basis that the sales environment was likely to be only one of many situations in which pre-purchase customer delight might occur. The interviews described above had also suggested that an important part of potential customers pre-purchase evaluation of cars takes place before stepping into a car salesroom. Motorshow stands tend to be similar to car showrooms in terms of their layout and it was assumed that the static evaluation of cars would be similar in each setting. In addition to the absence of any sales transactions, the major difference between the motorshow and the showroom is the density of people in the space. In essence, motorshows are just another form of showroom but with the manufacturer's cars displayed alongside their competitors. Car manufacturers pay millions of £'s to exhibit at these events and see them as a huge opportunity to promote their cars to potential customers and opinion leaders. If a car can appeal in this highly competitive arena it may be written about in the newspapers and might even be selected by buyers that are motivated to visit a dealer at a later date.

4.4.1 Methodological considerations

In terms of the methodological approach, motorshows offered some distinct advantages for conducting observational research. This setting provided both the opportunity to capture the evaluation of multiple manufacturer's cars and the possibility to reduce the conspicuousness of researchers, who could pose as motorshow visitors themselves. It was assumed that within the hub-bub of a motorshow it should be possible to collect in-depth qualitative data about multiple naturalistic product evaluations. The collaborating company were exhibiting at the motorshow selected thus providing the opportunity to use a camera system to film many visitors' evaluations of a single car. The potential risks of deploying a camera on one of many cars on a motorshow stand far outweighed the risks of using the same approach in a dealer's showroom. The collaborating company's Stand Staff played two roles in the observational research. Firstly, some acted as researchers conducting observations, whilst others managed the audiovisual equipment mounted on one of their vehicles. The large public attendance, and the fact that people rarely visit motorshows alone, also meant this setting offered the distinct opportunity to capture authentic customer verbatim as people discussed cars with friends, family and strangers.

To ensure the support of the collaborating company however, a constraint had to be applied to the research. At the time of this study the company in question were designing a car aimed at a female target customer. To deliver a specific benefit in return for the resources provided by the collaborating company it was agreed that the observational research should only focus on the evaluation behaviour of female visitors to the motorshow.

The following sections will describe two Observational methods deployed at the 1998 British International Motorshow held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham as part of the EPS. Although discussed sequentially these two methods were deployed simultaneously. The first method to be described is Motorshow Vehicle Observation (MVO). Here researchers posed as motorshow-goers, whilst keeping a diary of the evaluations of different cars they saw people around them making. The second method to be presented used a camera and microphone to capture every visitor to a single car and their evaluation of it. This method is referred to as

⁴ Other groups that were assumed to be present at such events, but were excluded from the research were children and the poor unacknowledged few who get dragged around such events against their wishes.

Motorshow Customer Observation (MCO) and because the data collection instrument did not select which motorshow visitors to observe, the evaluations of the vehicle by people of both sexes were captured .

The use of a discrete camera system in the motorshow raises the issue of research ethics. The reader is directed to the panel below which outlines the author's ethical justification for the use of such a research method. To summarise, ethical guidelines for market and academic research were consulted and adhered to. The images of the motorshow visitors captured cannot be published since their consent has not been given and the research went ahead on the ethical principle that those being observed were to be in a public space and had been informed of the use of cameras at the event they were attending.

Research studying people without their consent is legally and ethically sound if these people are in a public situation where they might naturally assume they can be observed. Appropriate notice of the research must be given. Researching people in private spaces is only acceptable when their consent has been given.

*Sources - The British Psychological Society (1998)
UK Data Protection Agency (1998)*

Tickets for the motorshow were sold under several conditions printed on the back of each ticket. One of these conditions of sale was that the bearer consented to being filmed whilst attending the event. These conditions were stipulated by the motorshow organisers because of the use of CCTV and the presence of television companies at the event. The motorshow test-car was not considered to be a private space.

Ethical basis of the MCO method

4.4.2 Motorshow Vehicle Observation

The aim of the MVO method was to capture potential customers in the process of appraising cars and to identify the vehicle characteristics and features that evoked identifiable positive and negative reactions in these people. Five researchers made observations on one Preview day and two Public days at the motorshow. The Preview day was open only to representatives of the motor industry and the Press and was used to pre-test the method. It was then used to collect data on the process used by potential customers to evaluate cars on two motorshow days open to the general public.

Procedure

A data collection instrument was designed to allow observers to describe and score customer reactions and to identify the product attributes that evoked them. This data collection instrument was pre-tested by two researchers on the Motorshow Preview Day, which was also used to identify and photograph the cars and features that evoked strong positive reactions in the journalists and industry representatives present. Based on the assumption that these cars could also evoke delight reactions in potential customers visiting the event, they became the focus of the observation to be conducted on two motorshow days open to the public. The Public days chosen for the research were the first Saturday and second Wednesday of the 14 day event. Three additional observers were recruited for these Public Motorshow Days and were briefed by the two researchers that had pre-tested the approach; the aims of the study were explained and the use of the data collection instrument was described. All

observers also received a map detailing the locations of each manufacturer's stand at the show and were instructed to start their observations by focussing on the potentially 'delightful' vehicles as identified above. The five observers that took part in the study included the author, and were made up of two women and three men, aged between 18 and 42 years, each an employee of either Cranfield University or the collaborating company.

Each observer was instructed to position themselves within earshot of a car and use the data collection instrument to record their observations of its evaluation by motorshow visitors. The pre-test of the method had shown that this was often difficult to accomplish and that an alternative approach was often needed. Observers were therefore told that they could mingle with motorshow visitors as they evaluated cars and make notes of their observations after each evaluation was complete. This second approach meant that observers could get much closer to the vehicle evaluation taking place without being identified. It often allowed observers to get into cars with motorshow visitors providing them with a much closer view of the evaluation taking place and enabling them to hear the comments people made in reaction to car attributes. However, it must also be recognised that observers had to complete each data collection sheet from memory, after the visitor's evaluation had ended, to maintain their anonymity.

In its final form the data collection instrument used was a recording book made up of identical recording sheets, one of which can be found in the Appendix (section 2.0). Observers carried these books around the motorshow and used each sheet to record a single vehicle evaluation by an individual or group of visitors. Observers were encouraged to station themselves at a particular car and to capture several visitors' evaluations of it before moving to another car on the list. As such, each recording sheet captured a single customer vehicle evaluation and became the basis of analysis. The visitor evaluation captured on each sheet is referred to from here on as a numbered Observation, (e.g., Obs25).

For each observation the researcher recorded the approximate age of the visitor, the make and model of the car they were evaluating and the features the visitor attended to in chronological order. The visitor's reaction to each car attribute was rated by the observer on a 6 point scale where 1 = *delighted*, 2 = *satisfied*, 3 = *indifferent*, 4 = *dissatisfied*, 5 = *angry*, and 6 = *confused*, based upon the behaviour, comments and facial expression of the visitor. Observers were also instructed to make a brief description of the visitor's interaction with each feature, paying particular attention to her behaviour, the length of time she attended to the feature, her body language, the senses being used, and any comments made. As such the attribute basis of motorshow visitors evaluation of cars was both categorised and described allowing comparison during analysis.

This research method had been designed to specifically capture extreme positive customer reactions, like delight, in line with the aims of this thesis, but negative reactions were still deemed to be of interest to the study. Because each sheet was used to describe a motorshow visitor's entire interaction with the product, both positive and negative reactions to cars and their features were recorded by observers. Having observed visitor evaluations of the cars on the suggestion list, the Observers toured the rest of the show, recording any other interesting evaluation behaviour they noticed, before returning the data collection instrument for analysis.

Results

Five data collection books containing 89 completed recording sheets were returned to the author. The 89 Observations of the car evaluation behaviour of female motorshow visitors were each transcribed into a word processor program, sequencing each evaluation according to the order in which vehicle attributes were attended to. The electronic text version of each observation contained all the information provided by the observer on the recording sheet. This electronic transcript was then used as the platform for a descriptive analysis of the data set. Each observation became a unit of analysis and was subjected to a categorisation and coding process. The following are three illustrative examples taken from this transcript;

Obs2
CITROEN SAXO VTS
Female 25-30

Styling - 5s
Reaction - 2 - "Quite like that."
Blue faced instruments - 5s
Reaction - 1 - "Oh that looks good." Big grin.
Seat cloth - 5s
Reaction - 4 - "Looks zizzy." Grimaced and turned her nose up.
Interior space - 5s
Reaction - 4 - Her boyfriend banged his head as he got in the passenger side. "It's quite small isn't it?" Then laughed.
Seemed to quite like the car as did her boyfriend despite the bump on his head.

Obs16

FORD KA
Female 30

Bumpers - 20s
Reaction - 3/4 - Slight frown as she looked at them.
Trunk - 20s
Reaction - 4 - Couldn't open the boot. "Oh you need a key to get into the boot" Didn't seem to like this.
Headroom - 5s
Reaction - 1 - "Oh there's loads of room up here."
Airbag and Immobiliser - 10s
Reaction - 2 - Noticed these features when looking at the information board at the side of the car. Pointed them out to her partner.
Pedals - 10s
Reaction - 3/4 - "They're tiny. I thought the ones in my car were small."
Gear stick - 10s
Reaction - 2/3 - Wagged it around a bit. Slight smile.

This woman was obviously very interested in purchasing. Spent at least 5 or 6 minutes looking around the car. Seemed more impressed by the interior styling than anything else. Seemed unconvinced by exterior styling but this didn't seem to concern her too much.

Obs73
VW LUPO
Female 25-30

Trunk - 1m
Reaction - 2 - Seemed to like the handle and the way the boot opened. Said she needed the car for shopping and was demonstrated the folding rear seats by the sales man.
Folding Rear Seat - 20s
Reaction - 2 - seemed impressed by the small size of the car and it still being practical in terms of rear flexibility.

In general seemed impressed by the styling and practicality of the car. Asked several questions - "Does it have ABS? Does it have airbags?" Seemed pleased when she was told it had both of these.

Example Observations collected using the MVO method.

The Visitors

12 Observation sheets were discarded because they did not contain data that could be analysed. These included incomplete observations where either no attributes were recorded or the description and categorisation of customer reactions was absent or illegible. The remaining 77 Observations contained 77 descriptions and categorisations of the attribute based reactions of 77 female motorshow visitors. The average estimated age of these visitors was just over 30 years (median = 30, mean = 32, range 20 to 70)⁵.

The Vehicles

Within the 77 Observations, customer reactions to 32 models of car from 15 different manufacturers were captured.

<i>Obs1</i>	<i>Alpha Romeo</i>
<i>Obs2-7</i>	<i>Fiat</i>
<i>Obs8</i>	<i>Daewoo</i>
<i>Obs9-19</i>	<i>Ford</i>
<i>Obs20</i>	<i>Land Rover</i>
<i>Obs21-26</i>	<i>Mercedes</i>
<i>Obs27-30</i>	<i>Nissan</i>
<i>Obs31</i>	<i>Peugeot</i>
<i>Obs32-36</i>	<i>Renault</i>
<i>Obs37-39</i>	<i>Seat</i>
<i>Obs40</i>	<i>Skoda</i>
<i>Obs41-45</i>	<i>Toyota</i>
<i>Obs46-55</i>	<i>Vauxhall</i>
<i>Obs56-77</i>	<i>Volkswagen</i>

Visitors' Car Evaluations

Each Observation described a motorshow visitor's sequenced evaluation of a car based on the attributes they attended and reacted to. The average number of car attributes recorded in each Observation was 3.3 (range 1 to 8) with 7 Observations made of visitors' reactions to lone vehicle attributes (Obs19, 28, 34, 50, 54, 67 and 71).

The first analysis process categorised each Observation into three types according to the polarity of the visitor's overall evaluation of the car; Positive, Indifferent and Negative reactions. The author performed this categorisation according to his interpretation of the codes and descriptions given by the Observer of the visitor's attribute-based reactions. When the Observer had coded or specifically described the visitor's overall reaction this was the basis of categorisation. Unfortunately, in only 10% of Observations had the researcher used the space provided on the data collection sheet to describe and code the visitor's overall reaction. The distribution of the 77 Observations in terms of their polarity is presented in the graph overleaf.

⁵ This is the average of the estimated ages given by observers on each data collection sheet.

categorisation of 77 vehicle observations according to polarity

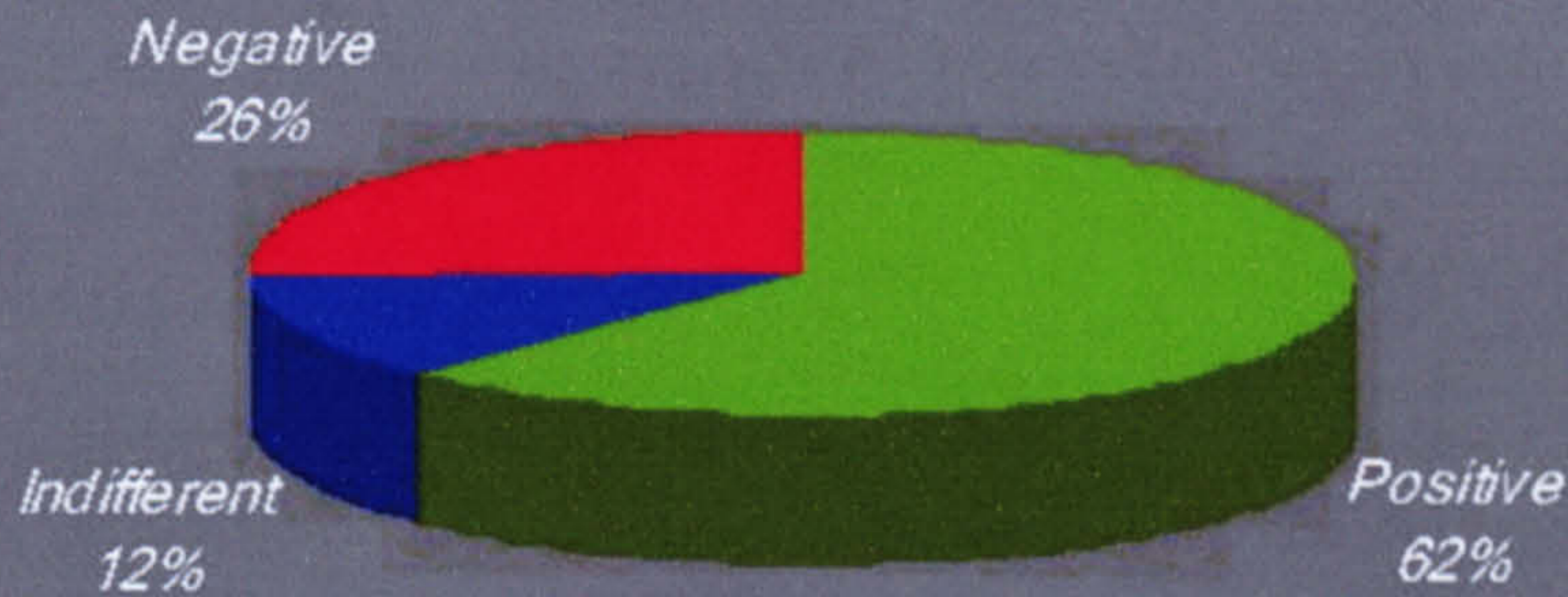


Figure 4.1: The polarity of 77 observed vehicle evaluations

This distribution is an artefact of the stated aim of the research given to Observers; *to collect data on the observable behaviour associated with extreme positive customer reactions to cars and their attributes*. The second process of analysis categorised each Observation according to whether or not the evaluation it described was made up of Uni-polar attribute reactions (e.g., Obs63 made up of six positively valenced reactions to attributes) or Mixed-polarity attribute reactions (e.g., Obs31 made up of two positively valenced and two negatively valenced reactions to attributes). This categorisation could be done objectively by comparing the attribute reaction codes given by the Observer and checking the agreement of any description of the reaction or comments recorded. This categorisation could not be performed mathematically because of the mixed scale used for coding. As stated above seven Observations were made of motorshow visitors reacting to lone car attributes. These appear to be Uni-polar Observations by definition but any one of these may have been the only recorded part of a larger multi-attribute evaluation and as such they were categorised separately as Single-attribute Observations (e.g. Obs50 and Obs67).

proportion of uni-polar, mixed and single attribute-based reactions

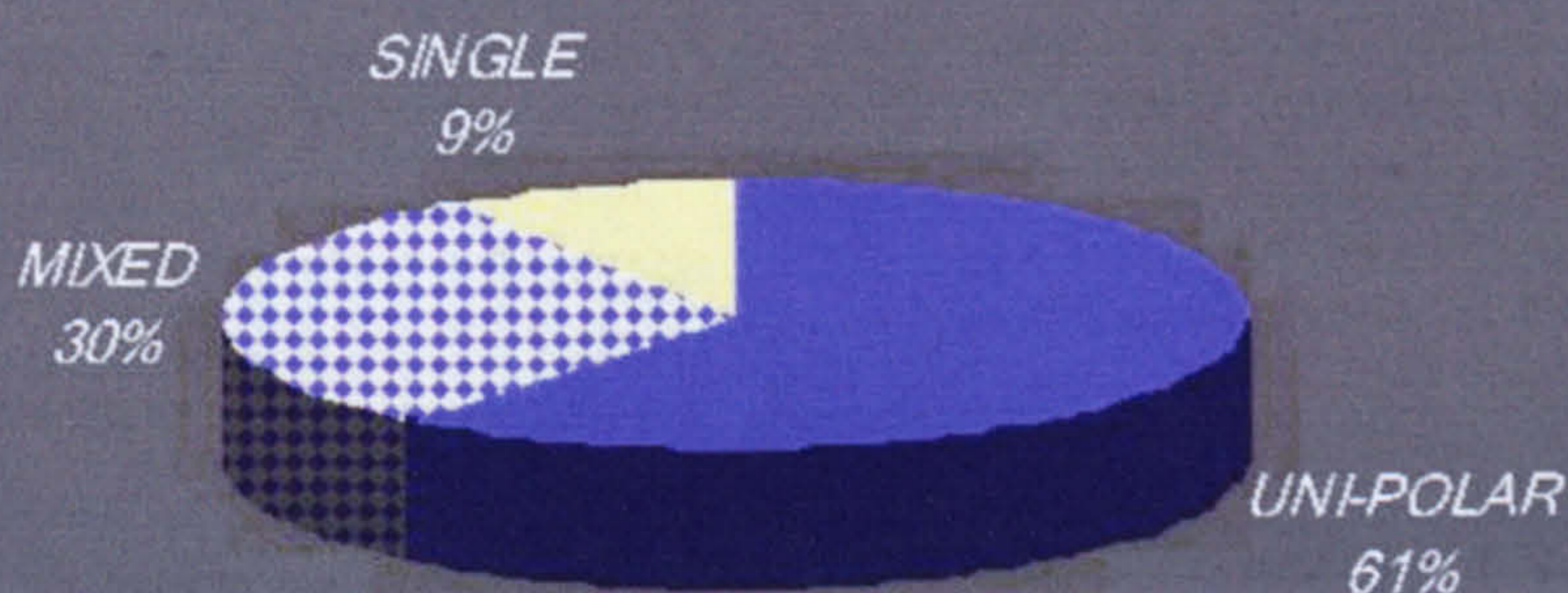


Figure 4.2: Mixed, uni-polar and single attribute based car appraisals

Obs63 - *UNI-POLAR*

VW BEETLE

Female 25-30

Roof Line - 10s

Reaction - 2 Just ran her hands along the roof line with an appreciating look on her face.

Rear Light Cluster - 5 s

Reaction - 2 Just touched it. It obviously caught her eye.

Seats - 20 s

Reaction - 1 Felt the leather obviously loved it.

Steering Wheel - 10 s

Reaction - 1 Commented on the lovely shape to her boyfriend and ran her hands around it several times.

Window/trunk/mirror/filler switches. - 5s

Reaction - 2 "I like the way they're all in the same place on the door."

Netting Door Bins - 5 s

Reaction - 2 "I like that."

"These are brilliant I must get the brochure for this one."

Obs31 - *MIXED*

PEUGEOT 206

Female 25

Colour - 10s

Reaction - 2 - Liked the metallic grey colour.

Steering wheel - 1m

Reaction - 5 - She said it was in the wrong place for her.

Split folding rear seat - 20s

Reaction - 2 - Liked this and said it wasn't on her current car.

Height adjust on steering - 1m

Reaction - 5 - This didn't help her get the wheel in the right place and she was still uncomfortable.

Obs50 - *SINGLE*

VAUXHALL TIGRA

Female 25-30

Door bins - 10s

Reaction - 4 - Commented that these were too small and her rings would get caught.

Said she liked the colour but seemed to be looking at the car only because her boyfriend thought she would like it. "Why should I like it?" Didn't seem too impressed.

Obs67 - *SINGLE*

VW GOLF convertible

Female 35

Gear stick - 10s

Reaction - 2 - Seemed to like the way the gear change felt.

Example Uni-polar, Mixed and Single attribute based reactions captured using the MVO method.

The use of these two categorisation schemes results in the creation of the 3x3 matrix below. Here each of the 77 Observations is allocated to a cell on the basis of its overall polarity (Positive, Indifferent or Negative) and whether or not the evaluation was made up of constituent attribute-based reactions with the same or mixed polarity. The final column of the matrix contains the seven reactions to lone car attributes that were observed.

	UNI-POLAR					MIXED-POLARITY					SINGLE-ATTRIBUTE								
POSITIVE	1	2	4	6	8	16	35	39	42	43	19	28	54	67	71	totals			
	11	15	17	18	20	52	53	57	60	62									
	25	27	30	32	33	69	77												
	36	37	47	48	49														
	51	56	58	61	63														
	65	68	72	73	75														
	76																		
	count					31	count					12	count					5	48
INDIFFERENT	64	66				9	12	29	40	41	34					9			
						74													
	count					2	count					6	count					1	
NEGATIVE	3	5	7	10	13	24	31	45	46	59	50					20			
	14	21	22	23	26														
	38	44	55	70															
	count					14	count					5	count					1	
totals					47	totals					23	totals					7	77	

 <i>delighted</i>	 <i>angry</i>	 <i>confused</i>	 <i>delighted and confused</i>
--	---	---	---

The 77 vehicle appraisals captured using the MVO method

Within the matrix those car evaluations that included distinct emotional reactions to products are identified by the colour-coding of the observation's entry. As would be expected delight (coded green in the matrix) tended to occur in evaluations categorised as Positive overall and likewise Anger (coded red in the matrix) was only observed in evaluations categorised as negative overall. Confusion (coded blue) was observed in vehicle evaluations of both polarities.

The matrix shows that attribute-based delight reactions are not necessarily constituents of unanimously positive product evaluations. Delight reactions to individual car attributes were observed in reactions that also contained negative reactions to other attributes (Obs16, 35, 42, 57, 60 and 62) and even as part of reactions that were deemed to be indifferent overall (Obs74). However, delight reactions were most often recorded as part of car appraisals that were entirely favourable (Obs1, 2, 8, 15, 17, 25, 27, 33, 51, 54, 58, 61, 63, 65, 72, and 75).

Obs19 and Obs71 were observations of single attributes that delighted. Without interviewing the motorshow visitors observed it is not possible to confirm their actual overall appraisal of the vehicle that contained one or more 'delightful' attributes. It is also possible that observers may have omitted attributes that evoked negative reactions knowing the underlying purpose of the research and its focus on extreme positive customer reactions.

Frequency of delight reactions

Overall, 26 Observations included one or more attribute-based reactions coded as 1 on the 6-point scale. As such 26 motorshow visitors were observed experiencing strong positive evaluative reactions to cars categorised as 'delight' by observers. 28 different vehicle attributes were identified by observers as the antecedents of these reactions. 98 attributes were judged to evoke satisfaction responses (coded 2 on the 6-point scale). 44 attributes were noted as being attended to by motorshow visitors without evoking a valenced reaction, resulting in observers identifying the visitor's indifference to the attribute (coded 3). Recorded negative reactions to attributes were predominantly mild with 50 attributes being judged to evoke dissatisfaction (coded 4) and only 8 attributes observed evoking what observers judged to be anger in motorshow visitors (coded 5). 23 car attributes were recorded by observers without being categorised according to the reaction they evoked (i.e., they were not scored using the 6-item scale) and 12 attributes were judged to evoke confusion in the motorshow visitors that evaluated them. These 230 categorised attribute-based reactions are presented in the graph below. The graph shows that, despite being the focus of the research, delight was relatively infrequently observed compared to less positive appraisal reactions. The majority of positive reactions recorded in the motorshow situation were not deemed to constitute delight.

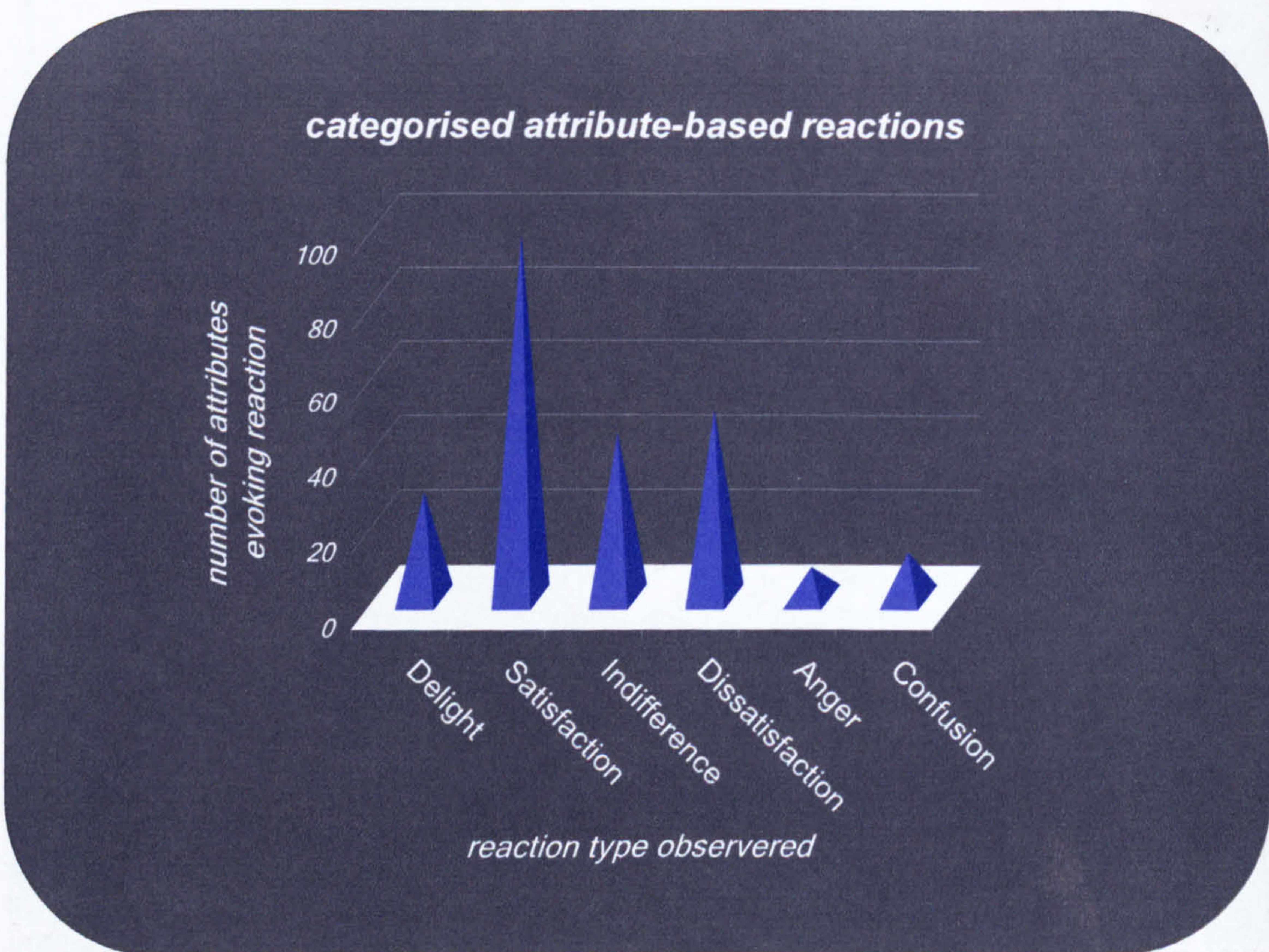


Figure 4.3: The distribution of car appraisals of different strengths

The antecedents of delight observed

The MVO method was designed to identify the things about cars that evoked delight reactions. A list of the 230 vehicle attributes recorded in the 77 Observations was created and ordered according to the reaction score given by the observer. The 28 different car attributes recorded as evoking delight reactions (rated as 1 on the 6-item scale) are presented below in the words of the observer.

- ALPHA ROMEO 156's front door handles (Obs1)
- ALPHA ROMEO 156's alpha badge boot release (Obs1)
- CITROEN SAXO's blue faced instrument dials (Obs2)
- FORD COUGAR's styling (Obs8)
- FORD COUGAR's rear lights (Obs8).
- FORD KA's interior styling (Obs15)
- FORD KA's headroom (Obs16)
- FORD PUMA's styling (Obs17, Obs19)
- FORD PUMA's headlamps (Obs17)
- MERCEDES E-CLASS styling and colour (purple pearlescent) (Obs25)
- MERCEDES E-CLASS rear facing trunk seats (Obs25)
- MERCEDES E-CLASS leather seats (Obs25)
- NISSAN MICRA's interior space (Obs27)
- NISSAN MICRA as a whole (Obs30).
- RENAULT CLIO colour. (yellow/gold metallic) (Obs33)
- RENAULT SCENIC rear drinks and snacks tray (Obs35)
- TOYOTA YARIS' centre console storage bins (Obs42)
- VAUXHALL TIGRA's steering wheel (Obs51)
- VAUXHALL TIGRA's styling (Obs53, Obs54)
- VW BEETLE's styling (Obs57, Obs60, Obs61, Obs62,)
- VW BEETLE's interior space (Obs58)
- VW BEETLE's cup holders (Obs62)
- VW BEETLE's leather seats (Obs63)
- VW BEETLE's steering wheel (Obs63)
- VW GOLF's driver's seat storage bin (Obs65)
- VW LUPO's full length canvas sunroof (Obs71, Obs72)
- VW LUPO's instrument dials (Obs74)
- VW LUPO's intergrated stereo (Obs75)

Discussion of the MVO method

After a de-briefing with the observers it was decided not to perform a more sophisticated analysis of the data. The task had proved difficult to carry out due to a relative lack of female visitors at the motorshow and the difficulty the observers faced in not being identified. With only 77 Observations recorded it was concluded that the method was an inefficient way of collecting detailed descriptions of vehicle evaluations. The depth of data collected was also judged to be limited. As the examples above demonstrate Observers were only able to record the basics of the delight reactions they had observed and relatively little insight was gained into the nature of these reactions.

However, the delight reaction had been observed in a naturalistic pre-purchase setting suggesting that the motorshow context offered the potential to study this reaction in more detail. 26 delighted potential car customers had been observed and the product-based antecedents of their delight reactions had been identified. It was shown that, although delight was often recorded as a constituent part of otherwise entirely positive vehicle appraisals, this was not always the case. On the basis of the MVO method it can be said that the experience of delight does not always result in an entirely positive product appraisal by that customer.

This seems to be the result of the attribute-based study of the appraisal process, adopted in the MVO method. 5 observers acting independently all reported vehicle evaluation reactions so positive they were scored as delight. Despite being instructed to identify the vehicle features that evoked these reactions observers, reported several delight reactions evoked by product attributes that suggest a more holistic appraisal process, including; interior spaciousness, interior and exterior styling and whole cars. These data support the insights gained from the EPS interviews.

4.4.3 Motorshow Customer Observation

Whilst the MVO method used multiple researchers to provide descriptions of delight reactions during people's appraisal of multiple cars, a method was also needed to directly capture delight reactions. The aim of the Motorshow Customer Observation (MCO) method was to supplement the human observers used in the method described above with the use of audio visual equipment to capture the full externally observable detail of delight reactions. Such an approach would be able to capture comments, body language and facial expressions that an observer taking notes would undoubtedly miss. Whilst the use of a video camera and microphone offered huge advantages in terms of the objectivity and quality of the data that could be collected, it was also subject to several limitations.

Firstly cost-limitations meant that only a single video camera could be used in the research. The effort and cost of installing the equipment in a discrete manner in a public space meant that visitors' evaluations of only a single car could be studied using this method. Discretely mounting the camera system was necessary to maintain the naturalistic setting required for the research, ensuring that motorshow visitors' behaviour was authentic and not altered by the process of data collection itself⁶. However, the fact that the camera system could only be economically fitted to a single car at the motorshow would limit the likelihood of capturing large numbers of diverse customer delight reactions. To ensure the full involvement of the collaborating company they specified the car on which the camera could be fitted. In return for the data collected and its preliminary analysis (upon which they would act in the design of the car's replacement) the collaborating company arranged the fitting of the camera system and provided staff to regularly retrieve and replace the video cassettes it used. The car chosen for the study was a small 'super-mini' hatchback (a Nissan Micra 1.3Si).

Secondly, the use of a discrete camera system meant that motorshow visitor behaviour could not be selected for collection⁷. The camera system would record continuously capturing every visitor to the car. A trade-off had to be made between the desire to capture multiple delight reactions and the length of time required to edit and analyse large amounts of video footage.

Procedure

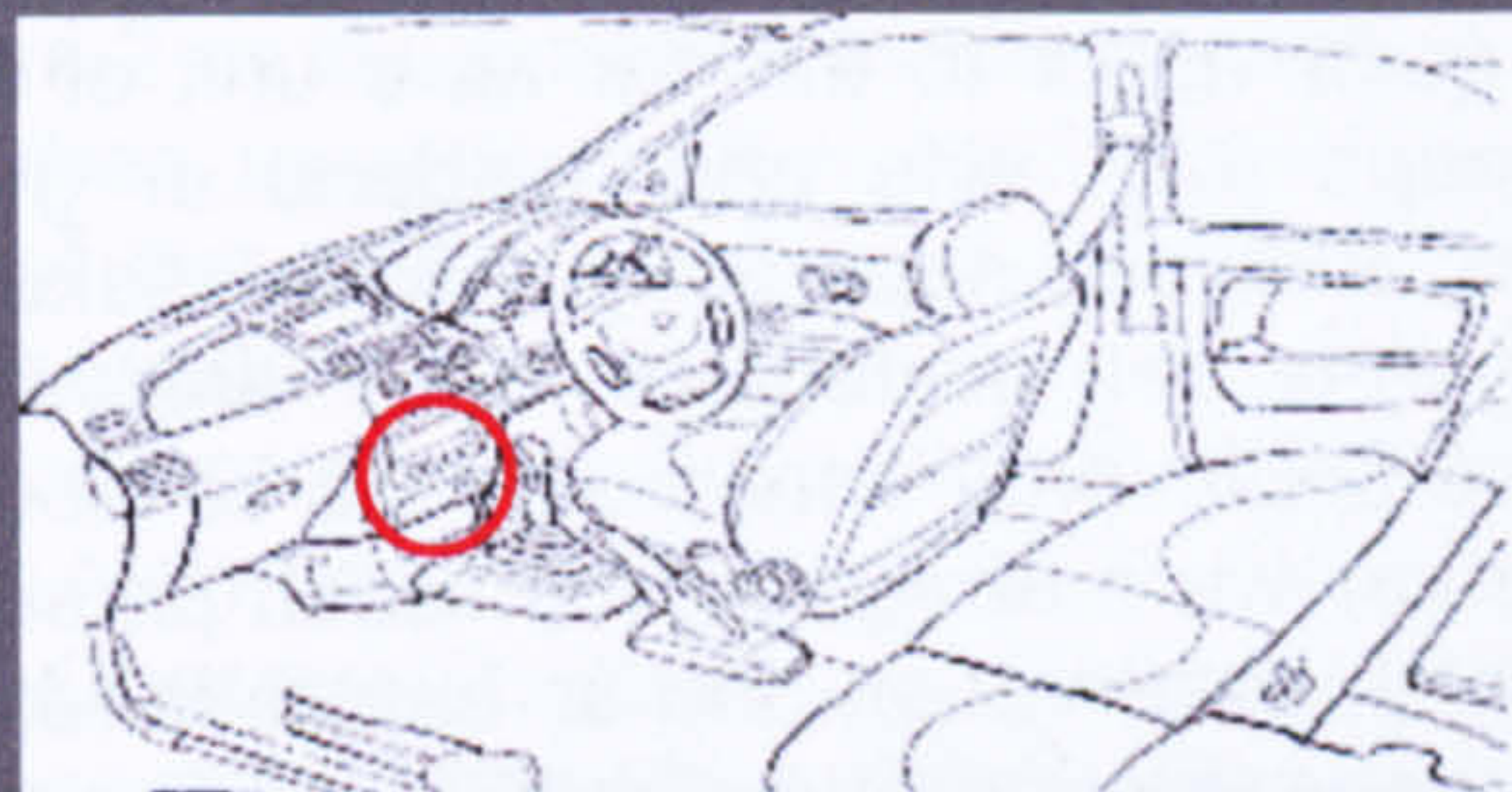
The miniature camera was mounted in the car's centre console. This mounting captured an image of the front seats of the car from a position on the dashboard immediately above and behind the gearstick. The location of the camera lens is indicated in the panel overleaf. The camera was mounted within the structure of the car interior and the only part visible from the front seats was the small opening

⁶ During a lecture given in the Antarctic, R.F. Scott is amused by his meteorologist G.C. Simpson who likens "the attempt to make a scientific observation when the condition under consideration is affected by the means employed.....[to]..... the impossibility of discovering the length of trousers by bending over to see!" (Scott, R.F.,1913, p.220).

⁷ The ethical basis of using a discrete observational method such as this has been outlined on page 91.

needed for the lens. It can be assumed that visitors to the vehicle during the course of this research would not have been aware of the camera unless they noticed this ambiguous 10mm opening in the car's interior plastic. The pinhead microphone was mounted out of sight in the driver's footwell in a position approximately 6 inches from the camera lens. These two capture devices were connected to a VHS video recorder strapped to the underside of the vehicle. The wiring needed for these connections passed internally through the engine bay and then outside, underneath the vehicle. As with the capture devices, neither the wiring nor the recording device were visible to motorshow visitors either inside or outside the car. The whole system was run from the car's 12v power supply, which in turn was powered from an external source as is the norm in motorshow display vehicles. The image and sound capture of the installation was then tested in situ and final adjustments were made to optimise the view of people sat in the car's front seats and to ensure their comments could be heard. The final view captured by this camera system is shown below and is the best that could be achieved with an economical and discrete installation.

The car was then positioned on the collaborating company's motorshow stand amongst several others. The car was watched on the first public day of the motorshow to insure that the camera system was not detected by visitors to the car and to establish the frequency with which these visitors got into the car's front seats. On this basis, and according to the trade-off outlined above, it was decided to record visitors' evaluations of the car over a three day period. The days chosen for the research covered the first weekend of the motorshow including the preceding Friday, the 3rd, 4th and 5th days of the 14 day event. Each of these days were open to ticket-holding members of the general public and were forecast to be days with high visitor numbers. Members of staff working on the motorshow stand on these days were briefed on the research and shown the camera installation. On each day, selected members of staff were given a supply of video tapes and instructed to activate the video recorder, changing the video tape every three hours. On removing each used video tape the staff member was instructed to label it with the date and time of the recording. The resulting video cassettes were collected by the author at the end of each day and were reviewed prior to analysis.



MCO method - camera Installation and image capture

Analysis

The resulting video footage underwent two levels of analysis. The first stage involved a descriptive analysis of the entire data set, the findings of which were disseminated to the collaborating company for the purposes of product improvement. The second selective analysis focussed solely on the extreme positive appraisals of the car captured on the tapes. Both rounds of analysis provide insights relevant to this thesis and as such will be described here.

Descriptive Analysis

The first video tape was watched by the author and a designer from the collaborating company. On the basis of this preliminary viewing the collaborating company specified the data they required for their design process. As highlighted above the company were primarily concerned with their female target customer's reaction to their product. They required a report outlining the evaluation process used by this customer, the identification of the areas of the car that were important in this customer's appraisal, and an edited video of extreme positive and negative reactions to the car, including the analysis of the features involved and the comments made. The images captured focused on the front seat occupants and did not provide a full view of the interior of the car. This meant that not all of the visitor's interaction with the product could be seen (e.g. switches on the dashboard were out of sight). The author and the designer learnt during their viewing of the first tape that with experience it was possible to deduce which part of the car the visitor was focussing on, even when this area of the car was out of shot. Identification of these off-screen areas of interest to the visitor was a matter of deduction based on prior knowledge of the car and its layout, the observed direction of the visitor's attention, the comments of the visitor, and the sounds made by the operation of some part of the car out of sight. This process became easier after several evaluations had been viewed and patterns of similar comments and directions of attention had been observed in several visitors. This allowed the identification of the visitor's focus of attention even when their evaluation took place in silence.

To fulfil the collaborating company's requirements the entire set of tapes was then watched in detail taking each visitor to the car as a unit of analysis. When visitors evaluated the car in groups (e.g. wife and husband or groups of friends) each member of the group was analysed separately. For the sake of completeness both target customers and non-target customers were analysed although the time constraints imposed on the preliminary analysis by the collaborating company meant that female visitors to the car were analysed first. Each person's visit to the test car therefore became a research observation and as before is referred to from this point as a numbered and sexed observation (e.g. ObsF235). For the sake of consistency across the data set, and because of the length of time involved, the analysis was performed by the author alone.

The data set used for the descriptive analysis was produced by the author keeping a coded and sequenced log of each motorshow visitor's behaviour in the car. This log was handwritten by the author as he reviewed each tape on a VHS video recorder. The frame-by-frame review and playback features of this equipment allowed the researcher to skip periods of inactivity on the tape and to review each visitor's evaluation of the car interior repeatedly. For each observation the time code of the visitor's entry into the car was recorded and the visitor was described in terms of their sex and approximate age. The visitor's car appraisal was then described by noting their sequence of attention and behaviour whilst in the car. Areas of the car that the visitor attended to were noted and the type of attention displayed by the visitor was

described (e.g. look, touch, operate, tap, comment). Attention to a particular car attribute was only logged when the visitor displayed interest or prolonged attention to it. For example a simple waggle of the gearstick or a brief look at the dashboard was not logged. In contrast extended gear-changing or staring at the dashboard were logged as attention. Every vocalisation of the visitor was also recorded. Alongside this sequenced behaviour log, notes of any overt expressions making up the visitor's reaction were kept (e.g. playing, smiling, grimacing, drawing another person's attention to something). The same 6-item scale used in the MVO method, (*1-delight 2-satisfied 3-indifferent 4-dissatisfied 5-angry 6-confused*), was used by the author to code both the sequenced attribute-based reactions of the visitor and their overall appraisal of the vehicle. Finally each observation was accompanied by remarks explaining the context of the visitor's evaluation (e.g. visitor is accompanied, visitor said she already owns this car, visitor noticed the camera).

This initial logging process produced a sequenced and coded description of every vehicle evaluation recorded over the three-day period of the research. From this log common sequences of visitor evaluation behaviour were identified and the frequencies with which visitors attended to particular areas of the car interior were calculated. The log also allowed the targeted editing of the video for the collaborating company and could be used to quickly find and review a particular observation in the subsequent analysis. A limited quantitative analysis of the data log was performed by the author for the purposes of the collaborating company and is described in the results section below.

Selective Analysis

Outside of the constraints imposed the collaborating company the video tapes provided an ideal source of data for the description of the observable and audible components of any customer delight reactions that had been captured. The log produced during the descriptive analysis was used to identify Observations that contained extremely positive customer appraisals of the car used in the research. Any observation that contained an evaluation reaction given a score of 1 on the 6-item scale was considered a potential delight reaction and its tape number and time code was taken from the log. Observations logged with scores of 2/1 (half way between item 1 and item 2 on the scale) were then similarly identified. These two sets of observations were then used to perform a simple inter-rater reliability check to establish the validity of the author's initial descriptive coding of Observations as 'delight'. A second researcher was recruited to view the tapes. Having viewed 5 example Observations to introduce the nature of the research, the second researcher was played each of the high scoring Observations in the order that they appeared on the tapes. For every Observation the second researcher was asked the simple question; "*does the Observation contain what you would call a delight reaction?*" The second researcher was not given any prior information on what might constitute a delight reaction and the basis of their judgements was investigated using a debriefing interview. Only those Observations that both researchers agreed contained delight reactions were selected for further analysis.

The aim of the selective analysis was then to identify the observable components of the delight reactions that had been captured in this naturalistic pre-purchase setting. Using the theoretical prologue introduced in Chapter 3 the analysis process identified the product-based stimuli evoking the reaction and the observable affective, cognitive and behavioural components of the reaction. The debriefing interview with the second researcher and the reviewing of each identified delight reaction were used to generate categories of observed behaviour accompanying the reaction. These categories were then used to code each captured delight reaction. The results of this

analysis are presented after those of the descriptive analysis in the results section below.

Results of the descriptive analysis

Over the three motorshow days on which the camera system was activated eight video tapes were used. Seven of these tapes contained 180 minutes of continuous footage captured from the interior of the test car, whilst the eighth captured the last 120 minutes of the final day of the research. During the 23 hour period covered by these tapes 841 adults got into the test car, approximately one every 102 seconds. Of the 841 Observations logged, 308 were of female visitors to the car, and 533 of male visitors. It should be noted that groups of visitors often got into the car together and that each member of such groups is considered separately in the totals given above. Several additional visits to the car were made by people obviously under the age of 15yrs and were excluded from the research on the basis that these motorshow visitors were not yet potential car customers. It should also be noted that the totals given above include a number of visits by adults that contained no appraisal or evaluation of the car as a product. These Observations contained behaviour ranging from people simply taking the weight of their feet, the attempted vandalism of the car and the use of the car as a place to chat. However, the great majority of visits to the car contained at least some brief product evaluation and appraisal behaviour (758 of 841 Observations, 90%).

On the grounds that the sequencing, coding and description of each Observation produced a handwritten data log 259 A4 pages long, and the fact that the log could not be typed at the same time as the video tapes were reviewed, a full electronic version of this document has not been created. This prevents all but the most basic descriptive quantitative analysis of its content and meant that it was used primarily as a reference document guiding the qualitative analysis. The panel overleaf contains an excerpt of this data log and reproduces the handwritten text from a single A4 page of this document.

<i>Sequence of attention</i>	<i>Observed behaviour</i>	<i>Reaction score</i>
------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------

*ObsF235
1hr27m39s
F 30-35*

<i>Overall</i>	<i>Looks around inside Comment - "Nice"</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Dashboard</i>	<i>Look</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Aircon</i>	<i>Searching for it Comment - "not got it"</i>	<i>4</i>

Notes - seemed less pleased with it in the end. Overall 3/2

*ObsF236
1hr28m31s
F 15-20*

<i>Dashboard</i>	<i>Look</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Pedals</i>	<i>Checking their position</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Gearchange</i>	<i>Operates</i>	
<i>Gearstick</i>	<i>Touches it then holds it Comment - "look at this... I don't like that its weird looking"</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Rear space</i>	<i>Looks into the back</i>	

Notes - seemed very indifferent towards the car as did her friend

*ObsF237
1hr33m10s
F 16-25yrs*

<i>Dashboard</i>	<i>Look Comment - "Beautiful" Big smile</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Switches</i>	<i>Operates</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Glovebox</i>	<i>Operates</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Gearstick</i>	<i>Look Comment - "wicked, look at that" Big smile - excited</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Gearchange</i>	<i>Operates - keeps changing gear and looking at the gearstick Comment - "wicked, really smooth"</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Instruments</i>	<i>Look</i>	
<i>Interior</i>	<i>Look Comment - "Everything's the same as mine in here" Positive reaction overall as she looks round the interior</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Body kit</i>	<i>Looking with the door open Comment - "Looks really sporty with these side panel things"</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Stereo</i>	<i>Comment - "Its got six speakers" Quite excited by this</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Steering</i>	<i>Comment - "...and it's got power steering"</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Spot Lights</i>	<i>Comment - "...and this one's got the spot lights too hasn't it"</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Overall</i>	<i>Comment - "Do you reckon they'd sell me this one...it's lovely"</i>	<i>1</i>

Notes - Accompanied by 2 friends. Previous owner. Loves this car, wants to buy the show car there and then. Definite Delight reaction to the gearstick.

Example page reproduced from the handwritten data log.

Descriptive analysis of the frequency of attention to car attributes

The first process of the analysis was to identify all the areas of the car that were attended to by the people evaluating it. This was done by reviewing the log and pulling out all the attributes that appeared in the sequenced attention column. Any dissimilar terms used in the log to describe the same area or attribute of the car were merged to form a single attribute label (e.g., 'indicators' and 'stalk switches' were merged to 'stalk controls', the preferred term used for this area of the car by the collaborating company). 60 different vehicle areas or attributes were identified as being attended to during visitor's evaluations. The data was then segmented according to the sex of the visitor captured in each observation. Manual counts were then performed on the log to calculate the frequency of attention to each of the 60 vehicle attributes for female and male visitors. Observations containing each attribute, according to the sex of visitor were totalled. These counts were entered into a spreadsheet to perform the analysis and the frequency of attention to each attribute was calculated and expressed as the percentage of visitors to the car that attended to it.⁸ The plot below shows the ten car attributes most frequently attended to.

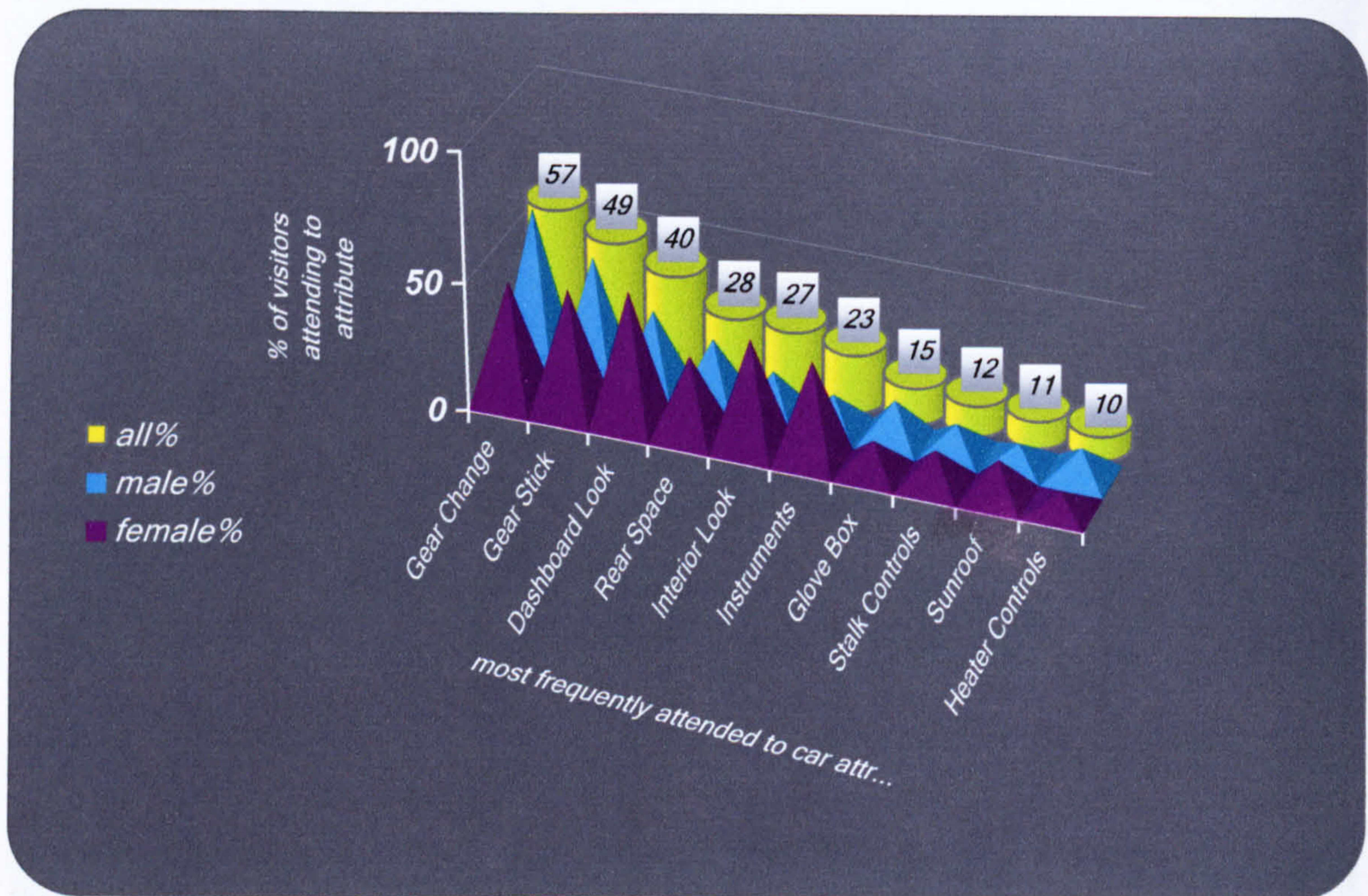


Figure 4.4: Frequency of attention to car attributes according to sex of visitor

The total number of attributes recorded in the data log was 3182, indicating that on average each of the 758 visitors that evaluated the car paid prolonged attention to 4.2 car attributes during their evaluation⁹. On average female visitors attended to more attributes than male visitors (4.7 per visitor verses 3.8) but this may simply reflect the fact that 68% of female Observations were of visitors to the driver's side front seat, compared with only 54% of male Observations. This is indicative of the fact that the car is aimed at a female target customer and when couples visited the car together

⁸ In the log any form of prolonged attention was included - staring, feeling, operating etc were all included in the attention count for each attribute if they constituted prolonged attention. Some car attributes may have had only one form of appropriate attention whilst others may have been attended to in several ways. To prevent skewing towards attributes that could be attended to in more than one way, only one attention count per attribute was included for each Observation.

⁹ The range cannot be calculated on the basis of the counts taken.

the female partner almost invariably took the driver's seat. It is assumed that the visitor to the driver's seat is the primary evaluator of the vehicle and is therefore likely to attend to a greater number of vehicle attributes. Likewise the driver's seat offered easier access to a greater number of vehicle attributes than the passenger seat.

Descriptive analysis of visitor comments

The analysis of frequency of attention does not provide an indication of what visitors to the car liked or disliked, merely what their evaluations looked like. The second count performed on the data log was the number of positive and negative comments made by each age and sex of visitor about each of the 60 attributes. Neutral comments and visitors' non-evaluative 'chat' were excluded from this analysis. Only 45 of these car features evoked evaluative comments from visitors to the car. 1041 comments were recorded in the log, an average of 1.4 per visitor.¹⁰

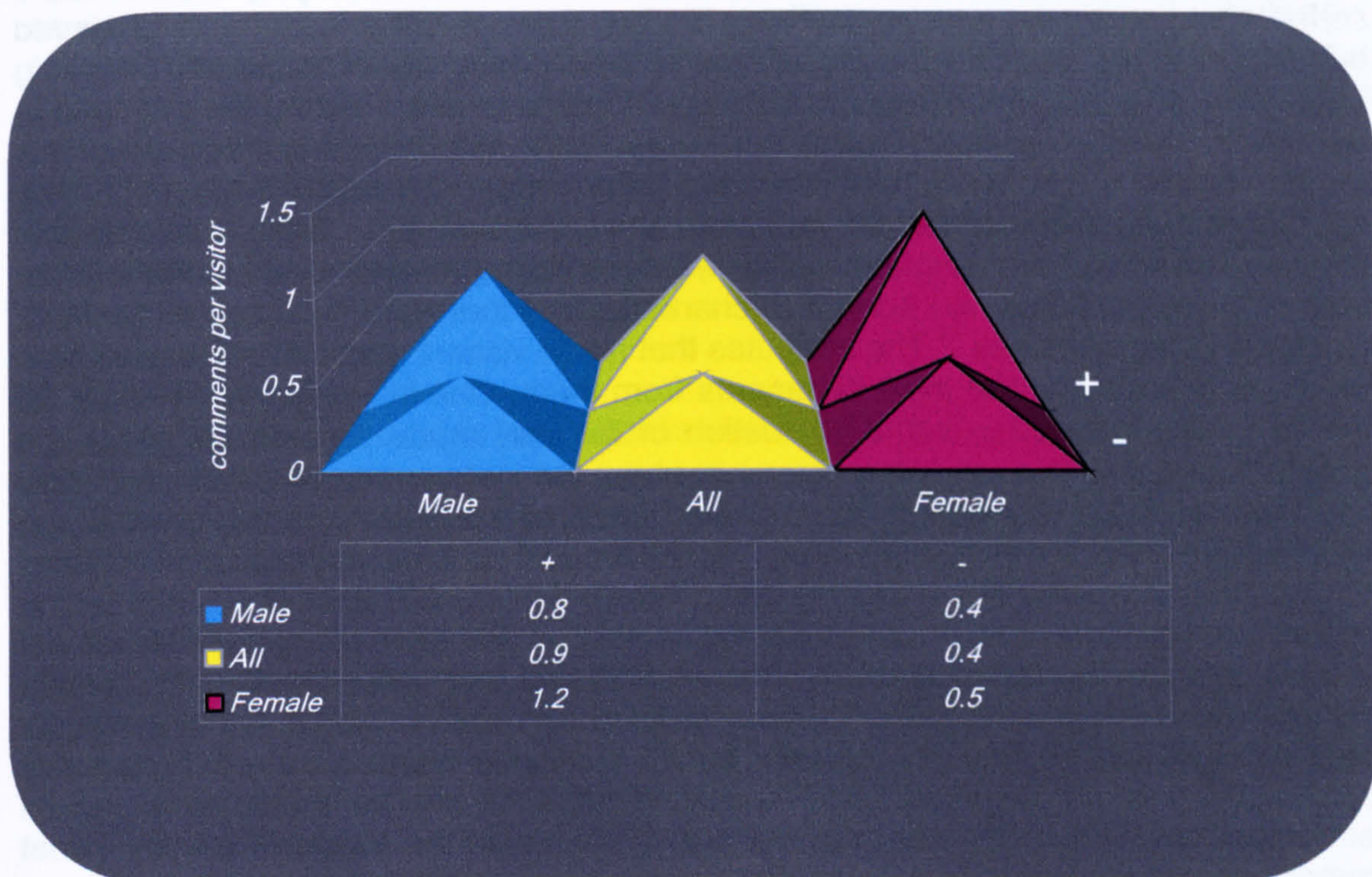


Figure 4.5: Frequency of positive and negative comments made by male and female visitors

In the log the polarity of visitors' comments noted by the researcher was generally explicit, and each was usually coded numerically using the 6-item scale when confirmation was needed. The frequency of positive and negative comments in the data log suggests that those visitors that were moved to comment on the test car generally gave it more praise than criticism. 705 positive evaluative comments were logged compared to 336 negative evaluative comments. The comparison between the sexes of the people evaluating the car shows that females were generally more vocal in their appraisal, making 1.6 comments each verses, 1.2 comments each for males. Correspondingly they were also both more pleased by the car, making an average of 1.2 positive comments each compared to males making 0.8 each, and more often disappointed, making 0.5 negative comments each compared to males making 0.4. The graph above summarises the frequency of both favourable and critical comments made by both sexes and by the group as a whole. Again this data

¹⁰ This low frequency of comments reflects the fact that many of the 758 Observations were brief whilst others were conducted alone and therefore contained no visitor vocalisations. The figure could also be indicative of a fairly indifferent reaction to the test car by visitors in general.

is indicative of the test car used for the research, and its manufacturer may be right in viewing its target customer as female. Compared to other visitors, the car's target customer seems to be more involved in its appraisal (she attends to more car attributes) and more frequently comments on it favourably.

Discussion of the descriptive analysis

Of the 60 different car attributes appearing in the data log only five were attended to by more than a quarter of the visitors to the car. This suggests that a great deal of the visitors showed very little interest in the car at all. Visitor's evaluation behaviour most frequently involved a routine appraisal of the car on the basis of these attributes. Visitors tended to get into the car and adjust the driving position to suit (this is not logged as prolonged attention in the data), change gear, check how the dashboard in front of them looked, check how much room there was in the back of the car, and then the same in the glove box. Visitors then tended to start playing with the car's controls and switches, noticing features like the sunroof. Other commonly observed behaviours in the car were the adjustment of the steering wheel height and checking behind the sunvisors for mirrors and lighting. Only one visitor did up his seat belt in this static vehicle evaluation situation. An attribute that regularly interrupted this routine was the gearstick, which visitors often spent extended periods of time appraising quite separately of the gearchange it was attached to. Other car attributes that were observed breaking the routine were the instruments or dials. In the test car both of these attributes had distinctive characteristics that were designed to, and did, catch the customer's eye.¹¹ The attributes that made visitors stop and stare were also the ones that evoked the most comments from them. One in every three visitors (of the 758 that engaged in some evaluation of the car) made a comment about the gearstick and one in every ten a comment about the instruments. Another seemingly important attribute that people were moved to comment upon was the gearchange itself which visitors often spent a significant amount of time appraising by shifting through the gears and which one in eight commented upon. These attention grabbing and comment-worthy car attributes often split opinion. For example one in four female visitors said they liked the gearstick but one in 14 said they disliked it. One in six male visitors said they liked the same attribute whilst one in nine disliked it. Other attributes only received praise, the rev counter for its presence alone received 19 positive comments and no negative vocal reactions. And of course there were certain attributes that people generally did not like, for example the image of the car (what people seemed to think it said about its owner) received 18 negative comments and only four favourable ones.

Again evidence of both attribute based and holistic evaluation process has been observed. As well as the image of the car, comments on its spaciousness (43 positive, 14 negative), overall look of the interior (50 positive and 35 negative) and dashboard area, (20 positive, 23 negative) suggest global appraisal of the car.

The limited analysis performed above has been presented to convey the nature of visitor's pre-purchase evaluation of the test car. Far greater insights can be gained by viewing the footage itself, and this is exactly how the data was used within the collaborating company who received and disseminated a single 180 minute edited tape, containing examples of various evaluations by their target customer. As the relatively low frequencies of positive comments and attention to individual car attributes attest, reaction to the car was somewhat lukewarm. This was bad but not unexpected news for the collaborating company who were designing the car's replacement. It also did not bode well for capturing multiple diverse delight reactions

¹¹ The instruments were coloured to match the exterior of the car and the gearstick was contoured to fit the hand and had a metal and leather finish.

for detailed analysis. Of the 758 car appraisals captured during this study only 72 contained an evaluative reaction coded as very positive by the author (receiving a score of 1 or 2/1 on the 6-item scale). Only 8.6% of the 841 people that got into the car over the 3 day period had demonstrated an extremely positive reaction to it or one of its attributes. At this point of the analysis it was assumed that these evaluations contained strong positive reactions to the product which may or may not have constituted delight. Again the target customer seemed more pleased with the product. 11.4% of female visitors to the car demonstrated a strong positive reaction to it (35 Observations, one in nine), compared to only 7.4% of its male evaluators (37 Observations, one in 14).

Selective analysis of delight reactions

The 72 Observations identified by the author as containing potential delight reactions were subjected to a inter-rater check using a second researcher (as described above). On the basis of this check, only those Observations which the author and a second researcher independently agreed contained a delight reaction were selected for further analysis. 40 observations met this criteria and were considered in detail. The analysis proceeded by identifying the antecedent stimulus and observable behaviour associated with each confirmed delight reaction. The review of the Observations and the debriefing of the second researcher resulted in the identification of the following distinctive behaviours that were associated with these reactions.

- *Expression of surprise*
Characterised by 'ooh' or 'aah' vocalisations and widening of eyes
- *Positive comments*
Characterised by speech of average pitch and normal tone
- *Exclamations*
Characterised by high pitched speech and forceful or excitable tone
- *Fidgeting*
Characterised by rhythmic or repetitive movements of limbs
- *Smiling*
- *Laughter*
- *Touching of the antecedent stimulus*
- *Enduring attention*
Characterised by prolonged focussing of attention on the antecedent stimulus or repeated refocusing of attention on it
- *Demonstration*
Characterised by the drawing of another person's attention to the antecedent stimulus
- *Hand gestures*
Characterised by the unconscious use of the hands to convey a message

Each Observation was reviewed in detail using VCR equipment and coded for the presence of these characteristic observable components. In addition to this coding the following information was also noted for each reaction;

- Observation number and sex of the visitor
- Approximate age ([Y]oung, [M]iddle-aged, [O]ld)
- Antecedent stimulus evoking the delight reaction
- Duration of the expression of delight ([B]rief, [E]nduring)
- Time of onset of delight after entry into the car ([I]mmediate, [E]arly, [L]ate)
- Visitors location in the car ([D]river's seat, [P]assenger's seat, [B]ack seat)
- Evidence of intention to purchase the car

- Evidence of previous ownership/experience of the car

The results of this analysis are presented over the next three pages. It should be noted that Observations prefixed by F (e.g. ObsF10) are female visitors and those prefixed by M (e.g. ObsM3) are male. Also it can be seen that each Observation usually contained only a single delight reaction. However several Observations contained more than one distinct delight reaction (e.g. ObsM242).

Observation No.	M3	F5	F10	M45	M49	M50	F34	F40	F41	F47	F59	M161	F77	M188	M204	M210		
Age (Young [Y] / Middle Aged [M] / Old [O])	Y	Y	O	Y	O	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y	M	M	O		
Stimulus	gearstick	comfort	dials	gearstick	dials	sunvisor mirror	sunroof	gearstick	gearstick	gearstick	gearstick	attributes - many	attributes - many	overall	attributes - many	gearstick	overall	overall
Surprise			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Comment	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Exclamation	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Fidget	✓						✓							✓				
Smile	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Laugh	✓	✓						✓	✓					✓	✓			
Touch	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Enduring Attention	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Demonstration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Hand Gesture	✓	✓	✓					✓										
Duration (Brief [B] / Enduring [E])	B	B	B	E	B	B	B	E	E	E	E	B	E	E	E	B	B	
Onset (Immediate [I] / Early [E] / Late [L])	I	E	L	I	E	L	L	E	E	E	E	E	E	I	I	E		
Previous experience (Yes [Y] / No Response [N])	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y		
Intention (Yes [Y] / No [N])	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y		
Location (Drivers [D] / Passengers [P] / Back [B])	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	P	D	D	D		

Observation No.	Age (Young [Y] / Middle Aged [M] / Old [O])	Stimulus	Surprise	Comment	Exclamation	Fidget	Smile	Laugh	Touch	Enduring Attention	Demonstration	Hand Gesture	Duration (Brief [B] / Enduring [E])	Onset (Immediate [I] / Early [E] / Late [L])	Previous experience (Yes [Y] / No Response [N])	Intention (Yes [Y] / No [N])	Location (Drivers [D] / Passengers [P] / Back [B])	
M222	O	attributes - many		✓					✓	✓	✓		E	I	N	N	D	
M242	Y	sunvisor mirror	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	E	B	L	N	Y	D
		spaciousness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		E	E	N	Y	D	
M257	Y	gearstick	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		B	I	N	N	D	
F147	M	Overall		✓	✓	✓					✓		E	E	N	Y	D	
F157	O	overall		✓		✓	✓		✓				E	I	N	Y	D	
M271	M	attributes - many	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	E	I	Y	N	D	
M275	Y	gearstick	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		B	E	N	N	D	
M285	Y	gearchange	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		B	E	N	N	D	
M300	Y	gearstick & gearchange	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	E	E	N	N	D	
F216	O	overall		✓	✓		✓				✓		B	I	N	N	D	
F218	Y	overall		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		E	E	N	Y	D	
F221	M	overall	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						B	I	N	N	D	
F227	Y	overall		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	E	E	Y	N	D	
F237	Y	gearstick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	E	I	Y	Y	D	
F255	O	gearstick		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		B	I	N	Y	D	
F261	Y	overall		✓	✓	✓	✓						B	E	N	N	D	
F265	Y	dials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						B	I	Y	N	D	
F266	O	rear space	✓	✓	✓						✓		B	L	N	N	B	
F282	M	attributes - many			✓	✓	✓						E	E	Y	N	D	

Observation No.	F296	M501	F298	F303	F304	
Age (Young [Y] / Middle Aged [M] / Old [O])	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	45 delight reactions in 40 visitors (24 female and 16 male visitors) 22 Young, 10 Middle-aged, 8 Old
Stimulus	gearstick	gearstick	gearstick	gearstick	footrest	17 to the gearstick (38%) 11 to the car overall (24%) 6 made up of many attributes (13%) 3 to the dials (7%) 2 to the gearchange (4%) 2 to the spaciousness (4%) 2 the sunvisor mirror (4%) 1 the comfort (2%) 1 the footrest (2%) 1 the sunroof (2%)
Surprise		✓	✓	✓		23 delight reactions contained expressed surprise (51%)
Comment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	42 delight reactions included a positive comment (93%)
Exclamation		✓	✓	✓	✓	31 delight reactions included an exclamation (69%)
Fidget	✓			✓		25 delight reactions included fidgeting (56%)
Smile	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	33 delight reactions included smiling (73%)
Laugh	✓	✓				11 delight reactions included laughing (24%)
Touch	✓	✓	✓	✓		28 delight reactions included the visitor touching the stimulus (62%)
Enduring Attention	✓	✓	✓	✓		26 delight reactions included the visitor paying repeated or prolonged attention to stimulus (58%)
Demonstration	✓		✓	✓	✓	36 delight reactions included the visitor drawing another's attention to the stimulus (80%)
Hand Gesture						10 delight reactions included hand gestures (22%)
Duration (Brief [B] / Enduring [E])	B	B	B	E	B	23 BRIEF delight reactions (51%), 22 ENDURING delight reactions (49%)
Onset (Immediate [I] / Early [E] / Late [L])	E	I	E	I	E	18 delight reactions occurred immediately after entering the car (45%) (18I 22E 5L)
Previous experience (Yes [Y] / No Response [N])	N	N	N	N	N	10 delighted visitors stated they knew or owned the test car (25%)
Intention (Yes [Y] / No [N])	N	N	N	Y	N	10 delighted visitors signalled their intention to consider purchasing the car (25%)
Location (Drivers [D] / Passengers [P] / Back [B])	D	P	D	D	D	41 delight reactions occurred in the drivers seat (91%) (2B 2P 41D)

Discussion and findings of the MCO method

During the selective analysis 72 Observations containing strong positive vehicle evaluations potential delight reactions were viewed by a second researcher. Only Observations which were independently confirmed as containing a delight reaction were analysed in terms of their behavioural content. The selective analysis again demonstrated a bias towards the female target customer proposed by the collaborating company. Of the 40 Observations confirmed as containing a delight reaction, 24 were visits to the test car by females compared to 16 by males. However the data presented above does demonstrate that the car did delight across the sexes and through the ages.

The analysis of the 45 delight reactions identified within these 40 Observations provides limited support for existing theoretical conceptualisations of delight as surprising pleasure (e.g. Russell, 1980, Plutchik, 1980, Oliver et al 1997). However, in only just over half of the reactions identified as delight did the visitors to the car seem surprised by the product stimulus evoking their reaction. This calls into question the assumption that the disconfirmation of expectations that results in surprise is a prerequisite for the experience of delight by people evaluating products (e.g. Oliver et al, 1997). It should be noted though that the lack of the expression of surprise as analysed here does not negate the occurrence of expectation disconfirmation. This process may of course be occurring at an unconscious or pre-conscious level, influencing the focus of attention of visitors to the car and the apparent salience of vehicle attributes.

Indeed the results seem to paint a somewhat confusing picture of the role of expectation congruency in the experience of a delight reaction. 10 of the visitors delighted by the car stated that they owned an earlier version of the car or had driven one. Several of these delighted potential customers were indeed reacting to the differences between their car and the new model they were now appraising (e.g. ObsF237), which suggests a role for the disconfirmation of expectations. However, at least two visitors to the car seemed to be already delighted with their version of the car whilst the test-car seemed to reaffirm this reaction so that it was expressed again (ObsM210 and ObsF77). The comments of these visitors make it clear that expectation confirmation, not disconfirmation, is taking place;

They're just so nice to drive these are. Have you driven one? Ah they're so nice, I love 'em. (ObsF77)

Had two of these... and I wouldn't get anything else.... (ObsM210)

The types of behaviour characterising the delight reactions observed here in this pre-purchase product evaluation setting bare a certain similarity to those identified by Bridges (1932) in her phenomenological study of delight in Canadian infants which included - *free as against restrained movements, open eyes and facial expression forming smiles, approach movement, soft low pitched vocalisations, rhythmic arm and leg movements, and prolonged attention to object of interest*. The fidgeting and exclamations observed here are indicative of the heightened state of arousal associated with delight, whilst smiling, laughing and the positive comments made by delighted visitors to the car are markers of the positive affective component of this emotional reaction.

Again in correspondence with the work of Bridges, delighted visitors to the car seemed to fix their attention on the stimulus they found appealing. This tended to manifest itself in the form of the visitor spending extended periods of time attending to the car attribute and returning attention to it having considered other less appealing

attributes. Furthermore, when the stimulus was appropriate, many delighted visitors were motivated to touch it therefore demonstrating an approach behaviour. It is particularly interesting to see that in 80% of the delight reactions observed the delighted visitor attempted to draw the attention of others to the car attribute that appealed to them. This finding provides persuasive evidence that delighted customers are positive ambassadors because they nearly always attempt to share their delight with others. It also seems to be the case that the delight reaction is only observable when people are in groups. Not a single delight reaction was observed in a customer visiting the car alone, although some delight reactions to parts of the car that had already been attended to were observed only after another person had entered the car. This suggests that the observable delight reaction is in itself a form of interpersonal communication. There was also limited evidence to suggest that delighted customers were more likely to consider purchasing the car, with only 10% of them going on to give some indication that they wanted the car or actually intended to purchase one of its type.¹²

The 40 Observations considered in the selective analysis seemed to contain two types of delight reaction. Although the behavioural characteristics of these two reactions are indistinguishable, their durations were quite different. Brief reactions were fleeting and usually directed to a single vehicle attribute, after which the visitor seemed to continue with their evaluation otherwise unaffected. These short-lived delight reactions would seem completely unimportant if it was not for the fact that the visitor concerned often returned to the attribute responsible for the reaction and frequently drew the attention of others to it. The second type of delight reaction was more enduring. Such reactions tended to be global appraisals of the car that were characterised by observable delight throughout the period of evaluation. Alternatively several enduring reactions were characterised by an initial attribute based reaction that seemed to be reinforced with each new attribute appraised by the visitor.

Furthermore, the delight reactions captured here seem to be distinguished not only by their duration but also by their antecedents in the car. Although limited by the single test-car used and its relatively basic specification, the naturalistic customer delight reactions observed during the MCO method had quite distinct bases in the car. The most common type of reaction observed was a simple single attribute-based delight reaction. The table above shows that the leather and chrome gearstick fitted to the test-car was the most reliable source of delight in its visitors. Other single attribute stimuli were seen to evoke a delight reaction but in all these cases the reaction tended to be focused on this single attribute or feature of the car. This type of delight reaction seems to mirror that represented in the Kano Model of Product Quality (Kano, 1995). Two of these single attribute 'delighters' match the Kano Linear category; spaciousness and comfort. This is to say that they are attributes or qualities of the car that you might expect customers to want higher levels of. However the other single attributes do not seem to match this category, nor most authors' interpretation of Kano's Attractive or 'Delighter' category; functional innovations that answer customer latent needs (e.g. Clausing, 1993, Matzler and Hinterhuber 1998, Hofmeister et al 1998). Car attributes seen to delight here such as the gearstick and the car's instrument dials are present in nearly every car. However it seems that here it is the distinctive or unexpected delivery of these otherwise basic features that delights. Also observed were delight reactions evoked, and reinforced by, the appraisal of many individual car attributes suggesting a cumulative type of attribute-based delight reaction. The third antecedent type observed evoking delight here was the car as a whole. Here visitors to the car seemed to be delighted by their global or holistic appraisal of the car. This delight reaction cannot readily be explained using the attribute-based Kano typology.

¹² One particular delighted visitor attempted to buy the test-car there and then (ObsF237)

Whatever the duration of the delight reaction, or its basis in the car, it tended to occur soon after the visitor's entry into the car. Many delight reactions occurred almost immediately (45%), whilst the only delight reactions that occurred late in the product appraisal were experienced by visitors that had already expressed delight earlier in their evaluation. Certainly within the motorshow context the delight reaction seems to be a highly positive initial reaction to a vehicle or one or more of its attributes.

4.5 Discussion of the Exploratory Pilot Study findings

The Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS) has provided the background information required to understand the context of the Case Study - the pre-purchase evaluation of cars by potential customers. Interviews with car dealers and owners guided the design and deployment of observational research with the goal of understanding the diversity and nature of customer delight within that context. Together, the EPS was designed to address the following research questions;

- *How do people evaluate cars?*
- *Does delight occur in this situation?*
- *If it occurs, what does this reaction look like? (i.e., what are the affective, behavioural and cognitive components of delight reactions to cars?)*
- *Do delighter features exist in cars? (i.e., what are the antecedent stimuli of delight?)*

The initial interviews with customers and dealers provided some preliminary answers to the first of these questions. Both types of interviewee saw car evaluation and the reasons for purchase being based on the appraisal of both individual car attributes and the car as a whole. However, these interviews were able to shed very little light on the nature of the delight reaction itself despite both sets of interviewees being able to identify things about cars that could delight the customer. Both groups of interviewees cited the importance of product-specific expectation levels in the appraisal of cars and were able to identify individual car features that influenced purchase decisions and/or evoked delight. Customer interviewees identified car features in their current car that they were delighted by. The examples given by interviewees were unexpected car features and high levels of linear qualities and therefore matched the constructs contained within the Kano Model of Product Quality (Kano, 1995). However, both interviewee types also identified the importance of the car's appeal at the global level in purchase decisions. This suggested an holistic appeal reaction not accounted for in the attribute-based Kano Model. Both car dealer and customer interviewees identified the importance of the car appraisal that takes place prior to visiting the car dealership. Car dealers identified this as the factor that determines a customer's arrival at a dealership and customers described the settings and sources of appraisal they used prior to visiting the sales environment. An example pre-purchase setting was then selected as the research context to be used for the observational methods.

The observational research conducted in the EPS captured the pre-purchase appraisal of cars using two methods. The analysis of the Observations recorded paints a detailed picture of how customers appraise cars in a particular pre-purchase setting. These Observations show both attribute-based and holistic customer evaluation processes. The MVO method provided Observations of female potential customers appraising both the interiors and exteriors of cars and the attributes that evoked customer delight reactions. The MCO method provided an indication of which areas of cars are important during customer appraisal of their interiors through a calculation of the frequency of attention to car attributes.

The observational methods used in the EPS were also designed to identify the presence of customer delight in the context of the first case. Both methods objectively demonstrated the occurrence of customer delight reactions in a naturalistic pre-purchase setting. The data collected has also provided preliminary insights into the nature of the delight reaction itself and its antecedents in a single class of products, providing initial answers to the third and fourth research questions. The MCO method allowed the study of these delight reactions in detail and highlighted some of the behaviours associated with delight reactions. Different forms of extremely positive reactions to cars, classified as delight, were identified. Several attribute-based delight reactions were seen, and were characterised by their interruption of the typical evaluation routine, favourable comments and exclamations, prolonged or repeated attention to the stimulus attribute (delighter) and the drawing of other people's attention to it, positive facial expressions and fidgeting. A second form of delight observed was the result of a cumulative appraisal of the car. This type of delight was characterised by an initial expression of the positive appraisal, followed by a process of serially checking the car attributes in the maintenance or refutation of this initial, emotionally charged, reaction. Finally a purely holistic delight reaction was observed where the stimulus for the reaction was the global appeal of the car rather than individual vehicle attributes. The duration of these reactions also varied. Delight reactions evoked by specific vehicle attributes were often brief and focussed on the attribute alone. Cumulative and holistic based delight reactions were correspondingly more enduring. Frequently the overt interest a customer showed in the car and its attributes was accompanied by excitable behaviour. Delight reactions of all types seemed to have generally the same behavioural components demonstrating the positive affective and high arousal components of this reaction. The frequently observed exclamations and fidgeting movements indicate the power of the delight reaction. Not only does the person experiencing delight sometimes appear to be momentarily overcome by the emotion so that they involuntarily display their emotional state, but they also often attempt to spread the reaction to their companions by drawing their attention to the attribute that appeals so strongly to them.

What the MCO method was unable to confirm was the role of expectations in the delight reaction. Although surprise, indicative of expectation disconfirmation, was frequently observed it appeared to be absent from nearly half the delight reactions studied in the MCO method. Evidence for the occurrence of expectation confirmation as a source of delight was also seen, calling into question theories of delight based purely on Disconfirmation and surprise (e.g. Oliver et al 1997).

The EPS has also succeeded in identifying a limited group of product based antecedents of the customer delight response for a single class of product. These have been objectively identified as evoking a delight response within a naturalistic setting. This is in contrast to the Kano methodology, (Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998 and Kano, 1995) which identifies researcher defined product features as 'delighters' on the basis of numerical responses to survey questions. The antecedents of delight identified during the EPS offer support for the constructs making up the Kano Model and the popular interpretations of it, (e.g. Clausing 1993, Hofmeister, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998 and Shen et al, 2000). Both Linear qualities and Attractive qualities answering latent needs were the source of delight reactions captured during the MCO method. However the EPS has uncovered several delightful car attributes that might be considered 'Basic' in Kano's terms. These attributes did not appear to delight because of their scalar achievement in the cars, nor because of the function they performed. Features such as gearsticks, instrument dials and door handles all appeared to delight because of their delivery in the product, their appeal to the senses or the way they worked or operated. Furthermore a frequent source of delight

observed in the EPS, and highlighted above, was the global appraisal of the car as a whole. This source of delight is not easy to explain in terms of the Kano Model. However, the EPS did not provide the depth of data required to investigate these proposals further due to the use of only a single test-car in the MVO method and the limited data collected through the MCO method. The investigation of these product based sources of delight will form part of the focus of the Descriptive Study described in the next two chapters.

4.6 Theoretical Development

The implications of these findings are incorporated into a development of the Kano Model below. The EPS has not employed Kano's positivist methodology. The model represents the new understanding gained by studying the phenomenology of customer delight during the naturalistic evaluation of cars and is a purely a theoretical development of the Kano Model. This development includes the two routes to customer delight (represented by the grey shaded area in the model) not accounted for in Kano's original model. These are the exceptional or distinctive delivery of everyday expected vehicle attributes (Basics - blue arrow in the model) and global-level product appeal (Holistic - red shaded area in the model). Kano's unexpected latent-need answering 'Attractive', and scalar 'Linear' routes to delight have also been supported by the EPS research findings.

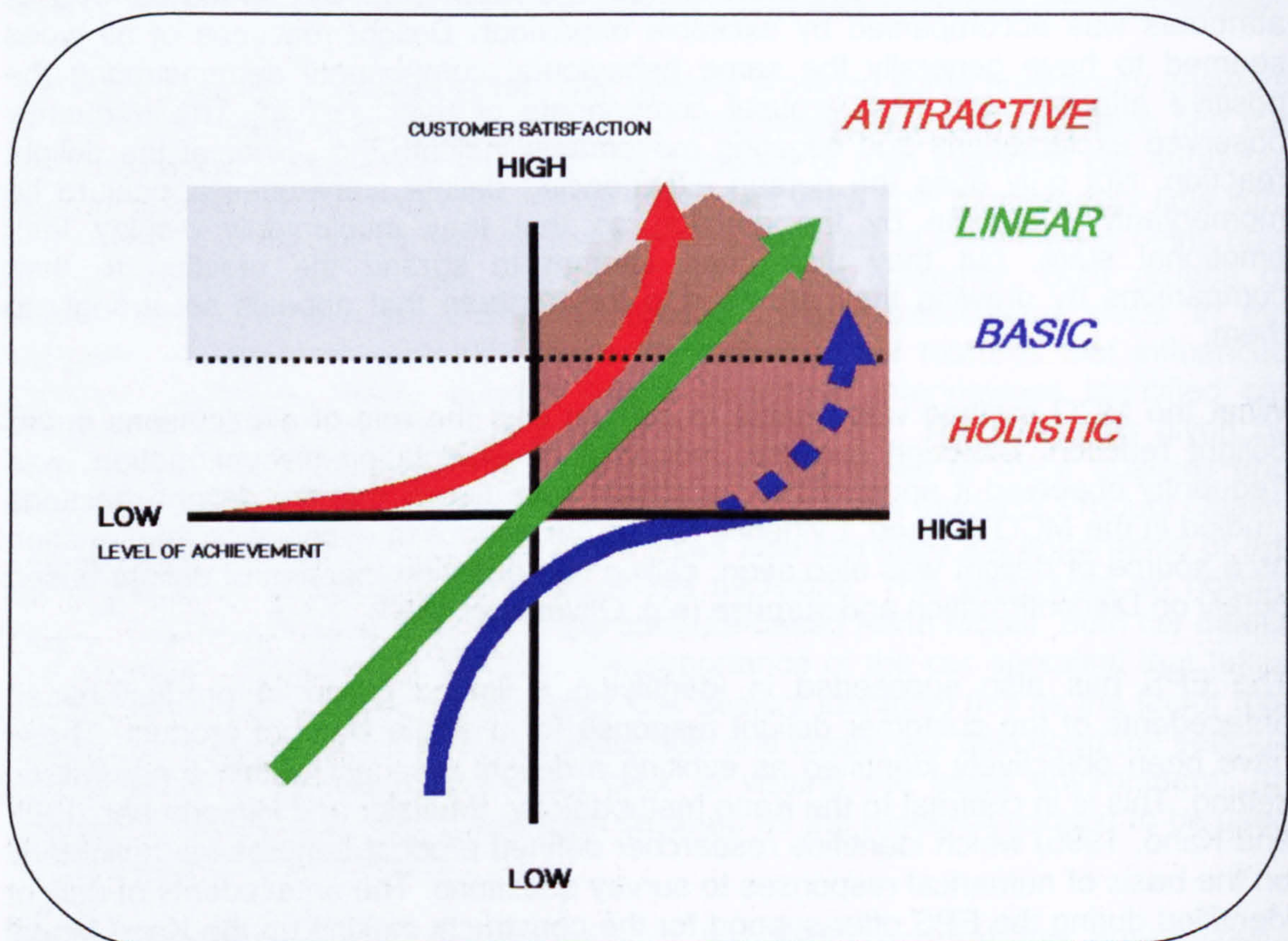


Figure 4.6: Theoretical development of the Kano Model based on the phenomenological study of pre-purchase car evaluation

Further to the development of the Kano view of customer satisfaction and its product basis, the EPS also allows the development of theory about the nature of the customer delight reaction from the initial $S > ABC$ ¹³ prologue presented in the previous

¹³ Stimulus > Affect Behaviour Cognition

chapter. The analysis of the data collected during the EPS produced initial insights into the existence of different stimulus types and the observable affective, cognitive and behavioural components of the reaction. The resulting theory contains the first information on the nature of delight within this consumption context. The existence of delight reactions within the static evaluation of cars has been demonstrated and the existence of several constituents of the reaction have been identified. This newly developed knowledge is incorporated into the ongoing theoretical development as the first building blocks of a model of this emotion-laden customer reaction. These are presented in the theoretical framework below.

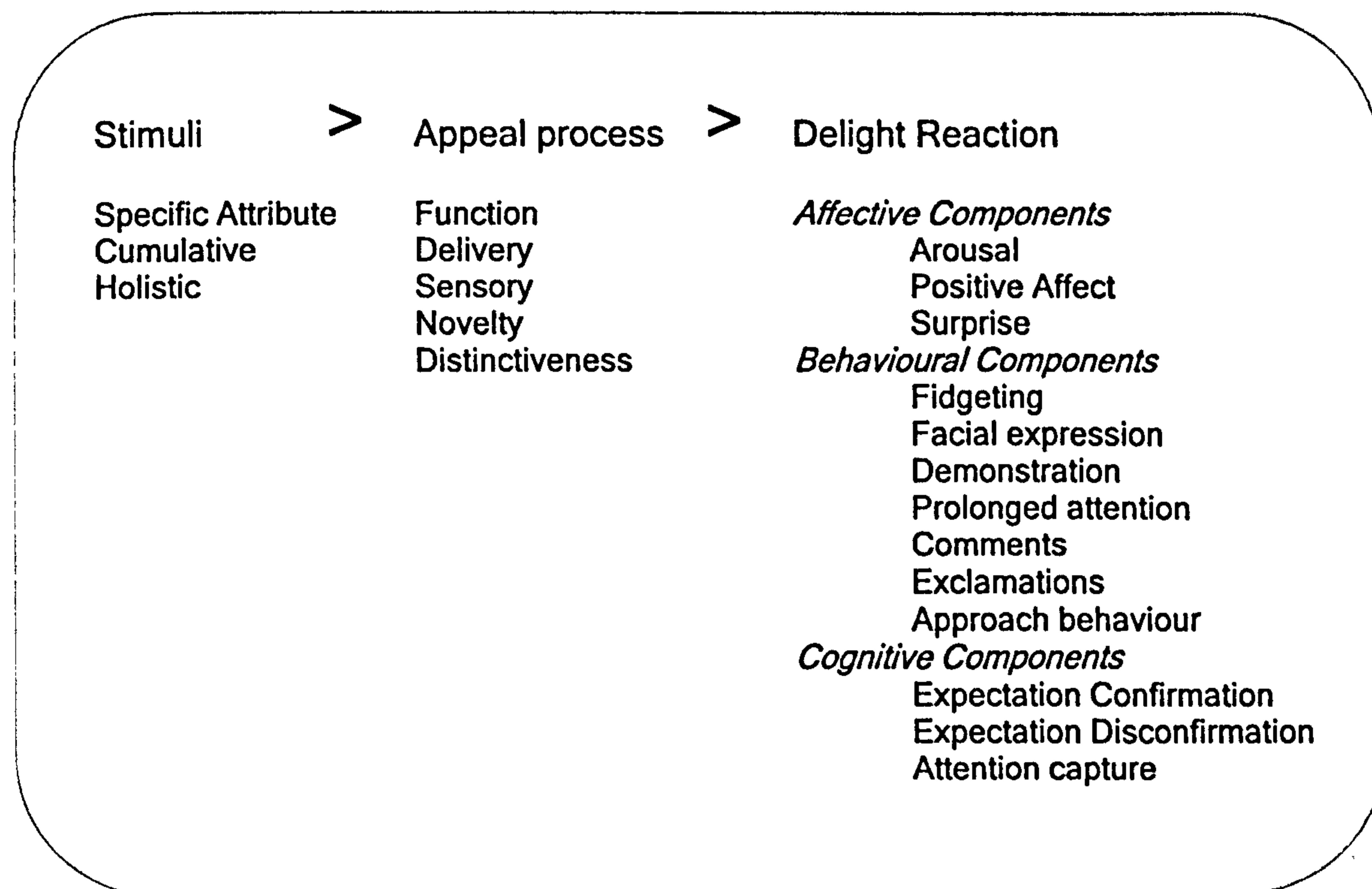


Figure 4.7: A descriptive theory of customer delight during product evaluation developed from the initial Stimulus>Affect Behaviour Cognition prologue.

The initial induction of theory based on the findings of the EPS allows the specification of three sources of delight within this class of products; specific attributes, cumulative attributes and the holistic appraisal of the product. The data also suggest a diverse cognitive and sensory appeal process, although the EPS has not provided the depth of insight needed to clarify the full nature and diversity of this process. Evidence has been collected for the functional appeal of product attributes, their appeal to the senses and their novelty or distinctiveness compared to expectations or the norm. Some vehicle features were also identified as appealing due to the way they were delivered or operated in the product. This appeal process requires further investigation. Finally the EPS has objectively identified some of the affective, behavioural and cognitive components of the delight reaction itself. Positive affects and feelings of arousal were implicit in delighted customers' facial expressions, exclamations and comments. The behavioural components of the delight reaction were uncovered in the detailed analysis of 45 confirmed delight reactions. Finally Cognitive components including prolonged attention and expectation congruencies were also identified. The EPS has allowed the progression of theory development, particularly in the area of the Behavioural components of the delight reaction. However the methods used in the EPS did not provide an opportunity to interact with customers. Whilst this maintained the naturalistic research

setting it has limited the detailed study of the Affective and Cognitive nature of the delight reaction. These components require further investigation in the Descriptive Study.

4.7 EPS limitations and implications for the Descriptive Study

The EPS has provided a triangulated understanding of the Case - pre-purchase evaluation of cars. Multiple methods have provided mutually supporting evidence for the existence of both attribute-based and holistic-based delight reactions and the first insights into the nature and diversity of this consumption emotion. However the following limitations of the exploratory stage require the progression to a more detailed Descriptive stage, prior to the final presentation of a descriptive theory of customer delight during product evaluation.

- The methods used only provided access to the externally observable components of the delight reaction. No method within the EPS specifically set out to interact with customers to uncover the internal nature of this reaction.
- Whilst the observable behaviour associated with delight reactions could be studied in detail, the cognitive and affective components of delight had to be inferred from observable behaviours.
- The Observational methods that provided the majority of the data during the EPS were deployed in only a single pre-purchase consumption context limited to only a single type of vehicle evaluation (static). This is likely to have limited both the antecedents and the nature of the delight reactions captured.
- The MVO method allowed the capture of delight reactions during the evaluation of multiple cars but due to external constraints considered only female customers.
- The appraisal reactions of both sexes were investigated in detail during the MCO method. However external constraints again limited this method to a single test-car. The relatively basic specification of this car, and the non-in-depth nature of the data collected in the MVO method, means that the sources of delight studied in the EPS are limited.

To develop a fully descriptive theory of pre-purchase customer delight reactions to cars this phenomenon requires further investigation via multiple methods that allow interaction with research participants. Whilst these methods may reduce the realism of the research context they will facilitate the uncovering of the internal cognitive and affective components of the delight reaction and the reasons underlying the appeal of product attributes. The developing grounded theory of customer delight must now be built upon using additional methods to produce a fully descriptive theory of its occurrence during pre-purchase product evaluation. The progression of the research into this Descriptive phase is now presented as the Descriptive Study in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented the first stage of this research - the Exploratory Pilot Study. The multi-method approach used to explore the case selected for the study has been described and the findings have been presented and discussed. This approach used a combination of interview and observational methods to develop a triangulated understanding of pre-purchase vehicle evaluation. Interviews with both car owners and car dealers provided an overview of the car purchase process. Two

Observational methods were then used to capture the real-time occurrence of delight reactions in the pre-purchase setting selected - an international motorshow. The first used observers to identify and describe the reactions of female customers to multiple cars. The second used a camera system to record the reactions of every visitor to a single car. Multiple delight reactions were captured using each method and were considered in terms of their nature and the product stimuli evoking them. Potential limitations with The Kano Model and the Disconfirmation Model have been discussed. The footage captured using the camera system was used to study the naturalistic behavioural components of the delight reaction.

The triangulated methods used in the EPS have resulted in the development of theory from the initial S>ABC theoretical prologue. However the insights gained into the behavioural components of the delight reaction and the examples of its antecedents captured here provide only a partial understanding of the nature of this phenomenon. The lack of insight gained into the cognitive and affective components of the reaction therefore determined the emphasis of the DS. The next chapter presents this evolution of the Case Study into its descriptive stage.

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Chapter 5

Stage Two of the research - The Descriptive Study

Aim

To describe the research's progression into its descriptive phase by presenting its methods and the quantitative analysis of the data collected.

5.0 Chapter Summary

This chapter demonstrates how the initial exploration of the - *'pre-purchase evaluation of cars'* - influenced the main study of the phenomenon of interest - *customer delight*. The two methods that make up this Descriptive Study (DS) are presented and their application is described. Following the introduction of each method the data collected are presented in the form of a descriptive quantitative analysis. After each method the research findings are discussed in terms of the existing theoretical conceptualisations of this phenomena and the process of theory development is continued.

Chapter 6 completes the DS by turning to the analysis of the qualitative data collected and the presentation of the findings of the research. Chapter 7 then brings together the findings of the EPS and DS in the presentation of a descriptive theory of customer delight during pre-purchase product evaluation and its comparison with the existing theories of the phenomenon introduced in Chapter 2.

5.1 Introduction to the Descriptive Study

The Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS) generated initial findings and theoretical propositions that steered the design and deployment of the descriptive phase of the Case Study. This Descriptive Study (DS) incorporates two methods designed to build upon the understanding of customer delight provided by the EPS. These methods are Car Clinic Interviews (CCI) and Self-Report Diaries (SRD) and were designed to answer the following re-framed research questions emerging from the Exploratory Pilot Study;

- 1. What is the cognitive and affective nature of the customer's internal experience of delight?*
- 2. What are the full diversity of antecedents of these reactions in the pre-purchase evaluation of cars ?*
- 3. How do the antecedents and nature of the delight reaction differ according to the appraisal situation?*

These two methods conclude the detailed investigation of customer delight reactions and their antecedents during pre-purchase car evaluation in two sub-cases, static evaluation and product trial;

- *16 Car Clinic interviews (CCI)*
Aim - to capture the customer's view of delight reactions as they happen and to identify the antecedents of these reactions in two forms of vehicle evaluation
Triangulation via method context (static, dynamic evaluation) and product (4 cars)

- *52 Motorshow Self-Report Diaries (SRD)*
Aim - to capture multiple delight reactions in the words of the customer
 Triangulation via method and setting

The developing theory of customer delight that resulted from the EPS is limited by the single context used for the investigation of the phenomenon, and the fact that the methods used did not provide a means of investigating the subjective or internal nature of delight reactions. The use of naturalistic Observational methods allowed the description of the externally observable components of multiple delight reactions, and the proposal of some factors underlying the cognitive and affective appeal of cars. However to fully understand the cognitive and affective components of delight reactions, and the appeal of their antecedent stimuli, methods that could gain access to the internal states of the people experiencing this reaction were required. Whilst the Observational methods provided an almost entirely naturalistic view of delight reactions the methods used in the DS would have to provide a means of interacting with the person experiencing delight to seek their interpretation and description of it.

The Motorshow Vehicle Observation (MVO) and Motorshow Customer Observation (MCO) methods had captured some of the variety of car attributes that could delight potential customers during their static evaluation of cars. The MCO method had captured delight reactions on video and this resulted in the identification of common externally observable behaviours that were associated with the delight reaction. Both these insights were used and built upon in the design of the methods used in the DS. The two self-report methods constituting the DS provide a more fully triangulated understanding of delight reactions during the pre-purchase evaluation of cars. They study the occurrence of delight during both static and dynamic car evaluation in two distinct research settings. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and their analysis resulted in the final stage of theoretical development. The data sets collected are described and their initial analysis is presented in this chapter. The in-depth qualitative analysis is presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 concludes the process of theory development through the synthesis of a descriptive model of customer delight during the pre-purchase evaluation of cars and its comparison with existing theories of this consumption emotion.

5.2 Methodological implications of the existing literature

The observational methods used in the EPS echoed a route of investigating emotional reactions commonly followed within the discipline of Psychology (e.g. the study of facial expressions Izard, 1972). They provided insight into the overt components of customer delight reactions, the behaviours, facial expressions and stimuli associated with them. However, most common scientific usage of the term, when it does provide a definition, considers emotions to be subjectively experienced (Reber and Reber, 2001 and Plutchik, 1980). The experience of an emotion cannot be fully understood by studying its externally observable components alone. One route of insight into the internal subjective components of delight provided in the EPS was through the analysis of the comments made by people during their evaluation of a product. Various cognition types and affective states could be identified on the basis of inference from the vocalisations and facial expressions of people who demonstrated some other overt signs of delight.

Psychoevolutionists consider that emotions by definition have survival implications in terms of their effect on an animal's behaviour (e.g. Plutchik, 1980). These effects may be observable but the emotional reaction itself, depending on its strength, may or may not be. The delight reactions analysed in the EPS were all identified on the basis

of observable indicators of the emotion (facial expressions, vocalisations, attention and body language). Outside the sensitivity of the methods used to study the phenomenon was the internal experience of delight. The EPS suggested that delight in itself was a form of interpersonal communication. Participants were observed expressing their delight reaction to cars they had been appraising only once they had gained the attention of companions. In such cases however, the appraisal of the car was already taking place and the act of drawing other people's attention to it seemed to be part of the delight reaction. The DS provides a means of theoretical triangulation by studying customer delight with the use of methods that do not rely on observation to identify its occurrence. Both methods described here incorporate self-report as a means of studying the internal components of the delight reaction. Here research participants report their own experiences of delight, and insights into the cognitive and affective components of this reaction are provided by the people actually experiencing it.

The use of self-report methods reduces the realism of the situation being studied. Participants must be interacted with before data can be collected about their delight reactions. This limitation is unavoidable but must be minimised if possible. As such both methods within the DS were designed to capture delight reactions as they naturally occurred rather than by creating them artificially. And, as in the EPS, these methods were designed to study delight as it happened rather than to collect data on the memory of it as suggested by Oliver and Rust, (2000) and Levine, (1997). Self-report mechanisms were therefore employed in such a way that participant's described their experience of delight as, or as soon as possible after, they experienced it.

Another consideration incorporated into the design of the Descriptive Study was the continued desire to study multiple and diverse delight reactions. The EPS was limited to a single research context, the 1998 British Motorshow, where visitors had been engaged in a purely static evaluation of products. Only the evaluation of multiple cars by female customers had been studied, whilst the delight reactions of both sexes had only been studied in detail during the evaluation of a single car. In the DS the context, within which the developing theory is grounded, was consciously enlarged. Two forms of product appraisal became the focus of the first CCI method; static evaluation and product trial. Here participants of both sexes evaluated four different cars, and delight reactions occurring during their static appraisals and whilst driving the cars were studied. This final stage of the Case Study also required a larger scale study of the phenomenon of interest, and was designed to collect a large number of diverse delight reactions by letting more people describe why more cars delighted them. Both the CCI and SRD methods sought to identify the diversity and nature of customer delight and its antecedents both to progress the development of new theory and to provide a basis for comparison with existing propositions such as those of Kano, (1995) and Oliver et al (1997, 2000).

5.3 Sampling

The DS itself represents a piece of purposeful or theoretical sampling. Firstly self-report methods were used to sample from the context of the case in a new way, with the aim of uncovering previously un-sampled aspects of delight reactions. Secondly, both confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence was sought by studying self-reported, rather than observed, delight in the same static evaluation context sampled from in the EPS and in a new context, the test-drive, that together better represent the case - *pre-purchase evaluation of cars by potential customers*.

The research participants themselves were again selected on a purposeful basis, as was the case in the EPS. The aim of this sampling is to produce depth of insight without data-overload by capturing large amounts of qualitative data from relatively small numbers of participants. The DS aimed to maximise the diversity of the delight reactions investigated, not only by broadening the context of the research, but also by insuring a diverse group of participants for the study. Research participants were selected on grounds of their variations in age, sex, and background. An expressed interest in cars or the imminent purchase of one was used as a filter to maximise the chances of capturing numerous authentic delight reactions. The same goals guided the selection of research contexts. Methods within the DS were specifically designed to maximise the variety of stimulus vehicles to be appraised by the research participants and to ensure the collection of verbatim from participants as soon as possible after their experience of a delight reaction.

5.4 Car Clinic Interviews (CCI)

The CCI method was primarily designed to answer some of the limitations of the MVO and MCO methods used in the EPS. These methods had captured the behavioural components of potential customers' delight reactions during the static evaluation of cars. The CCI method aimed to study any additional cognitive and affective components of this reaction without having to make inferences from the observable components of delight. To gain access to these internal phenomena the CCI method sought the participant's description of their own delight reactions. The interview approach used allowed the investigation of what participants were thinking and feeling during their experience of delight. Instead of relying upon solely observable indicators of delight, the CCI method let participants themselves identify when they were delighted. This meant that the CCI method could potentially capture delight reactions that may have been excluded from the EPS because they were not externally observable.

To aid the development of a more complete theory of customer delight it was necessary to further maximise the diversity of the delight reactions under investigation. The CCI method therefore incorporated the static evaluation situation explored in the EPS, and also gave participants the chance to drive the cars. These evaluation settings are referred to as *static* and *test-drive* and together better represent the complete context of the case - pre-purchase evaluation of cars. The method did not employ a true naturalistic setting. Participants were not actually in the process of buying the test-vehicles used, however the CCI method was deployed in a setting designed to represent the whole real world pre-purchase situation. Participants evaluated cars statically as they might in the sales environment. They were then able to use the cars, test-driving them as they would if they were buying one. This research setting met the aim of identifying a fuller variety of the car attributes that can evoke delight reactions in customers of this class of product. By letting participants drive cars it was hoped that antecedents of the delight reaction that do not present themselves during a static evaluation of the car would be revealed. Driving the cars would also extend the amount of time participants spent evaluating the vehicles.

The EPS had several unavoidable constraints applied to it. It had only been possible to study the detailed appraisal of a single car by potential customers in the MCO method. As a result the antecedents of delight reactions that could be studied in detail were limited to those present in a single test car. The MVO method was able to capture reactions to a greater variety of cars but in less detail, increasing the diversity of the car attributes that were observed stimulating delight reactions. However, this method was limited in terms of the depth of information that could be collected about

the internal nature of the delight observed. Furthermore the method had been restricted to the observation of female customers. The CCI method needed to increase the depth of insight gained through the EPS whilst increasing the variety of potentially delightful stimuli. As a result the method used interviews combined with observation in an attempt to capture the Behavioural, Cognitive and Affective components of potential customers' self-reported delight reactions to four different types of car.

Taking into consideration the methodological constraints already outlined above, the CCI method employed an open-ended interview approach deployed concurrently with the observation of car appraisal. This allowed the observation of the behavioural indicators of delight identified as a result of the EPS to prompt the discussion of the reaction with the interviewee. The method studied delight as it happened, ensuring the phenomenon itself was the subject of investigation, not the memory of it. The resulting data take the form of self-reported customer delight reactions, described in the words of the customer, as they occurred. The data collected allow the analysis of the affective, behavioural and cognitive composition of delight reactions and their antecedent stimuli in cars.

5.4.1 Procedure

A second collaborating organisation was approached to host the research. This organisation is an international company providing test facilities to the vast majority of the world's motor manufacturers. The collaborating organisation supplied four test-cars, research participants for the exercise, and a pre-planned test-drive taking in both their test-track and public roads.

To conduct the research the author recruited two colleagues at Cranfield University and one employee of the collaborating organisation to act as interviewers. The method called for these interviewers to accompany participants throughout their evaluation of the test cars, observing their appraisal, prompting the participant's description of their own delight reactions, and recording their resulting explanation of it. The group of interviewers for the event included the author and was made up of two males and two females, aged between 23 and 37 years.

The data collection instrument

As in the MVO method, a data collection instrument was designed for use by the interviewers. This instrument allowed the interviewers to collect descriptions of the interviewee's reactions to the test cars. The data collection instrument took the form of a book of identical recording sheets, one of which can be found in the Appendix (section 3.0). Each sheet was designed to capture a single delight reaction and contained space for the researcher to record details of the stimulus that resulted in the participant's observed or self-reported experience of delight. The researcher could record their description of the stimulus on the sheet and interior and exterior vehicle diagrams were provided for identifying the location of any contributing vehicle attributes. Each sheet also included space to record the vehicle involved and the type of evaluation taking place, *static* or *test-drive*.

The rest of the recording sheet was devoted to the coding and description of the delight reaction itself. A 5-item scale and eight questions enabled the researcher to code the delight reaction, and the remaining half of the sheet provided the space required to capture the participant's description of their associated thoughts and feelings. The 5-item scale used on the sheet allowed interviewers to record the strength of the delight reaction as reported by the participant on an ordinal scale from

1 (*like*) to 5 (*delight*).¹ These two terms anchored the scale with the other three items provided but not labelled. This uni-polar scale takes into consideration previous work demonstrating that delight is most appropriately measured as a uni-dimensional emotion, (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991). By scoring the strength of positive reactions to cars and their features, and the inclusion of delight as the upper anchor of the scale used, a filter could be applied to the data. Like Estelami, (2000) only the highest scoring reactions to the car and its attributes will be labelled as 'delight'².

The eight coding questions were included on the recording sheet with the aim of aiding the further development of theory that resulted from the EPS: The EPS had uncovered some limitations of the product appeal process modelled by Kano, (1995) and a theoretical development of the Kano Model was proposed. On the basis of the findings of the EPS and the existing conceptualisations of customer delight, eight factors were identified and incorporated into questions requiring a YES or NO answer from participants. These questions sought participants' own interpretation of the appeal process in terms of the product's functional, dynamic and sensory appeal, and its novelty and distinctiveness. The eight factors covered both the expectation and function based appeal processes proposed in the literature, (Oliver et al, 1997, 2000, Kano 1995, Clausing, 1994, Hofmeister, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998 and Shen et al, 2000) and the appeal of distinctively delivered expected car attributes observed in the EPS.

- *Does the car/attribute appeal because of its FUNCTION (what it does)?*
- *Does it appeal because of its OPERATION (the way it works)?*
- *Does it appeal because of its LOOK (the way it looks)?*
- *Does it appeal because of its FEEL (to the touch)?*
- *Does it appeal because of the SOUND it makes?*
- *Does it appeal because of its NOVELTY?*
- *Does it SURPRISE you?*
- *Does it appeal to you at an EMOTIONal level?*

The factors upon which the questions were based were recognised as a prototypical coding scheme and the majority of the recording sheet was devoted to an area for the interviewer to make notes. Here the participant's verbatim could be recorded, allowing comparison with the coding. Interviewers prompted participants to explain the appeal of vehicle features they particularly liked and to describe the thoughts and feelings they were having as a result. The recorded verbatim therefore offered the opportunity to capture additional factors influencing the appeal of a delightful stimulus and not accounted for in the coding questions. Finally, the data collection instrument contained a demographic questionnaire to describe the participant, their background, interests and car ownership history.

The participants

The collaborating organisation was responsible for recruiting the research participants on the basis of instructions given by the author. The requirement for a

¹ Note the differences between this scale and that used in the MVO and MCO methods. Items on the scale are only positively valenced and the strongest reactions would also be scored 5 in contrast to the MVO and MCO scale where delight reactions were scored 1.

² Estelami, (2000) uses a 5 point scale from disappointed (1) to delighted (5) in his research into extreme consumer reactions to organisational complaint resolution. Using a self-report mechanism Estelami only analyses the reports of consumers marking (1) or (5) on this scale to ensure only the extremes of delight and disappointment are studied. However, Estelami's scale fails to take into account the findings of Westbrook and Oliver (1991) who, whilst measuring satisfaction and delight numerically, identified that in contrast to satisfaction, delight is most appropriately measured as a uni-polar variable.

diverse convenience sample was stipulated and the collaborating organisation recruited members of staff, their relatives and friends accordingly. The research exercise was advertised internally asking for volunteers for the research. Respondents were selected to maximise the diversity of the sample and to reduce bias. As such, volunteers with non-vehicle related responsibilities were chosen where possible (e.g. family, friends and support staff) and employees who dealt with the makes of car being used in the research during their work were excluded. Volunteers were then chosen to maximise variations in age, sex and background. The resulting sample was made up of 16 participants, four females and 12 males, ranging in age from 19 to 61 yrs.

The test-cars

Again the collaborating organisation were responsible for sourcing the test cars. Four different categories of car were chosen by the author and stereotypical vehicles were chosen from the stock of cars under test at the organisation's UK facility. The test-cars selected, their category and approximate list price at the time of the research are shown in the panel below. All the test-cars were UK-specification, right-hand drive and had manual gearboxes except CAR 4, which had an automatic gearbox with both semi- and fully automatic modes.

<i>CAR 1 - Small city car</i>	<i>Fiat Seicento Sporting</i>	<i>£ 7500</i>
<i>CAR 2 - Family hatchback</i>	<i>Ford Focus 1.4 LX</i>	<i>£ 14000</i>
<i>CAR 3 - Multi Purpose Vehicle</i>	<i>Renault Megane Scenic 1.9td</i>	<i>£ 15000</i>
<i>CAR 4 - Sports Coupe</i>	<i>BMW 323 coupe</i>	<i>£ 25000</i>

The Car Clinic process

Participants were assigned to one of four Car Clinics on the basis of their availability. Each Car Clinic lasted just under four hours and took place on either the morning or afternoon of the two days of the research. Each Car Clinic followed the sequence outlined below;

- 10 minutes introduction to the research including the completion of demographic questionnaires and the pairing of participants with interviewers
- 50 minutes evaluation of each car (25 minutes static and 25 minutes test-drive - total 200 minutes)
- 30 minutes group discussion

Each car clinic took place at the UK test facility of the collaborating organisation. On arrival participants were introduced to the research and the agenda for the session was explained. The participants were told that the research aimed to identify the things about cars that delight customers. Each participant was assigned an interviewer so that each Car Clinic in essence became four three hour long in-depth interviews conducted during the evaluation of the test cars. The participants were told to try and concentrate on the things they liked about the cars, rather than the things they disliked about them. In particular they were asked to point out to their interviewer the things in the cars *“that stood out, that they thought were special, or that made them go ‘wow I like that’”*. The participants then evaluated each of the four test cars in sequence accompanied throughout by the same interviewer. To counterbalance any order effect the evaluation sequence of the cars was reversed on the second day of

the research. Each participant and interviewer pairing evaluated a test car alone, with pairings cycling through the cars until the four interviewees had each evaluated all four cars. This system of rotation meant that each participant appraised the cars in the same order (CAR1, CAR2, CAR3, CAR4, reversed on the second day) but starting with a different car.

Participants evaluated the exterior and interior of each car as it was parked in a car park. After approximately 25 minutes of this static evaluation (or until no further appealing car attributes could be identified) the pairing began their test-drive of the vehicle. The ten mile test-drive route took in a small portion of the collaborating organisation's test-track and a route through a local town and the surrounding countryside. Various road conditions were included and speeds varied from stationery in traffic jams up to the legal limit of 70mph on a section of dual carriageway. The route took approximately 20 minutes to complete and provided an opportunity to park half way around. Interviewers were instructed to use this time, and the change-over between cars to check and clarify their notes with the participant. In every case the interviewer took the front passenger seat and the participant the driver's seat. Throughout both stages of each vehicle's evaluation the interviewer prompted the participant to talk about the things that appealed most strongly about the car. The majority of delight reactions to the cars were self-reported by the participants but interviewers were also instructed to question participants when they observed a reaction they considered to be 'delight'³. Once the participant had identified a car attribute that particularly appealed to them a single sheet of the data collection instrument was used to record the reaction and its antecedents in the words of the participant. The participant was asked to describe what it was they liked and to score how much they liked it on the 5-point scale. Participants were then specifically asked to explain what the appealing attribute made them think and feel. The interviewer then asked each of the eight coding questions recording each of the participant's responses. Each completed recording sheet therefore described and coded a single positive reaction to the vehicle and identified the antecedent stimuli that evoked it. The type of evaluation taking place when the reaction occurred was also identified on the sheet (i.e., was the attribute identified during the static evaluation of the car or on the test drive). Interviewers were asked to observe and prompt their interviewees but to only record their verbatim comments. Each Car Clinic ended with a 30 minute group discussion of the cars. The resulting data collection books were then collected and transcribed into a spreadsheet program prior to analysis.

5.4.2 Results

18 data collection books were returned to the author⁴. The complete data set contained 567 reactions to the test cars, each one coded and described on an individual recording sheet. Each reaction, as recorded, became an numbered Observation (again referred to - e.g., Obs414) and was transcribed into a spreadsheet program. 118 of the recorded reactions had been rated as 'delight' by the participants, receiving a score of 5 on the 5-item scale. The remaining 449 reactions were discarded from the analysis on the grounds that they did not constitute customer delight reactions. In line with the developing theory the data set had been collected, and would be analysed according to the S>ABC prologue. The characteristics of the product were analysed as the stimuli evoking the self-reported delight reactions captured. These reactions were then analysed in terms of their associated affects and cognitions, the thoughts and feelings of the person

³ Interviewers had been briefed on the findings of the EPS and viewed example Observations taken from the video tapes recorded during the MCO method prior to the deployment of the CCI method.

⁴ Two participants' responses overflowed into a second recording book.

experiencing and reporting the reaction. The following sections present and describe the data set and its descriptive quantitative analysis. The detailed qualitative analysis of the participant verbatim, and its comparison with that collected in the SRD method, is presented in Chapter 6.

The stimuli - 'delighters'

The four test-cars used in the research were the stimuli whose appraisal evoked the captured delight reactions. The first process of analysis sought to identify the attribute-basis of these reactions; what was it about the test-cars that appealed to participants so much that they reported 'delight'. 567 positive reactions to the test-cars had been reported. The data shows that one of the test-cars in particular appealed to these participants. CAR4, the sports coupe, evoked 211 positive reactions from the 16 participants (13.5 per interviewee). The next most favourable reaction was to CAR3, the MPV, which evoked 141 positive reactions (8.8 per interviewee). The remaining two cars, CAR1 the small city car and CAR2 the family hatchback, the participants liked less, evoking 105 and 110 positive comments respectively (6.6 and 6.9 per interviewee). The graph below plots the number of positive reactions to the test-cars, according to the strength of the reaction as reported by the interviewee.

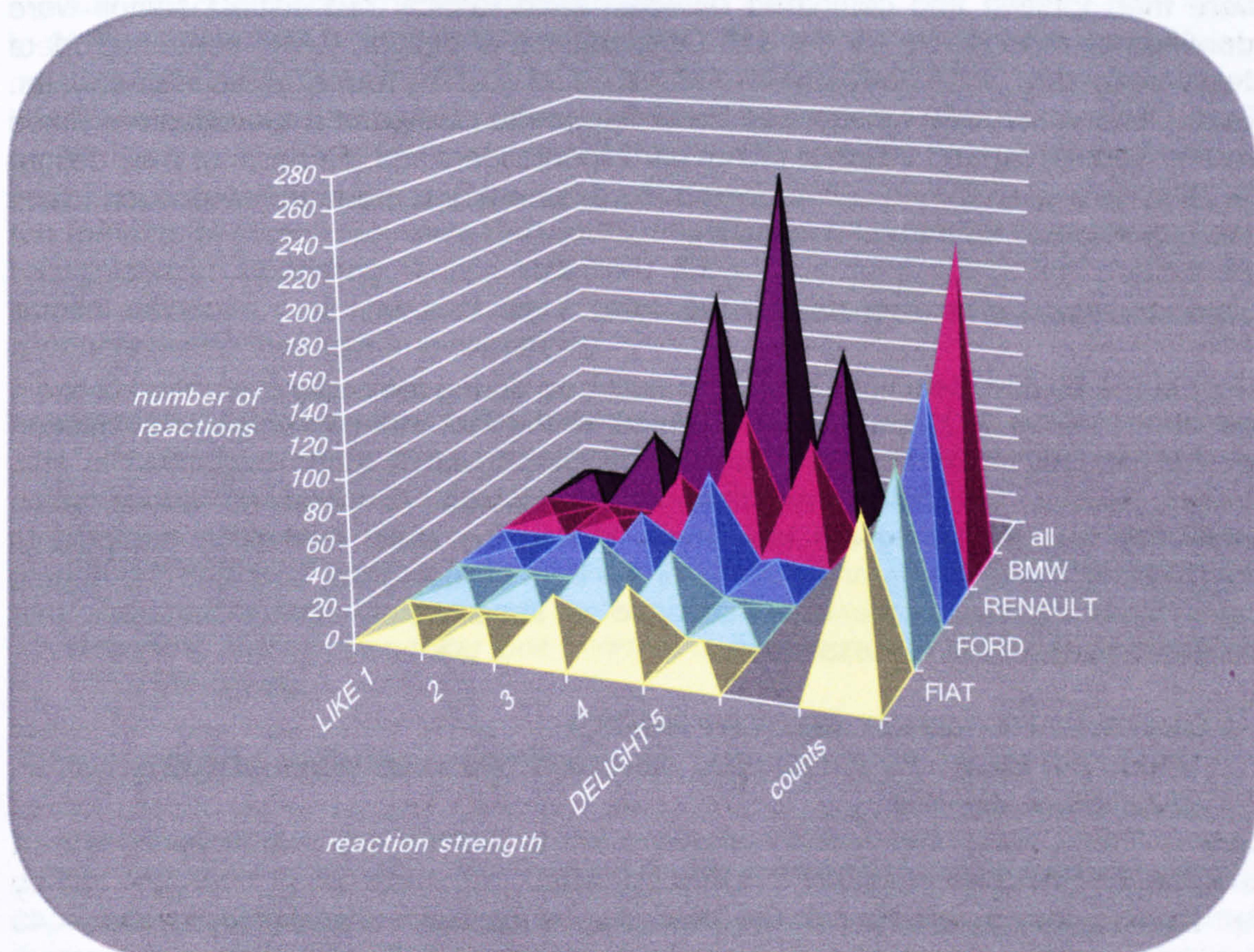


Figure 5.1: The number of positive reactions to the test-cars (Car 1 - Fiat, Car 2 - Ford, Car 3 - Renault, Car 4 - BMW) according to strength of reaction as rated by the participants

The data appear to be normally distributed around the fourth item on the 5-item scale used by participants to rate the strength of their reaction (mean = 3.71). The median positive reaction was scored as 4 by interviewees. Of the 118 reactions rated as 'delight' by the interviewees 74 occurred during the evaluation of CAR4 (63%). CARs 1, 2 and 3 evoked 16, 11 and 17 delight reactions respectively (14%, 9% and 14%).

Whilst receiving the highest number of delight reactions, compared to the other test-cars CAR4 also received fewer less-positive reactions. This suggests the participants were confronted by a plethora of appealing attributes in CAR4, whilst they struggled to find them in CARs 1, 2 and 3, and resorted to identifying the things they liked but that did not really delight them.

Only one participant, a 61 year old male, failed to report a single delight reaction. The remaining 15 interviewees showed quite different propensities to report delight. Including the apparently unmoved potential customer the average number of delight reactions reported across all test-cars was 7.4 per participant (range 0 to 18). This suggests that the customer delight reaction not only depends on the product as a stimulus but also upon the individual differences of the person engaged in its appraisal. The limited demographic information collected from the interviewees shows no obvious patterns explaining the differing rates of reporting delight. However, on average the four female interviewees reported more delight reactions than the 11 males (females 10.0 each, males 5.6 each).

The analysis proceeded by identifying what it was about the test-cars that participants found so appealing. For each reaction, the part of the car that the participant reported being delighted by had been recorded. These delightful stimuli, the antecedents of participants' delight reactions, will be referred to as 'delighters'. These 'delighters' were then totalled and compared between each test-car. 60 distinct stimuli were identified as responsible for the 118 Observations of delight. CAR4 contained 29 of these 'delighters', nine of which were identified as such by four or more interviewees. Each Observation was categorised according to the context of the evaluation (Static versus Test-drive) and whether or not participants identified the basis of their delight reaction as a specific part of the car (attribute-based) or a more global reaction to the car as a whole or an area of it (holistic).

Static Evaluation vs Test-drive evaluation

Most of the positive reactions to the car occurred during the static evaluation of the 4 test-cars (345 vs 222) and this is indicative of the fact that this stage of evaluation took place first in all four Car Clinics. This bias towards static evaluation is also present in the 118 delight reactions observed with 75 occurring during static evaluation and 43 during the test-drives. During the static evaluation participants appraised both the inside and outside of the cars including the boot and the engine bays. This resulted in the identification of a large variety of car attributes that delighted participants. For example;

Obs529 CAR4 (Male 51 JB) COAT HOOKS

"Those are lovely. It's the damped movement. So much effort has gone into all the details like that"

Obs303 CAR2 (Female 24 FC) DASHBOARD

"Funky - young persons car. Gadgets all sunk into dash. Makes it look good."

Obs444 CAR4 (Male 23 OT) BONNET

"Pop out catch is brilliant - I'm not surprised now by this car. It's just all these little things...oh and look the bonnet's on gas struts... top marks. Even opening the bonnet on this car is great fun."

On the test-drives participants tended to be delighted by car attributes that they had not been able to appraise during the static evaluation. Generally these delighters fell

into three categories. The majority were the dynamic qualities of the cars e.g., the engine, steering, gear change, and brakes;

Obs446 CAR4 (Male 23 OT) ENGINE

"Brrrrrrrr.. Listen to that cool... lovely noise"

Obs325 CAR2 (Male 23 AJ) STEERING

"It's a dream. Turning circle is big and light and easy. Not much roll and very sharp. Good radius of turn. Easy parking makes driving easier and can stop people worrying and improve their confidence."

Obs297 CAR4 (Female 24 FC) BRAKES

"Very powerful brakes. Feel safe. Nice and sharp. Very easy to use - too easy - you just have to tap them."

Also identified as delighters during test-drives were car features that only presented themselves when driving the car. These delight reactions could not have occurred during the static evaluation because the stimuli were not apparent;

Obs83 CAR4 (Female 30 LD) DOOR-OPEN WARNING

"Ooh!- Looks good, highlights the individual door. Good safety feature, clever. Clever - only came on when we moved off."

Obs412 CAR1 (Male 23 OT) WINDSCREEN WASHER JETS

"Wow - 3 washer jets. We'll have that. Novel"

In contrast, some delight reactions were characterised by the participant discovering the benefits of stimuli that were present during the static evaluation but had not been recognised as appealing. These test-drive delight reactions show that a product's appeal develops over time and demonstrates a role for delight in the evaluation of products during their use and ownership.

Obs198 CAR3 (Female 47 JR) DRIVING POSITION

"The driving position gives you real awareness. Really relaxes you and feels really comfy. Definitely not a road rage vehicle."

Obs210 CAR4 (Female 47 JR) WING MIRROR

"This is the best thing about the car. The mirror has blue glass really excellent. Makes everything look sunny in it. Makes me feel sunny and happy while I'm driving."

Attribute-based vs Holistic reactions

As described above, the context of the evaluation influenced which stimuli evoked delight reactions in the test-cars. In addition to this influence, the delight reactions captured could also be categorised on the basis of the antecedent stimuli themselves. As in the EPS two distinct types of delight reaction were captured. Attribute-based delight reactions occurred when the participant identified a specific car attribute or feature that delighted them. In contrast Holistic delight reactions occurred when the participant identified that they were delighted by the test-car as a whole or by a whole area of the car. This second type of delight reaction was characterised by a participant's failure to identify a distinct attribute-basis for their delight or to site the combination of many attributes as the source of a single experience of delight. Each Observation in the data set was classified as either Attribute-based or Holistic on the basis of the participant's verbatim as recorded by

the interviewer. Of the 118 delight reactions captured 82 were classified as attribute-based and 36 as holistic. Reactions of both types occurred during both static and test-drive evaluation of the cars.

Some example Attribute-based delight reactions;

Obs53 CAR4 (Male 23 AM) INFORMATION SCREEN + TV

"TV in car...awesome. Teletext is brilliant. Not intuitive and could be laid out better. Once you get used to the menu driven system its very easy. That's great, awesome"

Obs224 CAR4 (Male 26 GE) REAR SEAT FOLDING MECHANISM

"You can drop the seats from the boot opening. Saves you having to go round and do it from inside. Really clever. Solves a problem."

Obs479 CAR1 (Male 19 JB) REV COUNTER

"Like the rev counter - angled to the driver - odd looking - different. Like the way the dials are separated like in a small pod. Well thought out. Motorbike-like. Rev counter becomes a real focal point when you drive - nice to look at and the needle has a nice movement. Maybe a young person thing but its amusing whilst you're driving."

Some example Holistic delight reactions;

Obs501 CAR4 (Male 19 JB) INTERIOR OVERALL

"I'm gob-smacked - its so nice in here. The dials are lovely everything feels the same and its got some lovely details. Real attention to detail everywhere. The shapes and materials are gorgeous. It's a lovely place to be."

Obs153 CAR4 (Male 23 OT) THE WHOLE CAR

"This car comes in a package. You couldn't take one thing from this car and put it in another and make it as good. Its all the features in combination and the build quality that make this feel like a 30k car."

Obs211 CAR4 (Female 47 JR) DRIVING POSITION

"Everything is to hand. The steering wheel is the perfect size and just feels good. Perfect driving position, comfortable and enjoyable. You can just chuck the car about. Just makes you feel good. Feels really sporty, like cruising because you're low down."

Categorising each delight reaction according to the evaluation context (static vs test-drive) and the nature of its antecedent stimuli (attribute-based vs holistic) produces a 2x2 matrix for each test-car. These matrices are presented over the next two pages and are used to present antecedent stimuli of all 118 delight reactions captured. Those for CAR1, 2 and 3 merged, that for CAR4 is presented separately due to the larger number of delight reactions recorded for that car.

CAR1
Obs418 *Wing mirrors*
Obs331 *Sunroof*
Obs112 *Steering wheel*
Obs328 *Seats*
Obs311 *Door*

CAR1
Obs412 *Washer jets*
Obs332 *Engine*
Obs479 *Instrument dials*

CAR2
Obs124 *Stereo*
Obs321 *Rear space*
Obs117 *Boot release button*
Obs422 *Boot shut*

CAR2
Obs550 *Visibility*
Obs325 *Steering*

CAR3
Obs344,314 *Spaciousness*
Obs534,191,91 *Hidden storage boxes*
Obs190 *Rear seatbelt*

CAR3
Obs280 *Wing mirror controls*
Obs319 *Steering*
Obs506 *Spaciousness*
Obs318 *Seats*
Obs537 *Engine*
Obs317 *Brakes*

Static

Test-drive

CAR1
Obs267,327,106 *Exterior Styling*
Obs108,329,110 *Interior Styling*

CAR1
Obs331,115 *Whole Car*

CAR2
Obs96 *Exterior Styling*
Obs303,100 *Interior Styling*

CAR2
Obs326 *Driving Position*

CAR3
Obs272 *Exterior Styling*
Obs342 *Storage*
Obs463 *Driving Position*

CAR3
Obs561,198 *Driving Position*

Attribute-based

Holistic

Antecedents of delight reactions ('delighters') identified during participants' appraisal of Cars 1 (FIAT small city car), 2 (FORD family hatchback) and 3 (RENAULT Multi Purpose Vehicle).

CAR4
 Obs148, 149, 444, 564
 Bonnet Mechanism
 Obs226 Front Window Drop
 Obs442, 80 Vanity Mirror + Light
 Obs208, 233, 445, 53, 530
 Info. Screen + TV
 Obs565, 223 Toolkit
 Obs224 Rear Seat Folding
 Obs448, 164, 533, 78
 Rear Window
 Obs443 Pillarless Doors
 Obs205 Kickplate
 Obs79 Interior Lights
 Obs335 Grill
 Obs65 Front Lights
 Obs204, 441, 466, 232, 396
 Electric Seats
 Obs222 Boot Mechanism
 Obs567, 440, 494, 227, 529
 Coat Hooks
 Obs221 Door Handles

CAR4
 Obs210 Wing Mirror
 Obs298, 212, 76, 144
 Steering
 Obs209, 234, 446, 338, 72
 Engine
 Obs566, 447, 165, 142, 244, 74
 Sequential Gearbox
 Obs146 Roof
 Obs83 Door Open Warning
 Obs297 Brakes

Attribute-based

Static

Test-drive

CAR4
 Obs283, 336, 66
 Exterior Styling
 Obs153 Whole Car
 Obs49 Materials
 Obs207, 231, 501
 Interior Overall
 Obs531, 138, 493
 Driving Position

CAR4
 Obs77, 296, 454, 12
 Whole Car
 Obs452 Sound of controls
 Obs211, 51, 145
 Driving Position

Holistic

Antecedents of delight reactions ('delighters') identified during participants' appraisal of Car 4, (BMW sports coupe).

Analysis of participants' responses to coding questions

To understand why delighters appealed, an analysis was performed on the participant's responses to the eight YES/NO coding questions they had been asked for each of their delight reactions. These questions were designed to capture the participant's own coding of the stimuli that resulted in their delight reaction, i.e. what was it about the car attributes that made them delightful? The data is summarised in the panel below and presents the percentage of delight reactions to which the participants assigned a role for each of the eight factors; Operation, Function, Novelty, Surprise, Emotion, Look, Sound and Feel. The fixed number of factors used in the coding questions means that other factors influencing the appeal of the test-cars cannot be ruled out. The qualitative analysis of the participants' verbatim descriptions of each delight reaction will be presented in Chapter 6.

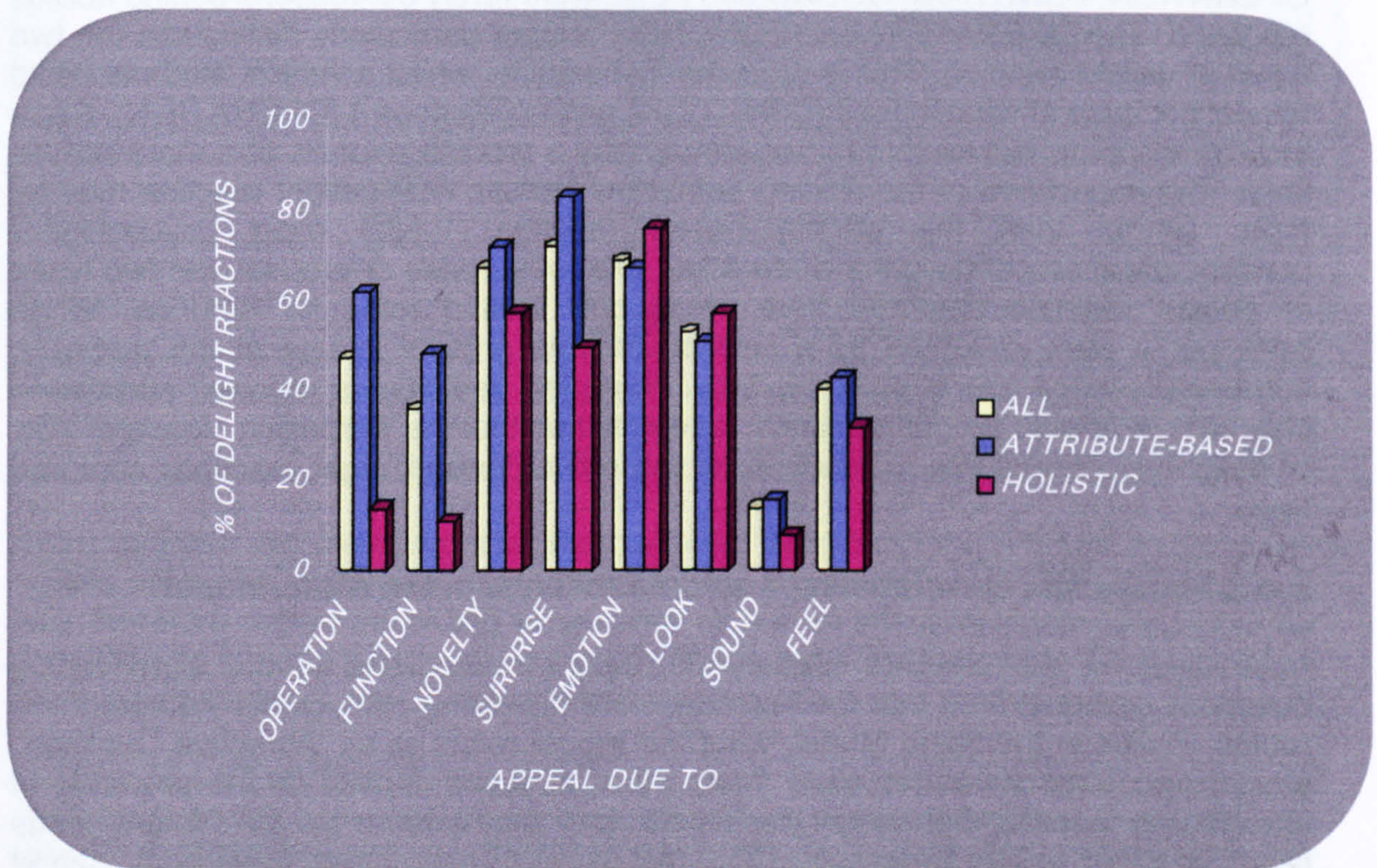


Figure 5.2: % of 118 delight reactions appealing due to 8 factors

The data shows that participants tended to attribute the basis of each delight reaction to more than one of these factors (mean=3.98). Taking the full set of 118 delight reactions it seems that the data concurs with the existing theoretical view of delight as 'surprising pleasure', (e.g. Oliver et al, 1997, 2000, Plutchik, 1980, Russell, 1980). Participants reported that 72% of the things that delighted them in the test-cars surprised them, and 69% appealed at an emotional level. If surprise is taken as an indicator of the disconfirmation of expectations, (Oliver et al 1997, and Vanhamme, 2001), and appeal at the emotional level as an indicator of positive affect then it seems that the majority of delight reactions captured through the CCI method mirror those described by Disconfirmation Theory. The next most frequently cited factor leading to the experience of a delight reaction was the novelty of the stimulus. Participants reported that the novelty of the test-car or its attributes played a role in 67% of their delight reactions. Again supporting Disconfirmation theory, this finding echoes one of the routes to delight implicit in the Kano Model of product quality - the provision of novel product features that answer people's latent needs (Kano, 1995). Interpretations of this model tend to suggest that it is the functional innovations that a

product contains that surprise and delight the customer, (Clausing, 1994, Hofmeister, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhauber, 1998, and Shen et al 2000). The data provides limited support for this interpretation. Participants reported that 36% of their delight reactions were at least partly the result of a function provided in the test-cars. The other factors that were commonly cited as the antecedents of delight reactions were the look or styling of the cars or their attributes (53% of delight reactions) and the operation or the way an attribute worked (47% of delight reactions).

When the 118 delight reactions are considered as either attribute-based (82) or holistic (36) quite different patterns are present in the data. When the delight reaction was attribute-based the average number of factors underlying the appeal of the delighter was 4.4 compared, to the average of 3.1 factors underlying holistic delight reactions. The data shows that the most common factors underlying holistic delight reactions were NOVELTY, SURPRISE, EMOTION and LOOK. The other four factors, OPERATION, FUNCTION, SOUND and FEEL were rarely the reasons behind holistic reactions. The OPERATION and FUNCTION factors particularly distinguish the two types of delight reaction. This is presumably because, whilst a vehicle attribute could appeal because of what it does (FUNCTION) and how it does it (OPERATION), these may be inappropriate factors for explaining why a product appeals at a more holistic level. The implication of this finding is that the holistic type delight reaction may be more simple than the attribute-based reaction. Whilst most psychological conceptualisations of delight include a key role for surprise or arousal, the two types of delight reaction captured here show only limited roles for surprise. When participants were delighted by a distinct attribute present in one of the test-cars, surprise played a role 82% of the time. However, participants reported surprise in only 50% of holistic delight reactions. It seems then that the 'surprising pleasure' view of delight explains some, but not all, of the self-reported delight reactions captured here.

5.4.3 Theoretical Development - a comparison with the Kano Model

As outlined in the previous section, participants' responses to the eight coding questions demonstrated that the test-cars were delighting participants via one of the routes implicit in the Kano Model, what the model refers to as 'Attractive Qualities'. Most prescriptive literatures have interpreted Attractive Quality as the provision of unexpected features that delight people because they answer people's latent needs (e.g. Clausing, 1994, Hofmeister, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998 and Shen et al, 2000). This route to delight could explain 48% of the attribute-based delight reactions captured using the CCI method, and 36% of all delight reactions. Kano's model also implies a second way in which products can delight people - by providing unexpected levels of the things people want more or less of in the product, which the model refers to as 'Linear Qualities'. These two routes to delight (shaded grey in the model) are presented in the figure overleaf. It has already been noted that the Kano Model is inherently reductionist in that it assumes product appraisal takes place at the level of individual product features or attributes. As such it cannot adequately account for the 36 holistic delight reactions observed here. To determine whether or not the Kano Model could explain the remaining 82 attribute-based delight reactions the Delighter and Linear typology was used to categorise the antecedent stimuli of each reaction as identified by the participant. Rather than repeat Kano's original methodology, which determines whether or not a product feature, pre-defined by a researcher, is a Basic, Linear or Delighter Quality on the basis of numerical responses, the approach taken here was to compare participant verbatim descriptions of delightful attributes with this typology.

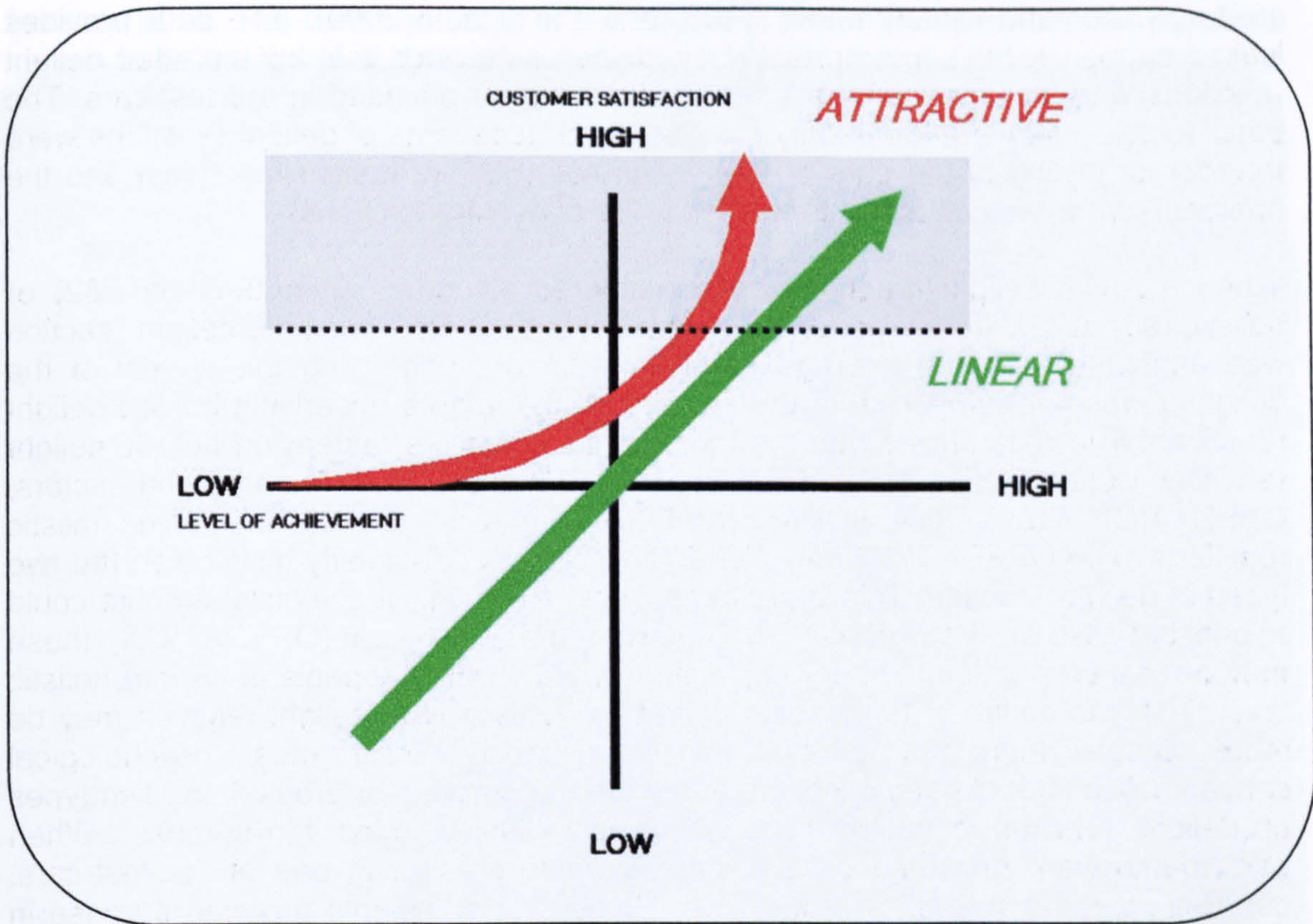


Figure 5.3: Kano's 2 routes to delight

Basic qualities are the things that the customer expects in the product and as such should not evoke delight reactions. Each of the 82 attribute-based delight reactions was therefore coded according to whether or not its antecedent stimulus could be described as either a functional innovation answering a latent need (a Kano Attractive quality) or a scalar quality (a Kano Linear quality).

In 28 of the 82 attribute-based delight reactions, participants identified a functional car feature as the basis of their reaction, classified as Kano Attractive. In a further 20 reactions, the participant identified extreme levels of a scalar quality as the basis for their reaction, classified as Kano Linear. The table overleaf presents the 48 reactions that can be explained using Kano's typology of product attributes.

<i>KANO ATTRACTIVE</i>	<i>KANO LINEAR</i>
<i>Wing mirror controls (CAR3)</i> <i>Multi-mode gearbox (CAR4) x6</i> <i>Door-open warning (CAR4)</i> <i>Wing mirror rubbing strips (CAR1)</i> <i>TV + Information screen (CAR4) x5</i> <i>Toolkit (CAR4) x2</i> <i>Sunroof (CAR1)</i> <i>Hidden storage boxes (CAR3) x3</i> <i>Seat dropping mechanism (CAR4)</i> <i>Electric seat adjustment (CAR4) x5</i> <i>Boot release button (CAR2)</i> <i>Bonnet release mechanism (CAR4)</i>	<i>Visibility (CAR2)</i> <i>Spaciousness (CAR3) x3</i> <i>Spaciousness (CAR2)</i> <i>Seat comfort (CAR3)</i> <i>Engine power (CAR1)</i> <i>Engine power (CAR3)</i> <i>Engine power (CAR4)</i> <i>Brake strength (CAR3)</i> <i>Brake strength (CAR4)</i> <i>Stereo simplicity (CAR2)</i> <i>Styling (CAR4) x2</i> <i>Door size (CAR1)</i> <i>Ease of lifting bonnet (CAR4) x5</i>

Antecedent stimuli of 48 attribute-based delight reactions categorised according to a Kano typology⁵

The delight reactions coded as Kano Attractive are characterised by the participant identifying an appealing product feature that provides a novel or unexpected function, perhaps one they have not experienced in a car before. These delightful stimuli match the functional innovation route to delight commonly cited by proponents of Kano's Model. This analysis also demonstrates the role of expectations in the Kano Linear or scalar route to delight. Despite the scalar qualities of Brake Strength, Spaciousness and Engine Power having different absolute levels in the different test-cars they still delighted participants. It appears that expectation congruency is at work here and that participants were delighted by these scalar qualities when they exceeded their expectations for the particular test-car involved. One anomaly that occurred in this analysis was the categorisation of the same car attribute as both a Kano Attractive and a Kano Linear. Five participants identified the appeal of the bonnet mechanism of CAR4 as due to the ease of lifting the bonnet, a scalar quality. In contrast, a single participant also identified the ease of lifting the bonnet as evoking a delight reaction, however in this case it was the provision of a novel release mechanism that appealed, a functional innovation coded as a Kano Attractive.

The remaining 34 attribute-based delight reactions could not easily be categorised using Kano's typology. 11 delight reactions were characterised by participants recognising an optimum or ideal level of a scalar quality rather than an extreme level. The remaining 23 delight reactions defied categorisation according to Kano's typology. These miscellaneous delighters included stimuli that could be considered as Kano's Basic Qualities, things that anybody would reasonably expect to be

⁵ Observation numbers for these 48 reactions can be found by examining the matrices presented on pages 139 and 140.

present in any car, and a group of stimuli that could not really be described as features at all. The common basis of the appeal in these 23 miscellaneous reactions seems to be the novel or distinctive delivery of otherwise very ordinary car attributes. The table below presents these two additional stimulus types.

OPTIMUM LEVELS OF SCALAR QUALITIES	MISCELLANEOUS DELIGHTERS
<p><i>Weight of the steering (CAR2)</i> <i>Weight of the steering (CAR3)</i> <i>Weight of the steering (CAR4) x4</i> <i>Engine sound (CAR4) x4</i> <i>Height of the roof line (CAR4)</i></p>	<p><i>Shape and feel of the door handles (CAR2)</i> <i>Shape and feel of the door handles (CAR4)</i> <i>Blue glass in the wing mirrors (CAR4)</i> <i>Look of the instrument dials (CAR1)</i> <i>3 stream windscreen washer jets (CAR1)</i> <i>Window dropping mechanism (CAR4)</i> <i>Vanity mirror opening activates light (CAR4) x2</i> <i>The way the rear windows open (CAR4) x4</i> <i>Shape of the seatbelt guide (CAR3)</i> <i>Pillarless doors (CAR4)</i> <i>The look of the kickplate sill protector (CAR4)</i> <i>The design of the interior lights (CAR4)</i> <i>The way the coat hooks open (CAR4) x5</i> <i>The design of the seats (CAR1)</i></p>

Antecedent stimuli of 34 uncategorised attribute based-delight reactions⁶

Unlike the Kano Linear and Attractive based reactions identified above, these additional attribute-based delight reactions do not demonstrate a role for expectation congruency in the participants' delight reactions. The Optimum group of delighters did not appeal to participants because they exceeded customers' expectations. In these reactions participants identified the fact the product had delivered exactly what they wanted in terms of a scalar attribute. It seems to be the recognition of this 'just right' quality that delights the participant. Many of the delighters identified as miscellaneous above could theoretically have one or more underlying scalar qualities. Optimum or extreme levels of these scalar qualities might well explain a participant's

⁶ Observation numbers for these 34 reactions can be found by examining the matrices presented on pages 139 and 140.

delight reaction. The fact is that this interpretation requires the inclusion of almost anything as a scalar quality, including vague or immeasurable terms, like 'design' and 'feel', to the minutely specific, like *'the speed with which the damped mechanism drops the coat hook'* and *'the pigment content of the blue glass in the wing mirror'*. To force such an interpretation of these delight reactions is incongruent with the customer's view of them. Participants did not describe these miscellaneous delighters in terms of their scalar components and it seems unlikely that they could have done so even if they had been asked to. Instead of forcing these delight reactions into Kano's typology, the participant's view of these delightful product attributes calls for the acknowledgement of three additional routes to delight not accounted for in the Kano Model; the optimum level of a scalar quality, the distinctive delivery of otherwise ordinary product attributes and the holistic appeal of the product. The findings of this initial descriptive analysis support the theoretical propositions presented as a result of the EPS. Everyday car attributes can delight potential customers if they are distinctively delivered in the product. And the global evaluation of the car, or an area of it, often evokes delight. The CCI method allows the consolidation of the developing theory and has contributed to it further through the identification of scalar attributes that delight because they are optimised, not maximised or minimised. This ongoing theoretical development is presented in the figure below which models the five observed routes to delight (grey shaded area in the model); Kano Attractive (Red), Kano Linear (Green), Basic (Blue), Optimum (Yellow) and Holistic (orange shaded area).

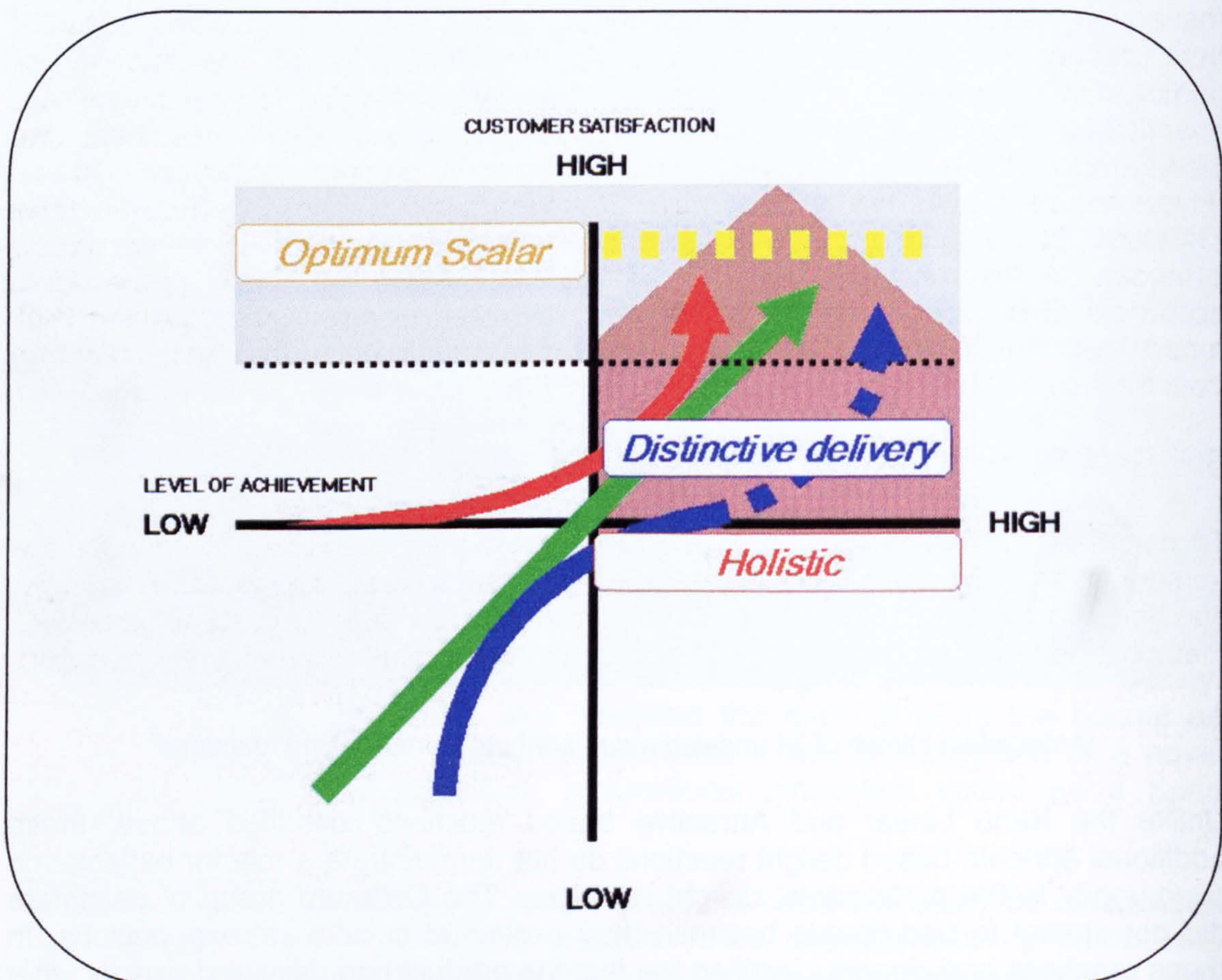


Figure 5.4: Theoretical development of the Kano Model including 5 routes to delight identified using the CCI method.

5.4.4 Qualitative analysis of participants' reaction descriptions

In addition to the data analysed above, each Observation collected using the CCI method also included participants' descriptions of the thoughts and feelings associated with each positive appraisal reaction. Due to the similarity of the data collection instruments used, the analysis of this participant verbatim and that collected using the SRD method are presented together in Chapter 6. Observations were classified into three groups according to the reaction strength as scored by the participant allowing the comparison of the most positive delight-like reactions with the least positive. The participant's verbatim recorded for each observation then became the focus of a detailed content analysis designed to progress the emergent Stimulus > Appeal Process > Delight Reaction theory presented at the end of the EPS. This process sought to uncover confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence across the CCI and SRD research settings.

5.4.5 Conclusion

The Kano Model represents a general theory of product quality derived through a positivist research methodology. The two theoretical routes to delight it contains have also been demonstrated here from a phenomenological perspective. The approach used here has let potential customers identify the basis of their own delight reactions in contrast to that used by Kano, where customers' are asked to react to the researcher-prescribed product attributes. The resulting delight reactions captured here cannot be fully explained using Kano's Model. Whilst the analysis of participants' responses to eight coding questions provided some preliminary quantitative insights into the reasons underlying their delight reactions, the inadequacies of the Kano Model identified call for a more complete analysis of these drivers for delight. As highlighted above 28 of the attribute-based delight reactions (34%) and 36 holistic delight reactions cannot be explained in terms of the constructs it models. A theoretical development of the Kano Model has been proposed to account for five types of product antecedent identified using an accompanied Self-report mechanism. This method has supported and progressed the theory resulting from the use of Observational methods in the EPS.

5.5 Self-Report Diaries (SRD)

To complete the Descriptive Study the SRD method was designed to increase the number of self-reported customer delight reactions captured. By collecting a larger number of positive appraisal reactions to a de-limited set of product stimuli, the SRD method planned to produce the data required to compare between different strengths of these reactions - i.e., to compare and contrast the antecedents and nature of delight reactions with those of less positive product appraisal reactions. The objective of the SRD method was therefore to identify what it is that distinguishes the strongest appraisal reactions to cars and to provide a basis for comparison with the data collected using the CCI method. This would permit the search for confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence across research settings, and the progression of theory development from the CCI and EPS methods.

In essence the SRD method took the data collection instrument used in the CCI method and deployed it in a different way to produce a larger data set for analysis. To enable a larger sample of potential customers to report their delight reactions the data collection instrument was administered as a diary to be completed by participants during their product evaluation. The context chosen for the study was the same motorshow situation used in the EPS. This allowed the maximum number of product stimuli to form the basis of participants' appraisal. Sampling from the same

context would also allow the development of a more complete theory of delight within this real-world pre-purchase situation. Building on and comparing with the CCI findings, the observable components of delight identified in the EPS could be supplemented with the study of its internal Affective and Cognitive components. As had been identified during the EPS delight was a salient observable reaction in the motorshow context. However in all the methods recounted so far in this thesis there has been a filter between the participant and the data collection instrument. The use of a postal-diary method removed this researcher filter. Data collected using the SRD method would be provided directly by the person completing the self-report diary. Each participant and the diary were simply placed in the motorshow context where delight reactions were expected to be experienced and recorded.

Deploying the same data collection instrument in this alternate way offered several advantages for the goals of the study. Firstly greater numbers of participants could be used since no researchers would be required during the data collection. This greater number of participants could then provide data in exactly the same format as provided by the CCI method, allowing direct comparison between the two research contexts and collection strategies used. At the same time a larger diverse data set could be generated by maintaining the use of varied participant types, and a context that provided a plethora of stimuli with the potential to delight the participants. Consequently the theory development was facilitated by allowing the analysis of a greater number of varied positive appraisal reactions, their Affective and Cognitive components and the nature of their antecedent stimuli. Reactions of different intensities and types were distinguished and compared. The SRD method was designed so that data would be collected during or immediately after the experience of a positive reaction to a product, in the words of the participant. As with the CCI method described above this Chapter describes the data set collected using the SRD method and its initial descriptive analysis.

5.5.1 Procedure

The data recording sheet used by the interviewers in the CCI method was modified for use as a self-report diary. The aim of these modifications was to negate the need for a researcher to collect data and to facilitate naïve participants in the reporting of their own delight reactions. These modifications included the reduction in size of the recording sheet from A4 to A5, and the inclusion of prompts at each point on the sheet where the participant was expected to provide data. This modified data recording sheet can be found in the Appendices (section 4.0) and includes the same elements as the sheet used in the CCI method⁷. In its final form the data collection instrument was a conveniently sized book of 40-50 identical recording sheets. The front cover of each book formed a demographic questionnaire. These books were then sent to volunteer participants with a letter of introduction (see appendix section 5.0) and instructions for the completion of the research (see appendix section 6.0).

These instructions were designed to inform respondents of the type of reaction the research aimed to study, and used the word 'delight' to introduce this.

"the aim of this exercise is to gain insights into how cars appeal to you on an emotional level, what makes the cars you like the most stand out to you, and how and why these things excite, surprise or delight you."

⁷ The single omitted element was the now redundant space needed to code the evaluation context as either Static or Test-drive in the Car Clinic situation.

At the same time care was taken to describe the nature of 'delight' without stipulating what it was about cars that might evoke this reaction.

"We are interested in things that would influence your decision to buy a car, things that you think are clever, novel or interesting, and things that make you go, "Wow, I like that!" You might be delighted by anything, and shouldn't feel limited by this description."

The instructions asked participants to identify the attribute-basis of their 'delight' and the term 'delighter' was introduced as the stimulus of any such reaction.

"For the sake of this research we are calling these items 'Delighters'."

The instructions pressed respondents not only to describe 'delighters' in their own words, but also to describe their thoughts and feelings associated with each. Participants were asked to view as many cars as possible during the show, recording each positive reaction to a car on an individual sheet. Finally respondents were given instructions on how to return the self-report diaries to the author.

The prompts included on each individual recording sheet guided the respondent through its completion. Participant's were asked to identify the part of the car that strongly appealed to them and to identify its physical location using a car diagram. They were then asked to;

"Describe the 'delighter' in your own words."

Next the respondent was asked to score the strength of their positive reaction to the car. The 5-item scale used to rate the strength of the participants' positive reactions to the vehicle was introduced with the prompt;

"Rate your reaction" LIKE 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 DELIGHT

The eight YES/NO coding questions were then presented as fully-framed questions echoing the prompts used by the interviewers in the CCI method;

<i>"Delighter appeals because:</i>	
<i>The Function it performs</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>
<i>You think its Novel/Unique</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>
<i>It Surprises you</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>
<i>It appeals at an Emotional level</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>
<i>It Looks good</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>
<i>It feels good to the Touch</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>
<i>It Sounds good</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>
<i>The way it works</i>	<i>YES/NO</i>

circle as appropriate"

Finally the bottom half of the sheet provided space for the participant to describe their delight reaction. This space was headed with the prompt;

"Describe why the 'delighter' appeals to you including what it makes you feel and what it makes you think:"

The resulting data collection instrument and instructions were pre-tested by two naïve⁸ colleagues of the author. Both reported the collection books enabled them to describe their positive reactions during the appraisal of three of their colleagues' cars.

⁸ Sorry Dr's KP and YR.

This pre-test suggested that the instrument would enable the research participants to record any delight reactions they experienced as they happened within the research context.

5.5.2 The Contexts Used for the Research

The research exercise was run identically at 2 UK motorshows; the 1999 Earls Court Motorshow held in London and the 2000 British International Motorshow held at the NEC in Birmingham. 30 tickets for each event were purchased and offered free of charge to volunteer participants. Research packs containing the data collection instrument and tickets were posted to a convenience sample of 60 respondents.

5.5.3 Sampling Strategy and the Research Participants

The SRD method was motivated by the same purposeful or theoretical sampling process used in the CCI method. The SRD method itself represents a sampling decision. The motorshow context, previously sampled from using Observational methods in the EPS, was now to be sampled from using a Self-Report mechanism. The suitability of this context as an exemplar of a relevant pre-purchase consumption situation for this class of products has been discussed in the EPS (see Chapter 4 section 4.4). Sampling from this context longitudinally (the two SRD exercises were separated by approximately 12 months) offered the opportunity to detect any shifts in the nature of delight reactions and their stimuli within this context over time. The use of two methods to sample from the same context would allow the externally observable behavioural components of delight identified in the EPS to be supplemented with insights into internal cognitive and affective components of the reaction, accessible to the self-report mechanism. Comparison with the distinct contexts used in the CCI method would also be possible due to the use of an almost identical data collection instrument.

As before research participants were selected to produce a small but diverse convenience sample from which large amounts of data could be collected without excessive data-overload. Approximately two months before each motorshow the research and incentive were advertised via electronic mail to over 200 business and personal contacts of the author. Volunteers for the research of both sexes over the age of 17 years were requested. The advertisement provided the author's contact details and asked recipients to extend the request for volunteers to family, colleagues and friends. It was also made clear that not all volunteers would be used and that selection would be based upon the need for respondents of both sexes, and varying ages.

Replies to the e-mail were received⁹ and volunteers were selected to maximise the numbers of each sex and the diversity of their ages. Preference was also given to volunteers who were unknown to the author. For each use of the SRD method, this produced a sample of 30 participants who were each sent a research pack. By volunteering for the research it was assumed that these participants had expressed an adequate level of involvement in the product category and were potential-car-customers. The composition of the two samples is presented in the results section overleaf.

⁹ The exact number cannot be identified due to a change in e-mail system at Cranfield University during the period of the research and its storage limitations.

5.5.4 Results

Of the 60 research packs sent out, 52 Self-Report Diaries were returned to the author. Coincidentally participant response rates were identical for both research contexts. In each sample 25 participants completed the diary and returned it, four participants provided no response at all and a final participant returned a blank diary with completed demographics questionnaire. The two participants that returned blank diaries were included in the initial analysis because they were assumed to be participants who had visited the research context but had failed to feel moved enough by any car to complete the research. The two resulting samples are outlined below.

1999 Earls Court Motorshow (EC)

25 respondents returned their diaries; 10 females and 15 males, mean age 36 years, range 22 to 53 years. One female aged 50 returned a blank diary. (participants no.1-26)

2000 NEC Motorshow (NEC)

25 respondents returned their diaries; 8 females and 17 males, mean age 30 years, range 22 to 53 years. One female aged 48 returned a blank diary. (participants no.27-52)

The 52 diaries contained a total of 716 sheets, each a coded description of a positive appraisal reaction to a car, and 52 completed demographics questionnaires. This data set was entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. Two data fields were created taking two different units of analysis. Firstly each data collection sheet, containing a self-reported positive reaction to a car, was transcribed. This produced a data field made up of the 716 positive reactions which will each be referred to as a numbered and coded observation (e.g. Obs566NEC41 - observation 566 recorded by participant no.41 in the NEC sample). On average participants had reported 13.8 positive reactions each, (range 0 to 69)¹⁰ including an average of 4.8 rated as delight (i.e. those reactions that participants scored as 5 on the 5-item scale - range 0 to 25). On average male participants had reported higher numbers of both positive reactions and delight reactions and likewise, participants at the EC motorshow had reported more favourable reactions to cars than the NEC sample. A second data field was produced to assess the statistical significance of these trends prior to the analysis of the content of the 716 positive reactions reported

Comparison between motorshows

The second data field was generated from the first and took each participant as the unit of analysis. For each participant the total number of positive reactions reported, and the number of these reactions which the participant rated as delight (giving it 5 on the 5-item scale), were recorded alongside their demographic data. This second data field was used to compare between the two research contexts, the Earls Court (EC) and British International (NEC) motorshows. Participants from both the EC and NEC samples were ranked according to the number of positive reactions and the number of delight reactions they reported. This enabled the two samples to be compared on the basis of where participants from each context (EC vs. NEC) were positioned in these two rank orders. Mann-Whitney U-tests showed no significant difference in the distribution of the ranking position of participants due to the motorshow that they had attended (number of positive reactions $U = 317$, $z = -0.38$, p

¹⁰ The two participants that returned blank diaries are included in these calculations.

> 0.1 and number of delight reactions $U = 406.5$, $z = 1.25$, $p > 0.1$). This is to say that the variations in participants' rates of reporting both positive reactions and delight reactions were not dependant on the research context and the 2 samples were merged¹¹.

Comparison between participants

Two further analyses were performed on this second participant-based data field. The first aimed to identify any difference in the rates of reporting positive reactions and delight reactions between females and males. Mann-Whitney U-tests for gender showed no statistically significant difference in the two rank ordered lists (number of positive reactions $U = 258.5$, $z = -1.16$, $p > 0.1$ and number of delight reactions $U = 359.5$, $z = 0.74$, $p > 0.1$). Again the two rank orders were well mixed with the scores of male and female participants indicating both sexes reported reactions to the same extent. The second analysis aimed to identify any difference in the rates of reporting reactions due to age. Within the combined sample the participants' ages were biased towards youth and as such were not normally distributed. As a result participants were assigned to age categories on the basis of their rank age order, with the youngest ten in group 1, the next youngest ten in group 2, the median aged ten in group 3, the next eldest 10 in group 4, and the eldest twelve in group 5. These five age group codes were then applied to the two rank orders for positive reactions and delight reactions. A Kruskal-Wallis test showed no statistically significant difference between any of the five age groups' rates of reporting positive reactions and delight reactions (number of positive reactions $H = 0.86$, $p > 0.1$ number of delight reactions $H = 0.26$, $p > 0.1$).¹²

These three sets of analysis have failed to demonstrate any significant differences in the rates of reporting positive reactions and delight reactions due to research context, gender, or age of participant. A statistician would say the variance in the data set is due to chance rather than any characteristics of the participants. This author would rather label this statistical chance, 'individual differences'. It seems that the differences in the rates at which people reported their reactions were due to the individual rather than any generalisable differences. Men and women of various ages, on average, reported the same number of reactions and were delighted the same number of times. It seems that it is the individual, not their gender or age, that determines how frequently they positively appraise cars in the motorshow context. The tests also show that the cars in both contexts were equally appealing on average. The lack of any underlying influence due to these variables means that each of the 716 reported appraisal reactions will now be considered separately. These tests allow the data set to be merged prior to a more detailed analysis of individual reactions.

5.5.5 Analysis of the 716 positive appraisal reactions'

To facilitate the theoretical development the aim of the analysis was to identify what distinguished the strongest positive appraisal reactions, those that participants

¹¹ The Mann-Whitney U-test takes the null hypothesis that two samples have the same underlying distributions and tests the alternative hypothesis that the two samples have different distributions. With sample sizes over 20 the U score is compared to an approximated normal distribution to give Z-scores. At the .05 probability level, Z-scores between -1.96 and 1.96 mean that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and that the 2 samples show the same distribution. It indicates that the rank order is well mixed with scores from both samples, (McCall, (1994)

¹² The nature of the age distribution and the resulting 5 categories required the use of the K-W test. This test compares observed rankings with the rankings expected due to chance to produce H scores equivalent to chi-squared statistics. With 5 categories there are 4 degrees of freedom and to reject the null hypothesis, that the observations are due to chance and not the age categories, H scores of 5.99 or greater have to be achieved for significance at the 0.1 level, (McCall, 1994).

reported as delight, from the less positive appraisal reactions that participants did not feel reached this level. Positive reactions were categorised according to their strength as reported by the participant using the 5-item scale. This categorisation then became the basis of comparison between the 716 reported positive appraisal reactions in terms of their antecedent stimuli in cars and their affective and cognitive components. Again the behavioural components of reactions were not explicitly captured in the SRD method. The comparison of the findings of the SRD and CCI methods with those of the EPS observational methods, deployed in the same research context, will be the focus of Chapter 7.

Strength of reaction

The initial quantitative analysis of the data set described shows that there was variation in how participants reported their positive appraisal reactions. Some participants recorded over 30 positive reactions to cars, several of which they reported constituted 'delight'. Other participants recorded fewer more positive reactions. The statistical tests of the rates of reporting positive reactions and delight reactions have shown that the variation in the data cannot be accounted for by gender and age differences in the participants nor the different research contexts. However, what the variation in the data does indicate is that the limitations of the 5-item scale, used by participants to rate the strength of their reactions, must be recognised. As described in the CCI method this 5-item scale is assumed to be ordinal, and responses using it can only be analysed as non-parametric data. It can be assumed that reactions scored by a single participant as 5 are stronger and more like 'delight' than those she or he scored 4. However, the same cannot be assumed across participants. This is the case in nearly every use of subjective rating scales within research (Keiningham et al, 1999). To avoid reification the scale will be used here purely as a means to categorise each positive reaction reported by participants. As in the EPS and CCI method, only the highest scoring reactions will be considered to constitute 'delight' and these will only be compared with the lowest scoring reactions. Average scoring reactions are considered to be ambiguous because of the assumed variation in participants' use of the rating scale. Alongside the following descriptive quantitative analysis the bulk of the theoretical development will be the result of the in-depth qualitative analysis of participants' descriptions of their reactions, and their comparison with those collected from the CCI method, to be described in Chapter 6.

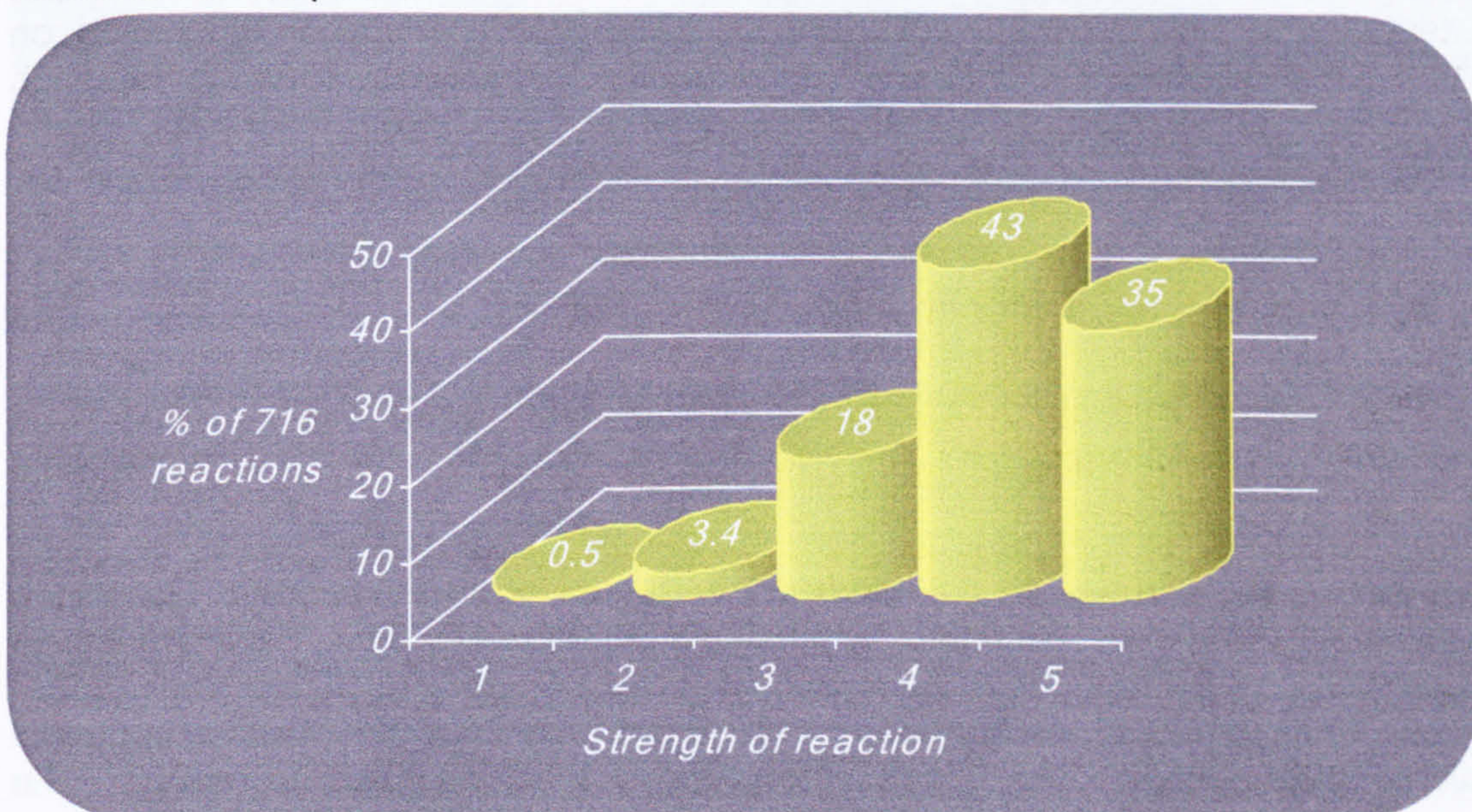


Figure 5.5: % of 716 positive appraisal reactions receiving strength scores from 1 (LIKE) to 5 (DELIGHT).

The plot above shows the strength of the 716 reactions that make up the data set as scored by the 50 participants that provided data¹³. As expected the research instructions are responsible for the obvious skew in the data towards more positive reactions. The average score given to a reaction was 4.1 showing that participants were reporting reactions where they were closer to being delighted by cars than merely liking them. 251 reactions (35%) were rated by participants as 5, equivalent to 'delight', the upper anchor used for the scale. These are the 251 strongest positive appraisal reactions reported by participants. The next strongest were 308 (43%) average strength positive reactions given the median score of 4 by participants. Finally 157 reactions (22%) received scores of 1, 2 or 3, that is they were identified as being less strong than the average 4 rating. These are the 157 least strong positive reactions reported by participants. The plot shows that this pattern is generally consistent across the two motorshows and independent of the gender of the participant reporting the reaction. Like the statistical tests performed above, the plot suggests a similar distribution of reactions given each score on the 5-item scale, regardless of the gender of the person reporting their occurrence and the motorshow they attended.

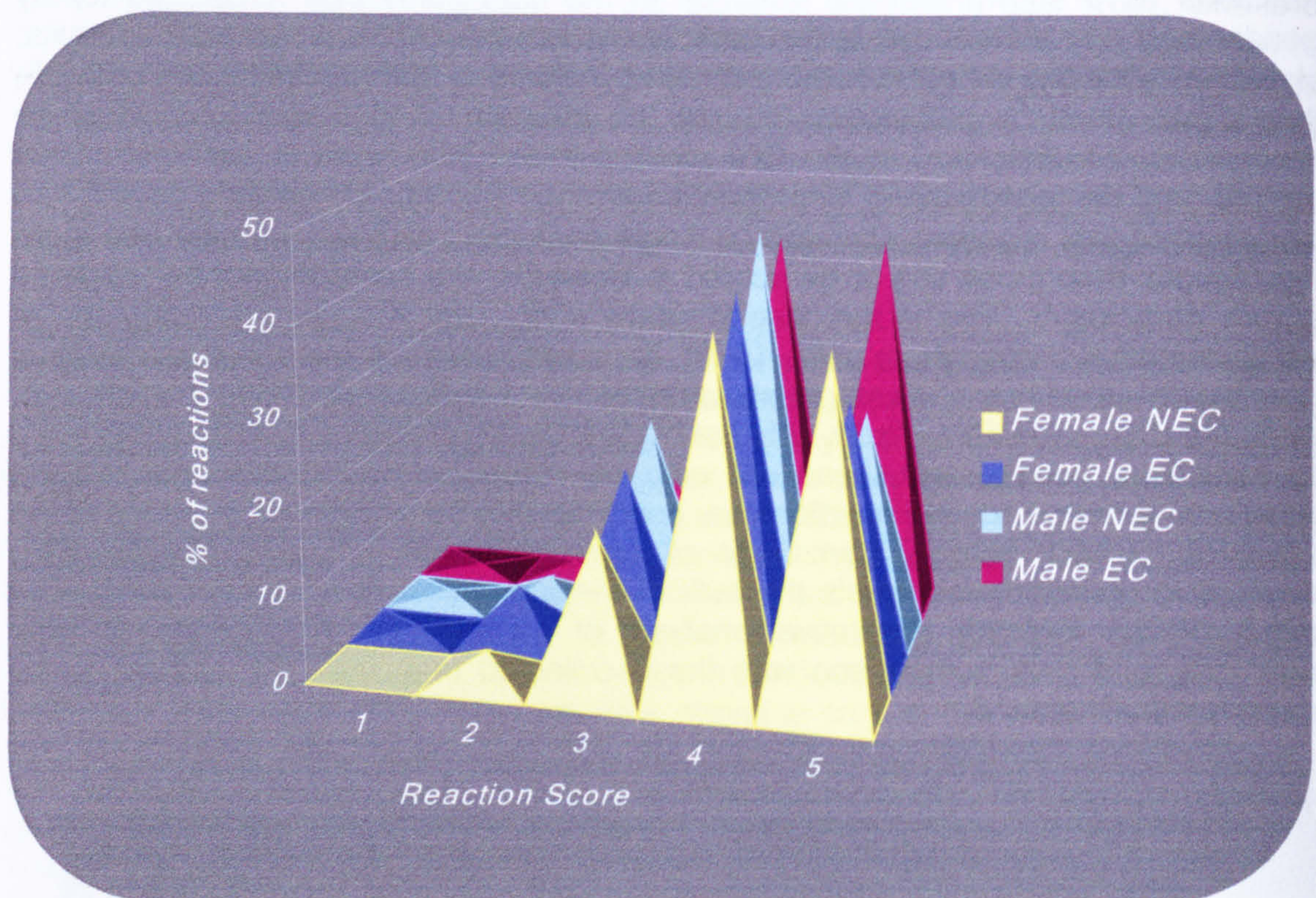


Figure 5.6: Strength of self-reported positive appraisal reactions according to sex of participant and research context.

Analysis of the differences between the delight reactions and less positive appraisals

On the basis of these patterns the group of Observations were analysed independently of the research context and the gender of the participant. Taking the ambiguities of the 5-item reaction strength scale into consideration, the 308 average strength reactions, those given the median score of 4, were excluded from further analysis. This potentially ambiguous group of average strength positive appraisal reactions were labelled (A). Comparisons were then only made between the

¹³ The 2 participants that returned blank diaries are excluded from the analysis from this point onward.

strongest positive appraisal reactions, the 251 receiving a score of 5, and the 157 least strong positive appraisal reactions, those receiving scores of 1, 2 or 3. Only the 251 most positive reactions are labelled 'delight' (D), whilst the 157 least strong reactions are labelled (L). As described in the CCI method, this process of skimming the data is equivalent to that used by Estelami, (2000), in the study of extreme customer reactions to organisational complaint handling. The same mechanism was used to skim the CCI data prior to its qualitative analysis and comparison with the SRD data, to be presented in Chapter 6.

The Stimuli

The analysis of the antecedent stimuli of the 716 reactions reported by the participants followed a two stage process. Firstly participants' responses to the eight coding questions presented on the recording sheet were analysed to identify the basis of each positive appraisal reaction. Then each reaction was individually analysed in terms of the respondent's description of the car attributes that evoked it and the thoughts and feelings associated with it. This second phase of the analysis is presented in Chapter 6

Analysis of responses to the 8 coding questions according to strength of reaction.

To investigate any trends in the data participants' responses to the eight coding questions for every reaction reported were compared with its strength ((L)east, (A)verage, (D)elight). Participants' answers to the coding questions were used as indicators of the reason each stimulus evoked a positive appraisal reaction. Each Observation was indexed with the factors, incorporated in the coding questions, that received a 'YES' response from the participant. The plot below shows the distribution of participants' 'YES' answers to the eight coding questions, and presents the percentage of the 716 reactions in which the participants reported the factors played a role.

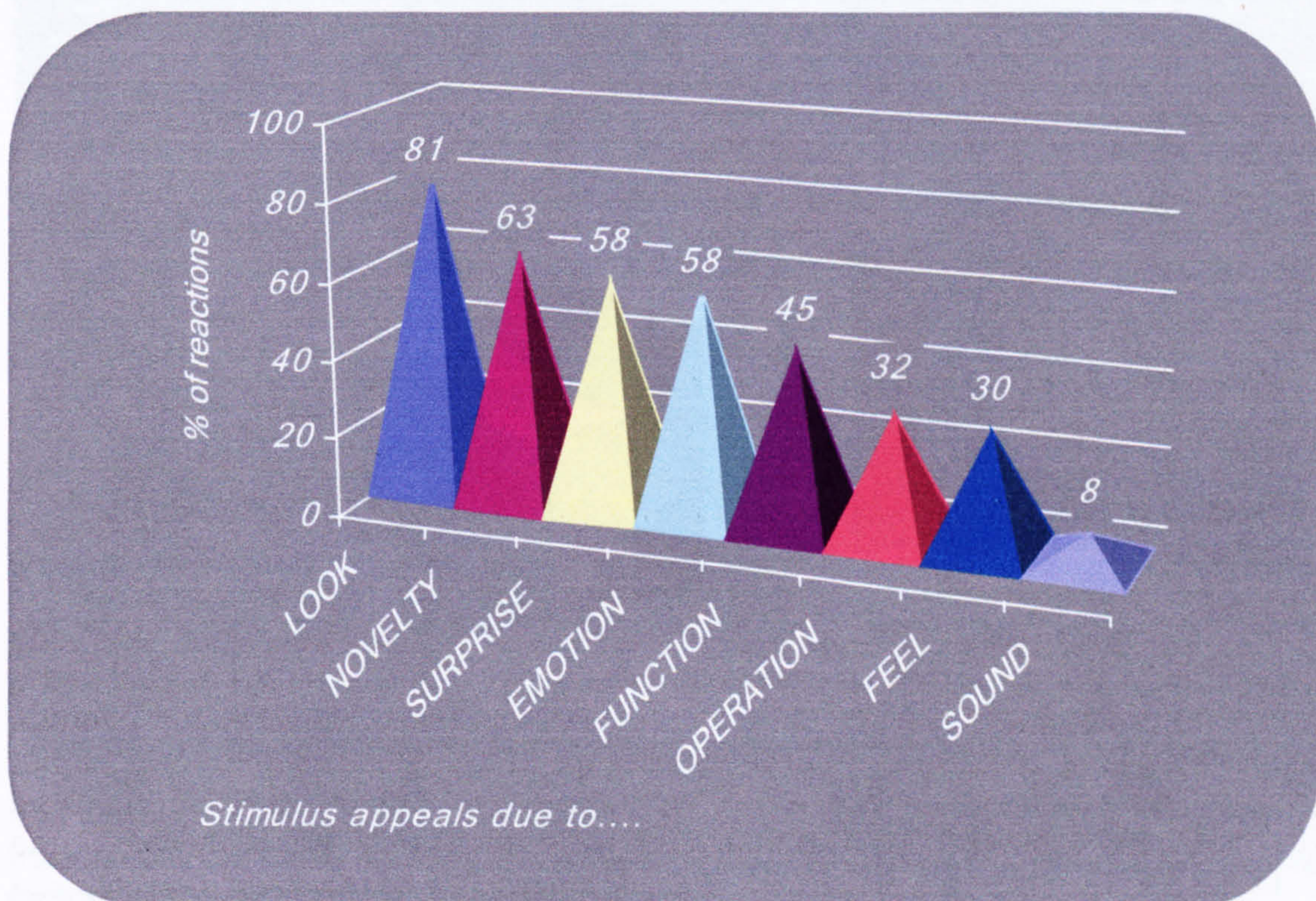


Figure 5.7: % of 716 reaction stimuli appealing to 8 factors

As might have been expected the data show an important role for the look or styling of cars and their attributes. Participants coded 81% of all the positive reactions recorded with the Look factor. In the static evaluation setting of the motorshow the vast majority of positive reactions to cars were at least partly due to the visual appeal of the product. But as the data show, participants rarely coded a reaction as the result of a single factor. On average participants used 3.7 factors to code each reaction they reported. Obviously cars also evoked positive reactions due to their appeal to other senses - the way they felt to the touch (Feel - 30% of reactions) and the noise they made (Sound - 8% of reactions). Another factor underlying a large proportion of the reactions was the Novelty of the product (63% of reactions). Cars and their attributes seemed to appeal to participants when they were perceived as being new or different. This suggests a cognitive process whereby participants recognised the novelty of the stimulus, that it did not match expectations or that they held no expectations about it. The data also show that features could appeal because of what they did (Function - 45% of reactions) and how they did it (32% of reactions). Finally participants' responses to the coding questions also indicate that some of a product's appeal is down to less tangible factors. Participants reported in 58% of their positive reactions that they were surprised by the product and, also in 58% of their reactions, that the product appealed to them at an emotional level.

With the aim of identifying the distinctive features of delight reactions the data were re-plotted against the reported strength of reaction according to the (L)east positive, (A)veragely positive and (D)elight groupings. The panel below shows the least positive reactions in the foreground and the most positive reactions in the distance. The proportion of reactions of each strength that participants coded as due to each of the factors is shown. The gradient of each factor's 'roof' is therefore indicative of the difference between the most positive (D) group of reactions and the weaker (L) group of reactions.

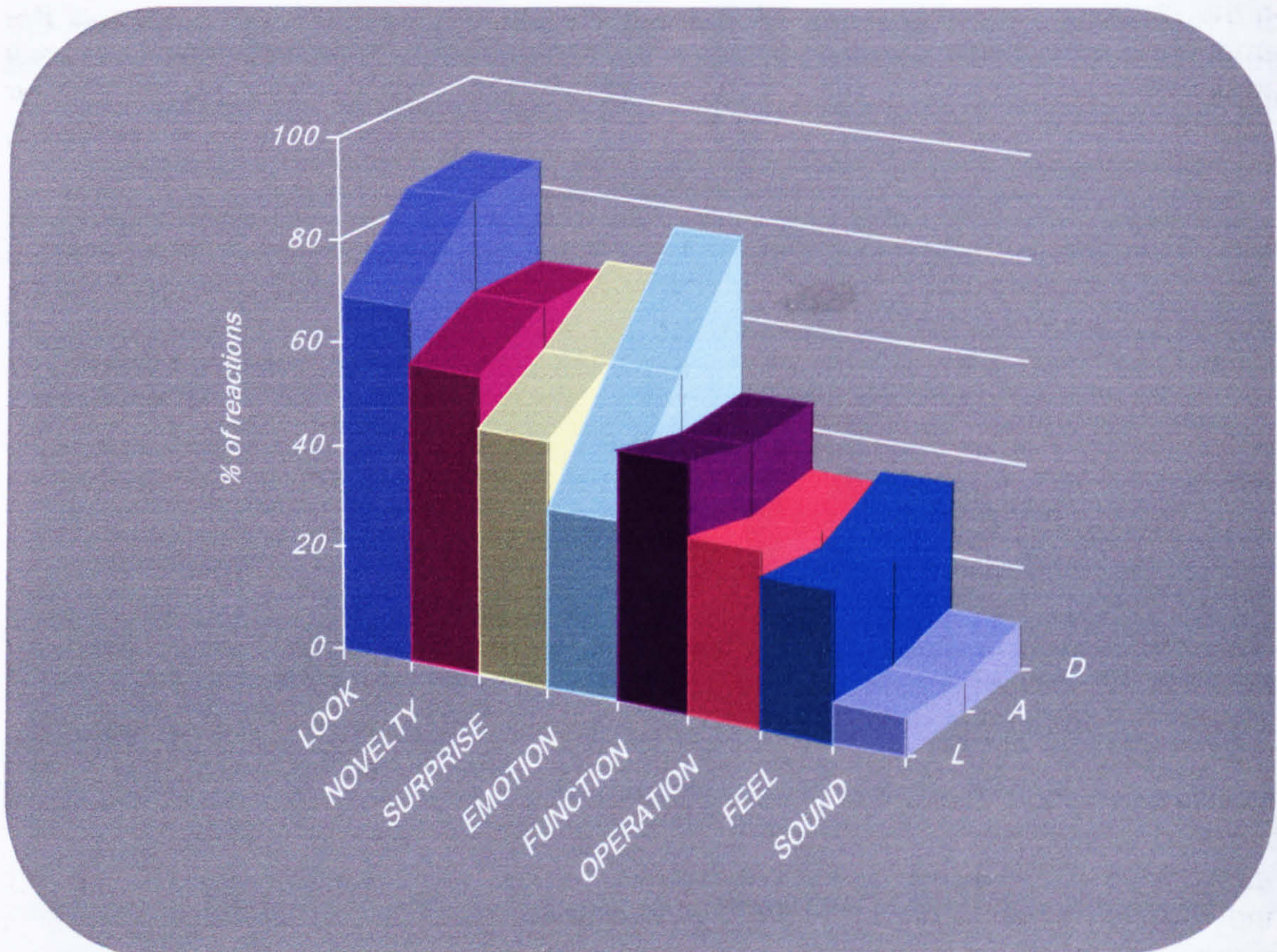


Figure 5.8: The proportion of reactions of each strength, (L)east (A)verage (D)elight, appealing due to 8 factors.

Flat roofs

The four least frequently reported factors - Sound, Feel, Operation, and Function - have comparatively flat roofs. This is to say that there is not a great difference in the frequency of these functions' role in reactions of different strengths. For all strengths of reaction these factors were cited relatively infrequently by participants as playing a role in the appeal of the product. They would therefore seem not to distinguish the strongest delight-like (D) reactions from the least positive appraisal reactions (L), in the motorshow setting.

Steep roofs

Two factors seem to have steeply raked plots indicative of trends in the data associated with increases in the strength of positive reaction. The gentler slope of the Surprise plot shows that participants reported being surprised by the product in less than half (48%) of the L reactions. In contrast the surprising appeal of the product was reported in over two thirds (67%) of the D reactions. This trend suggests that although surprise occurs in lesser reactions, its frequency of occurrence tends to distinguish the most positive customer appraisal reactions. One interpretation of these data is that products that surprise participants are likely to delight them. However, in 33% of the strongest reactions participants failed to report any surprise, and as such it is indicative of the strongest delight-like reactions, but not definitive.

The strongest trend in the data is the plot for Emotion. Only 35% of the least strong positive reactions included a reported role for the product's emotional appeal. In contrast participants reported that the product appealed to them at the emotional level in 75% of D reactions. Participants report that the emotional appeal of products is much less common in weak appraisal reactions and almost characteristic of the strongest positive reactions. This is reiterated by the fact that the rank order of this factor rises from the 5th most common in the group of L reactions to 2nd most common in the D group. One interpretation of these data is that products that appeal at the emotional level delight the participant. However, in 25% of the delight-like reactions participants failed to report the emotional appeal of the product as a source of their positive reaction. Again this factor is indicative of the strongest delight-like reactions, but not definitive.

Alternative interpretations of these data might take these factors as indicators of the nature of the reactions themselves. Participants may have reported surprise when they experienced it, and emotional appeal when they experienced a feeling or emotional response to the product. As such these data can be taken as indicative of the nature of the strongest positive appraisal reactions themselves, rather than of the stimuli that evoke them. This interpretation sits with the existing theoretical views of delight as 'surprising pleasure' although there remain at least 33% of these strongest reactions that are missing at least one of these components.

Other roofs

The remaining two factors, Novelty and Look, show no clear trends that distinguish the different strengths of positive reaction. Indeed these two factors were the most commonly coded by participants as playing a role in their positive appraisal reactions. The Look factor was the most frequently used factor in all 3 strengths of reaction, with it playing a role in 65% of L, 84% of A and 85% of D reactions. The Novelty plot shows a similar pattern although its rank order drops from 2nd most frequent in L reactions to 4th most frequent in D reactions, with it being overtaken by the Surprise and Emotion factors. Although the delight-like reactions are characterised by high frequencies of these factors, so too are the least strong reactions and so these factors seem not distinguish the former.

Number factors reported according to reaction strength

Another trend evident in the data is the rise in the number of factors per reaction cited by the participants, as the strength of reaction increases. In the L group of reactions participants reported a role for an average of 3.3 factors per reaction. In the stronger D reactions participants tended to put the stimuli's appeal down to more factors, on average 4.1 per reaction. It seems the strongest positive appraisal reactions were evoked by cars (and their attributes) that had a broad appeal in terms of the factors accounted for in the coding questions. The plot above shows the percentage of reactions of each strength according to the number of factors participants cited as influencing the appeal of the product. Reactions that participants put down to a single factor are to the left and those that participants coded with all eight factors are to the right.

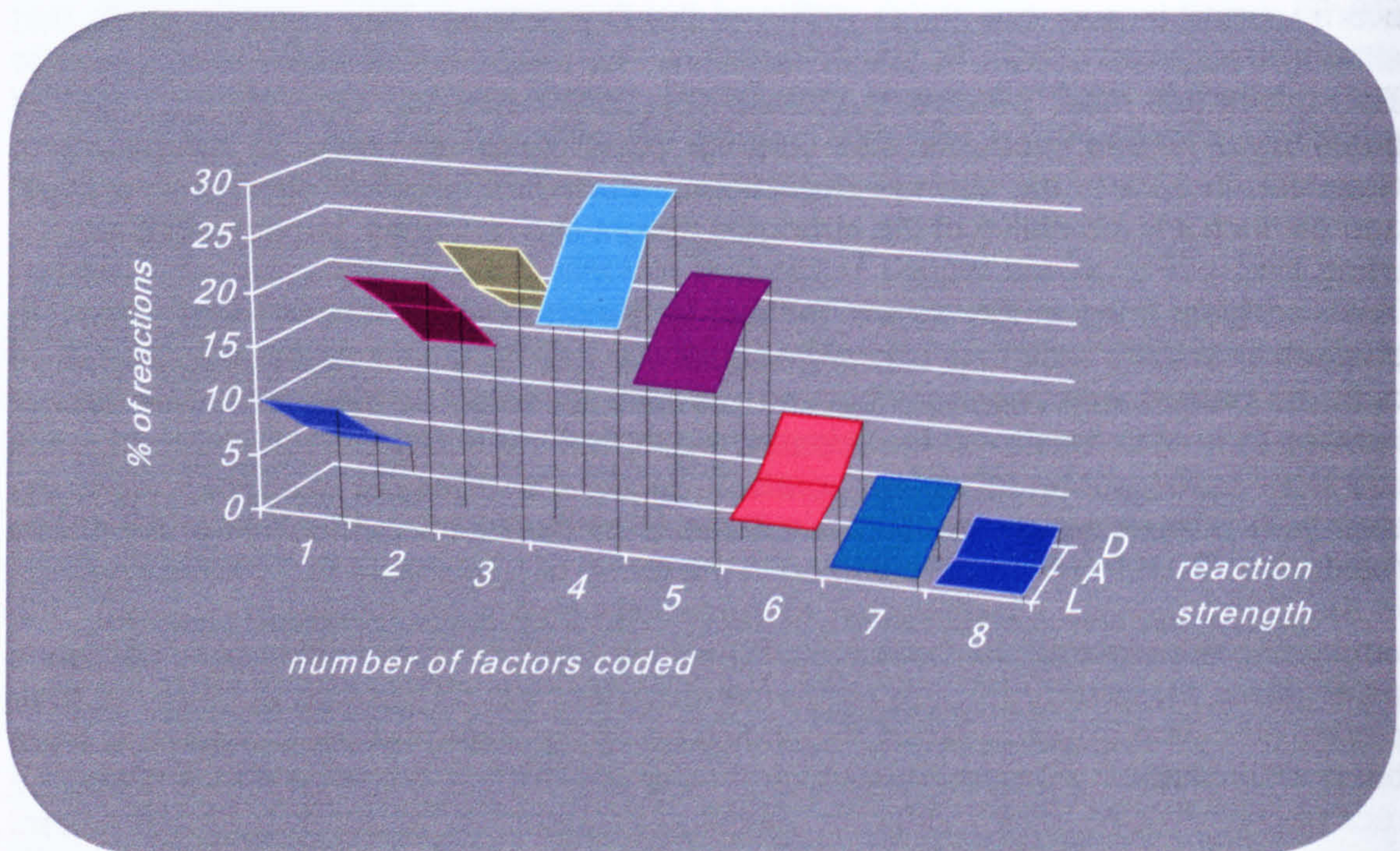


Figure 5.9: Number of factors coded vs strength of reaction

Reactions plotted to the left could be labelled 'narrower' and those to the right 'broader'. Again the L reactions are in the foreground and the strongest delight-like D reactions are in the distance. The gradient of the plots is indicative of the difference between these different strengths of positive product appraisal. 'Narrower' reactions, to the left, have 'roofs' that rise towards us. This indicates that, compared to delight-like reactions, a greater proportion of weaker reactions are reported to be the result of fewer of the eight factors. In contrast the plots for 'broader' reactions, to the right, have 'roofs' that rise away from us. Conversely, this indicates that a larger proportion of the D reactions are put down to larger numbers of factors by participants. The helical twist in the plots above illustrates the shift in the mean number of factors per reaction from 3.3 in (L) reactions to 4.1 in (D) reactions.

There are at least two ways to interpret these data. Firstly it could be said that delight-like reactions tend to be the result of a product, or one of its attributes, that appeals on more levels, i.e., it appeals to the senses, its novel, it does what it does well and it surprises usually resulting in an emotional reaction in its appraiser. Extrapolating from this would lead to the proposition that the broader the appeal of the stimulus the stronger the appraisal reaction. An alternative way to explain these

data is that the group of delight-like reactions collected in this research context is made up of different types of reaction. Fewer factors underlying a reaction could be indicative of a simple type, (e.g., wow, its got one of those new fangled Functional things), whilst reactions put down to more factors may have been more complex (e.g., hang on a minute that gearstick is a bit nice, umm I like the way it feels and moves... nice that)¹⁴.

These two interpretations are distinguished by where the seat of the reaction is assumed to be. The first sees the antecedent of the reaction being the product stimulus. The second sees the act of appraisal and the mental processes of the appraiser as the root of the reaction. Both interpretations may be appropriate but a deeper analysis of the participants' descriptions of their reactions and the stimuli that evoke them is needed to understand these patterns of data.

5.5.6 Conclusions

The findings of the SRD method resulting from the descriptive analysis of the quantitative data collected can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the frequency of reporting Surprise and Emotional Appeal distinguished the strongest product appraisals from the least strong. This suggests that the strongest reactions captured using the self-report mechanism do indeed match the prevailing surprising pleasure view of delight (e.g. Oliver et al 1997). These are the factors that seem to characterise the strongest positive product appraisal reactions and are indicative of both the expectation-based nature of delight and its positive affective nature. However, participants' reports indicated that not all of the strongest appraisal reactions collected using the SRD method contained these two factors, suggesting that surprising pleasure is an appropriate but limited conceptualisation of these reactions.

Secondly, in this category of product, the novelty of the stimulus and its appearance were the most commonly reported factors underlying all positive appraisals, both strong and weak. Again, an expectation-based appraisal process seems to have been taking place during the static evaluation of cars, resulting in the participant's recognition of novelty. However, the data suggest that this expectation-based appeal process played a part in different strengths of positive appraisal reaction and consequently, that the favourable disconfirmation of expectations did not always result in the experience of delight.

The other four factors included in the coding questions - Sound, Touch, Operation and Function - were each reported to play a role in less than half of all positive appraisals. This finding is indicative of the diversity of the product-based antecedents of the delight reactions captured. Support has been provided for the 'functional innovation' route to delight commonly cited by users of the Kano Model (e.g. Clausing, 1994, Kano, 1995, Hofmeister, 1996, Matzler and Hinterhuber, 1998 and Shen et al 2000), although the finding that less than half of the delight reactions captured contained a reported role for the function performed by the stimulus suggests that these interpretations of Kano are simplistic. The Sound and Touch factors were indicative of a sensory appeal process whilst the Operation factor suggested that the delivery of a product attribute, and not just its function, can be the source of positive appraisal. These findings are consistent with the data collected using the CCI method.

¹⁴ Of course a third possible interpretation of these findings is that delighted participants, in their excitement, ticked more 'yes' responses to the coding questions, than when they were less impressed by the cars.

As in the CCI method, evidence has been found using the SRD method for multiple types of delight reaction. In general participants cited a role for more factors in the appeal process making up the strongest reactions, hinting that the broader the appeal of the stimulus the stronger the reaction. Nonetheless, several delight reactions were reported to be the result of the very narrow, or single factor, appeal of the stimulus. Unlike the CCI method, the quantity of data collected using the SRD method means that at this stage of the analysis the reactions had not been categorised as either attribute-based or holistic. However the patterns in the factor data do suggest multiple types of delight reaction occurring in this consumption setting. The detailed analysis of the qualitative data was designed to investigate these postulations and is reported in the next chapter.

5.6 Summary of the Descriptive Study - findings and theory development

The DS deployed two methods with the aim of progressing the two theoretical contributions of this thesis. At this stage of the analysis the quantitative data collected allow the further development of the product bases of customer delight contained within the framework presented by the Kano Model. The qualitative analysis of the data collected during the DS will be presented in Chapter 6 allowing the development of a descriptive model of the nature of customer delight building upon the S>ABC¹⁵ prologue and the findings of the EPS. Whilst the original Kano Model proposes two product-based routes to delight, Attractive qualities that provide unexpected answers to latent needs and Linear qualities that delight when exceptional levels of desirable scalar qualities are present in the product, the initial findings of the DS indicate that this is a limited conceptualisation of the phenomenon.

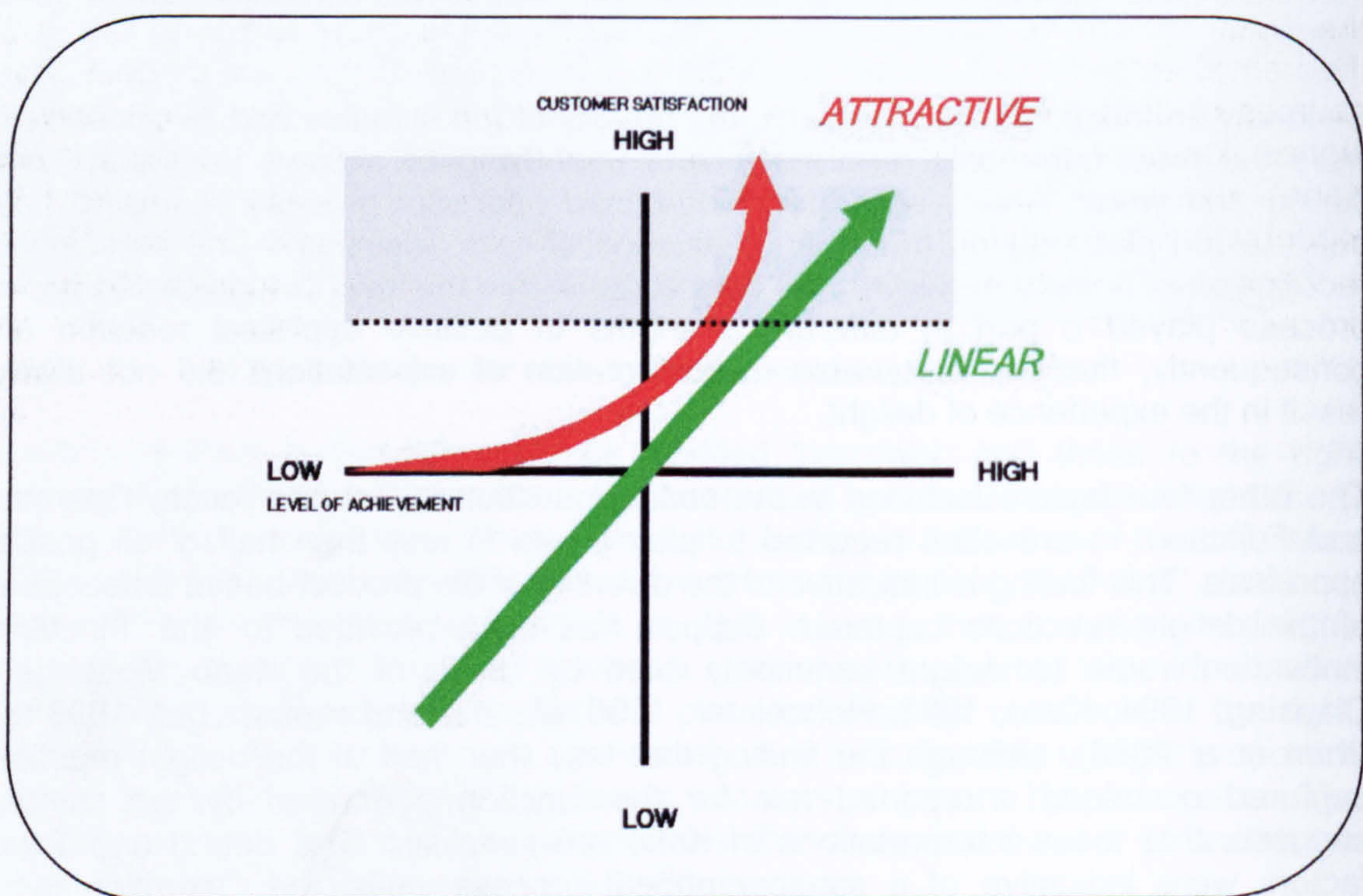


Figure 5.10: The Kano Model 2 routes to product based customer delight

Firstly the DS has provided support for these two Kano based routes to delight. The initial analysis of the stimuli identified by participants in the CCI method suggested

¹⁵ Stimulus > Affect Behaviour Cognition

that both functional innovations and high levels of scalar qualities were the sources of many of the delight reactions captured. Further support was provided by participants' reports of the functional appeal of product attributes in the SRD method.

However, the DS has provided evidence for additional product bases of delight not accounted for in the Kano Model. The identification of an holistic basis of appeal in the EPS was supported by the CCI data and cannot be easily explained using the Kano typology. Further evidence of this route to customer delight was gained from the SRD method and the finding that participants tended to report a larger number of factors as responsible for their delight reactions compared to their less positive appraisals. Likewise, the identification in the EPS of everyday product attributes that can delight because they are delivered in the product in unexpected ways, was supported in both the CCI and SRD data sets. In both methods participants had reported delight reactions evoked by product attributes, not because of the function they performed, but because of their delivery or operation in the product and their sensory appeal. The Kano model suggests that those attributes that the customer expects in the product cannot evoke delight reactions. The DS however, has suggested that these Basic qualities can delight the customer when they are delivered in new or unexpected ways. The initial analysis of the stimuli identified by participants in the CCI method as the basis of their delight reactions suggests a 5th route to delight. Scalar product qualities were occasionally cited as sources of delight, not because of their exceptional levels in the product, but rather their optimum level. This proposed route to delight requires further investigation through the qualitative analysis of the participants' reaction descriptions to be described in Chapter 6.

The result of the descriptive analysis of the quantitative data collected in the DS, and the initial qualitative analysis of the CCI data, is the proposal of a five route theoretical extension of the Kano Model that incorporates the new product-based sources of delight identified. The model extension presented below maps only the highest levels of customer appraisal reaction representing delight and incorporates Kano's existing Attractive and Linear sources of delight. In addition to these the model presents the three additional routes to delight identified in the EPS and DS and that are unaccounted for in the original Kano Model. Expected product features can delight when they are delivered in unexpected ways. Scalar product attributes can delight when they are optimised so that the customer perceives them as 'just right'. And appraisal of the product, or areas of it, at the global level can result in an holistic rather than attribute-based delight reaction.

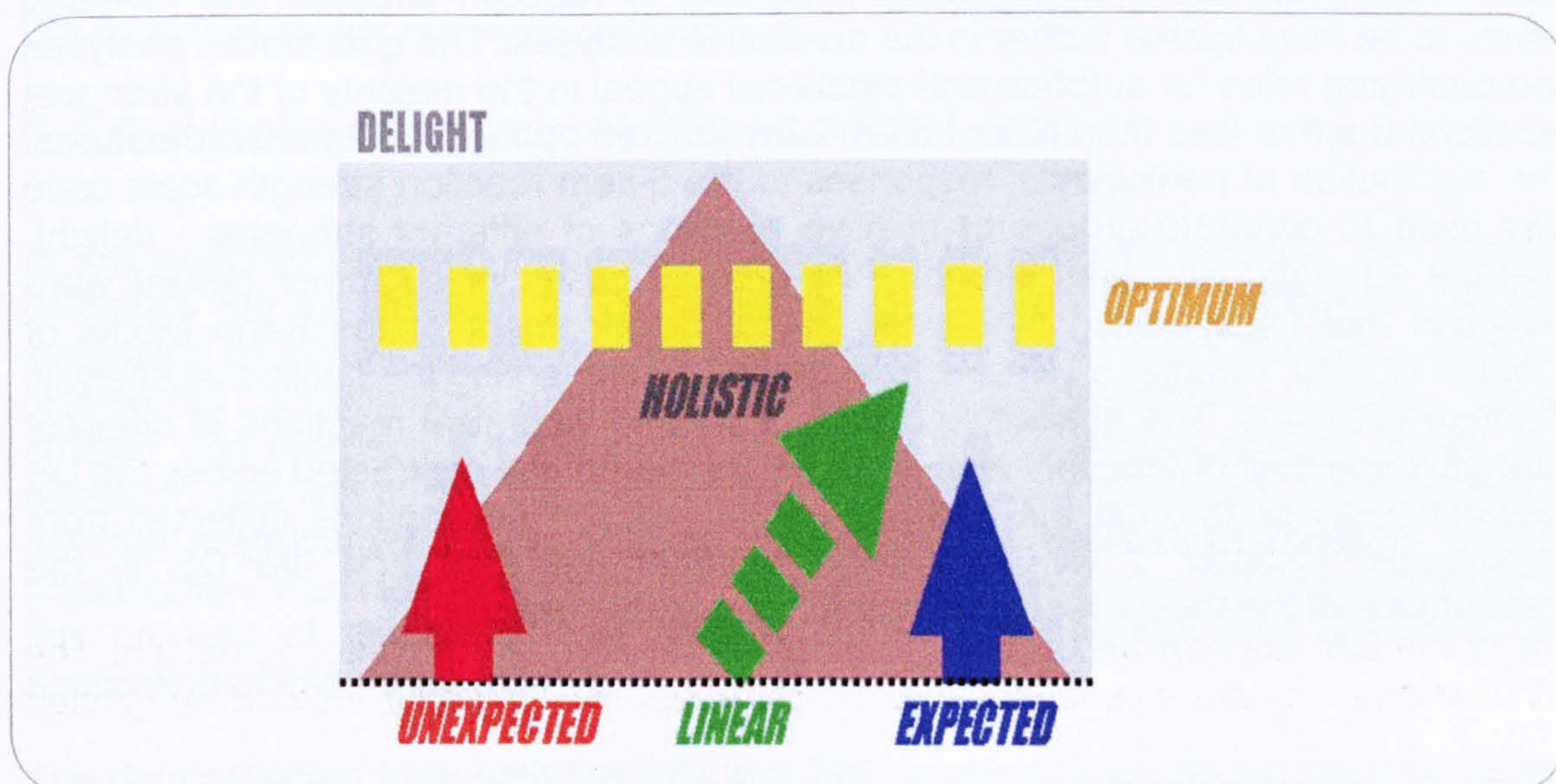


Figure 5.11: 5 route theoretical development of the Kano Model

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has demonstrated how the findings and insights gained during the research's exploratory stage have influenced its descriptive stage. The final two methods used to investigate customer delight during pre-purchase car evaluation were designed to address research questions and research aims reframed as a result of the Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS). Principally these methods endeavoured to capture a greater diversity of customer delight reactions to cars, whilst uncovering the customer's cognitive and affective experience of these reactions. To achieve these aims the two methods used the same data collection instrument in two different ways and investigated customer delight reactions during two distinct types of car evaluation; static and test-drive. These methods collected both quantitative and qualitative data from participants in the same format with the goal of making comparisons between appraisal reactions of different strengths occurring in different situations. This chapter has presented the quantitative analysis of these data, whilst Chapter 6 presents its qualitative analysis.

The CCI method used researchers to interview 16 potential customers whilst they appraised four different cars. This method allowed these customers to evaluate cars both statically and on a test-drive. Researchers were able to capture the participant's self-reported delight reactions to the cars in the form of their verbatim descriptions of the reaction and its antecedents in the product. Participants were also asked to score the strength of their positive appraisal reactions and to indicate whether or not eight factors, (Look, Function, Operation, Novelty, Surprise, Emotional appeal, Sound, Touch), played a role in each. The SRD method collected the same data through a pure self-report mechanism. The same data collection instrument used by the researchers whilst interviewing in the CCI method was sent to 60 participants, along with instructions and a free ticket to one of two UK motorshows. 52 self-report diaries were returned, each containing the participant's description and scoring of the delight reactions they had experienced during the show and the product stimuli that had evoked them.

Having presented the detail of these methods' deployment this chapter presented the analysis of the quantitative data collected from each. These analyses described the size and shape of the data sets in terms of the number of reactions of different strengths collected in the different settings. 567 positive reactions to cars were collected in the CCI method and 716 in the SRD method. Responses to the eight factor coding questions were plotted according to reaction strength and revealed trends to be investigated further in the qualitative analyses. The quantitative analyses demonstrated roles for surprise and emotional appeal in the majority of the strongest reactions but that less than half of them were evoked by functional product features. The distribution of participants' responses to the 5-item reaction strength scale code was used to generate groups of positive reactions of different strengths - delight, average strength, and less strong. Five product bases of customer delight were identified and incorporated into a theoretical development of the Kano Model of Product Quality. Chapter 6 will conclude the DS by presenting the qualitative analysis of these data sets. The qualitative nature of positive appraisal reactions of different strengths and their antecedent stimuli will be compared and contrasted across the DS research settings through the analysis of the reaction descriptions collected from participants. Chapter 7 will then bring together the EPS and the DS in the presentation of the theory resulting from this inductive research.

Chapter 6

The Descriptive Study - findings of the qualitative analysis

Aim

To conclude the Descriptive Study by presenting the qualitative analysis and the synthesis of a descriptive model of customer delight.

6.0 Chapter Summary

The previous chapter presented the two methods used in the Descriptive Study (DS) to investigate the subjective experience of customer delight in two car evaluation settings. The chapter concluded by submitting a descriptive analysis of the quantitative data collected and the identification of trends in these data that require further investigation. This chapter presents the qualitative analysis of the data captured during the DS according to the research objective of describing the diversity and nature of customer delight reactions and their antecedents in these settings.

The qualitative analysis is the process via which the emergent theory of customer delight is grounded in the data. The first stage of this qualitative analysis process uses a data subset to develop a structured coding scheme. The use of this coding scheme to interpret the full sets of participant verbatim accompanying each reaction captured is then described. Participants in both methods, Car Clinic Interviews (CCI) and Self-report Diaries (SRD), described their reactions in the same format. The chapter explains how stimulus, cognition and affect codes were generated, grouped and refined by returning to the full data set and the final structured coding scheme is presented. The chapter then relates the application of this coding scheme to the full data sets and completes the qualitative analysis by comparing between delight reactions and less positive appraisals in both static and test-drive evaluation situations.

The findings of the DS are submitted through a discussion of the code frequencies and their patterns in reactions of different strengths, occurring in the different research settings. This chapter concludes with the proposal of a descriptive model of the customer delight reactions captured.

6.1 Qualitative Analysis of CCI and SRD data

In this inductive research theory is the product of the analysis process. This section describes the synthesis of a descriptive theory of customer delight during vehicle evaluation by presenting the qualitative analysis of the participant verbatim collected in both the CCI and SRD methods. The final theory is presented at the end of the chapter and represents a description of the delight reactions captured during this research. This first part of the chapter relates the qualitative analysis process used to develop a structured coding scheme to interpret the data and concludes with its presentation. Participants' descriptions of their delight reactions are the start point of this process of theorizing. The second part of the chapter then describes the application of this scheme.

The data collected from both the CCI and SRD methods took almost identical forms. Each reaction to a car as reported by a participant had been entered into a

spreadsheet as a numbered observation. In all 1283 Observations were collected, each of which had been coded by the participant in terms of the strength of the positive reaction and some of the possible reasons underlying the reaction. These quantitative data have been presented in the previous chapter. Each observation also included two fields of qualitative data in the form of the participant's description of the reaction and the product stimulus being appraised. These two fields of participant verbatim were considered as bounded customer statements and became the basis of a qualitative content analysis. The two bounded statements associated with each Observation were then considered in terms of their affective, cognitive and behavioural content and the product-basis of the reaction.

The triangulation of CCI and SRD methods permitted the search for both confirmatory and dis-confirmatory evidence for the emergent theory across the two contexts researched - static and test-drive car evaluation. Insights gained in these two self-report research settings could then be compared and contrasted with the observation of the static evaluation context reported in the Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS). Chapter 7 concludes the research by bringing together the findings of the EPS and DS in the presentation of two theoretical contributions - a development of the Kano Model of Product Quality and a descriptive model of Customer Delight during product evaluation.

6.2 Development of the Coding scheme

In order to develop an appropriate means of coding the content of participants' reports a structured inductive analysis process was followed¹. The two electronic data sets, CCI and SRD, contained two qualitative data fields. The first of these was a short data field in which the participant (or interviewer in the CCI method) described the product-basis of the reaction in no more than a few words. These entries were limited by the space provided on the data collection sheets used and the longest entry in this field was the seven word statement;

SRD/Obs424 - *"Styling - shape from windows round to boot"*

The second statement associated with each observation tended to contain much more participant-sourced verbatim since greater space had been provided on the data collection sheet. These statements were participants' responses to the prompt *"describe why the delighter appeals to you, what it makes you think and how it makes you feel"*. These bounded statements varied in length from observations with no entry, to the 96 word statement;

CCI/Obs336 - *"Makes the car look the 'boss', powerful. The dimpled features on the front lights are nice. Shows quality and how much the car is worth. The details like this are what sells the car. When you can afford a car like this you probably are the boss and you don't want to look a twat. The front detail shows the heritage and tradition of BMW. You are buying the past performance and history of the car as well. It has the image of the company and this image is important. It shows quality money and status."*

On this basis the qualitative analysis to be described in the following sections was conducted on 1283 reaction descriptions containing 22,659 words of participant verbatim provided by 66 research participants. On average each positive appraisal reaction to a car was accompanied by 19 words of verbatim in the CCI data set, and

¹ Prescriptions for qualitative analysis processes can be found in Straus (1987), Straus and Corbin (1998), Symon and Cassell (1998), King (1998) and Easterby-Smith et al (1991).

17 words of verbatim in the SRD data set. The full participant verbatim was read through several times to familiarise the researcher with the data, and observations with blank entries were discarded. During the descriptive quantitative analysis described in Chapter 5 it was shown that, in the SRD data, there were no differences in the rates of reporting positive appraisal reactions and delight between participants of different ages and sex. Furthermore, the behavioural components of delight observed in the EPS had been similar in all the delight reactions regardless of the age and sex of the customer. It was therefore decided to consider each reaction making up the CCI and SRD data sets individually.

6.2.1 Code Generation

To produce a manageable amount of data for the generation of codes, a random sample from the two data sets was taken. The CCI data was sorted to distinguish between the static and test-drive evaluation contexts and the latter were put aside for later comparison. Only the static evaluation context would be used to generate codes whilst the test-drive context would be used to search for disconfirmatory evidence after the initial analysis. The two electronic data sets containing static vehicle evaluations, CCI and SRD, were then cropped to remove all fields other than the Observation number and the two bounded participant statements. The order of each data set was then randomised to remove patterns in the data set up during the quantitative analysis. This produced two lists of mixed-strength positive static evaluation reactions, containing only a numerical identifier and two participant statements. The first 100 reactions in the both SRD and CCI static evaluation randomised sets were then printed to perform the process of generating affect, behaviour, cognition and stimulus codes.

The participant verbatim for the 200 reactions was considered iteratively according to the S>ABC theoretical prologue. Participants had been instructed to identify the things about cars that delighted them and so for every reaction there was a stimulus explicitly reported as the first bounded statement and often expanded upon in the second. Initial readings of the reactions suggested that their descriptions also included both explicit and implicit indicators of affective states and cognitions. Participants had been specifically asked to identify what they thought and how they felt about the things that appealed to them. Many observations included very limited reaction descriptions that did not always contain either implicit thought processes or the use of affective words. Others included indications of multiple cognitive processes and the explicit use of several affective words.

Participants had not been asked to provide information on the behavioural component of their reaction since this had been captured during the EPS. Unsurprisingly, the participant verbatim, contained very few descriptions of behaviours associated with appraisal reactions. However, after several readings of the data sets it was evident that they did include several explicit statements of the potential consequences of the reaction described². A significant number could be viewed in terms of their cognitive and behavioural consequences. The process of code generation therefore followed the sequence - Stimulus, Affects, Cognitions, Consequences. Each stage of this analysis followed a process of first identifying explicit evidence of the four reaction components and their types. Then Observations were scanned for implicit evidence of the reaction components³.

² Including those identified in the MCO method - intention, approach and repeated attention.

³ The process first provided an objective view of the content of respondents' reaction descriptions then the researcher's interpretation of the participant verbatim. This interpretative process will be presented alongside the participant verbatim to ensure transparency in the analysis.

The identification of both explicit and implicit examples of the four component types in the 200 reactions produced lists for each. Items on these lists were then grouped together according to emerging themes and categories. These categories were then assigned an appropriate label which became part of the coding scheme to be used on the complete data set. The following sections will make explicit this process of code generation for each of the reaction components.⁴

Stimuli codes - product basis and reaction type

This iteration of the analysis process aimed to identify and code the bases of cars' appeal in the contexts studied. As described in Chapter 5, Observations in the CCI data set had already been categorised according to the product basis of the reaction. Here, the Attribute-based and Holistic categories used in the quantitative analysis had been derived from the contents of the first bounded statement associated with each reaction. These categorisations had been lost during the process of producing the cropped randomised data set for the code generation. Therefore, this categorisation process was applied to the SRD data and repeated for the CCI data. Examples of Observations coded as either attribute-based (given the code [A]) or holistic (given the code [H]) were presented in Chapter 5, page 134. To summarise, reactions with a single product attribute identified in the first bounded statement were coded [A], and reactions with general areas of the product or the product as whole were coded as [H].

After this initial re-coding using the 1st bounded statement, the 2nd bounded statement was used to differentiate further the 200 reactions coded as either A or H. Explicit examples of subcategories were identified and coded as follows.

Specific Attribute-based reactions - coded [AS] - reactions where the participant identified a singular basis of a specific car attribute's appeal.

CCI/Obs529 - *"Coathooks" [A] "Those are lovely. It's the damped movement. [S] So much effort has gone into all the details like that"*

CCI/Obs406 - *"Ashtray" [A] "The action on pressing and opening the ashtray [S] is very good"*

SRD/Obs359 - *"Headlights" [A] "The headlights give the car an aggressive appeal. Something to do with the fact that they are flattened at the top" [S]*

Cumulative Attribute-based reactions - coded [AC] - reactions where the participant identified multiple bases of a specific attribute's appeal.

CCI/Obs131 - *"Boot" [A] "Handles on both sides of the lid make it very easy to close [1]. Very practical. Can also be opened from inside the car so you don't have to use the key [2]." [AC]*

CCI/Obs26 *"Electric seats" [A] "Electric adjustment [1], very good. good range of adjustment [2] and seat memory [3]. "ooh" leather [4] means quality." [AC]*

⁴ The reader is asked to note that although this analysis process is represented here as a linear activity this is merely a constraint of presentation. The code generation process was in fact a repetitive, iterative and often circular process. Many groupings, themes, labels and final codes were developed, organised rejected and then reassessed before the coding scheme was finalised.

SRD/Obs675 *"Integrated Telephone"*[A] *"Telephone is integrated into the centre console next to the audio unit [1]. It has a familiar digital phone layout [2]. Controls are also mounted on the steering wheel for call accept and reject [3]."* [AC]

Cumulative Holistic reactions⁵ - coded [HC] - where the participant identified the appeal of the whole car, or an area of it, as made up of several appealing attributes.

SRD/Obs344 - *"Car's Styling"* [H] *"Lovely styling, unlike the old model. I particularly like the surf tail roof [1], the rear lights are a nice shape [2]. The alloy wheels [2] look cool. The front lights [3] look classy, really clear glass [4]"*[HC]

SRD/Obs537 - *"Grill - Styling - front"* [H] *"Radiator grill [1] combined with deep front bumper [2] makes the car look very strong and sturdy. Looks like it means business on the roads"*[HC]

CCI/Obs504 - *"In the back"* [H] *"Just really like it back here. Flexible folding middle seat is great [1] with table to play games on [2] etc. Easy to move and remove seats [3]."*[HC]

Mixed reactions⁶ - coded [AM] and [HM] - Cumulative attribute-based and holistic reactions where the participant identified good and bad points when describing the basis of the appeal.

CCI/Obs272 - *"Styling"*[H] *"Modern futuristic looks. Slopey at the front [1+], not wind resistant, wedge shaped to flow through the air. The shape of the rear windows look like a bit of an add on [2-] at the back but they are novel [2+]."*[HM]

CCI/Obs48 - *"Electric seats"*[A] *"These are great fun [1+], but not as good as some to use [1-]. Memory feature useful [2+]."*[AM]

SRD/Obs213 - *"Interior"* [H] *"The interior looks full of quality [1+]. This is let down by cheap feel to some things like the sunvisors [2-] and ashtray [3-], but the car does have a quality feel to it."*[HM]

SRD/Obs193 - *"Titanium look trim"* [A] *"The dash was dated and boring looking [1-] but it had a nice titanium look finish [2+]."*[AM]

Example Holistic reactions⁷ - coded [HE] - where the participant identified the whole car, or an area of it, as appealing, and provided a single attribute example.

SRD/Obs111 - *"Interior - Dials"* [H] *"The interior looks good especially the dials mounted in the steering wheel."*[HE]

SRD/Obs237 - *"Interior"* [H] *"Very interesting car. Quirky. Lots of nice features on display inside including interesting graphics for switches."* [HE]

⁵ [HC] type reactions were referred to as Cumulative reactions in the EPS, whilst [AC] type reactions were referred to as Attribute-based.

⁶ [AM] and [HM] type reactions had been observed in both MVO and MCO methods but were excluded from analysis.

⁷ Similar single attribute-based reactions had been dismissed in the MVO method as partial observations.

CCI/Obs329 - *"Interior styling"* [H] *"For a cheap car this is beautiful. Even the interior metal showing looks good."* [HE]

Overall Holistic reactions⁸ - coded [HO] - holistic reactions to the car where the participant did not identify any specific attribute basis for the car's appeal.

CC/Obs327 - *"Styling"* [H] *"Amazing. Sporty image. Modern chic and fashionable. Nice details and touches that look expensive for the price."* [O]

CCI/Obs488 - *"Overall feel"* [H] *"This car has big fun factor whilst having a cheap balanced appeal. Appeals to me as a young person. Has a kind of rebellious feel to it too - against old drivers kind of thing. It makes people look at you. It's a real head turner trendy."* [O]

SRD/Obs15 - *"The way the car makes you feel"* [H] *"Nothing compares with it. It feels big, it feels like nothing can stop you, you feel in complete control - King of the Road."* [O]

Stimuli codes - appealing nature

The participant verbatim also contained a great deal of information about the nature of these appealing stimuli - what it was about cars and their attributes that participants found appealing. To uncover the nature and diversity of cars' appeal, participants' reports were scanned for explicit and implicit product based drivers for the appeal reactions. For Observations in each data subset (SRD and CCI) every aspect of the product either explicitly or implicitly cited by the participant in their descriptions was identified and coded. The lists of codes generated for each data subset were then compared to identify redundancies, and synonymous codes were merged. The table below presents the full list of product appeal codes identified in the static evaluation data subsets. Example Observations are then provided to demonstrate the use of these codes to label reactions according to their explicit and implicit antecedents in the product.

[ap] appearance, look	[func] function	[fe] feel to the touch
[siz] size	[sha] shape	[loc] location, layout
[bui] build	[oper] operation, movement	[pri] price
[no] many, number of	[sim] simplicity	[mat] materials
[co] co-ordination, integration	[nov] novelty, newness	[col] colour
[fle] flexibility	[dis] distinctiveness	[erg] ergonomics
[ves] vestibular, body senses	[comf] comfort	[hei] height
[wei] weight	[br] brand	[sou] sound
[sp] speed	[spa] spaciousness	[vis] visibility
[us] user friendly, ease of use	[atd] attention to detail	

CCI/Obs137 - *"Electric Seats"* *"The seats have a real fluid motion [ves][oper]. You can move them into any position [func] [fle]"*

CCI/Obs391 - *"Doors"* *"Doors feel [fe] really expensive. They fit really nicely [bui]. The chrome [mat] catches in the door are a nice detail [atd]. Kick plate along the door frame has an expensive look [ap] especially with the BMW logo on it [br]"*

⁸ Also identified in the EPS and CCI data and labelled Holistic.

CCI/Obs147 - *"Switchgear" "Everything is nice and hunky [ap] [sha]. Nothing I can't understand [us]. Solid quality feel [bui]. Good feedback [oper] from the controls [fe] and location [loc] is good ergonomically [erg]"*

CCI/Obs396 - *"Electric seats" "I like the motorised seats. Nice click [sou] on the switch to change position [oper]. Satisfying nice sound [sou] to motor - robust sound - not obtrusive. The back of the seat feels nice - supports spine from top to bottom [ves] [comf]"*

CCI/Obs293 - *"Air con" "Changes from normal air to cold very quickly [sp]. Quite quiet [sou] as well"*

CCI/Obs269 - *"Instruments" "Really eye catching [dis] [ap] and simple [simp]. Like a rally car"*

CCI/Obs492 - *"Boot release" "Nice electric release on the trunk [oper] [fe]. Makes it very easy to open [us] - not seen that before [nov]"*

CCI/Obs2 - *"The view" "High [hei] seats mean its gives a great all round view [vis]"*

SRD/Obs459 - *"Styling - headlights" "The headlights jut out but unlike most cars [dis] where they jut out in a cylinder [sha] made of glass [mat], these were made of black and grey [col] metal [mat]. It looked [ap] highly technical"*

SRD/Obs621 - *"Satellite navigation system" "Well integrated [co] into the dash layout [loc]. The controls are large [siz] and easy to read [erg]"*

SRD/Obs623 - *"Switches" "Quality feel [bui] [fe] to the switchgear with well weighted [wei] switch movement [oper]. Gives a very upmarket feel - surprising considering price [pri]"*

SRD/Obs275 - *"Rear sunroof" "The car has a second [no] sunroof in the rear [loc]."*

SRD/Obs554 - *"Rear seat height" "The base of the rear seat is high off the ground [hei]. I'm 6ft3 and to get into the back of any car where I don't feel cramped [ves] is surprising. For the modest size [siz] of the A2 the rear space was very spacious [spa] feeling"*

These 29 codes, developed as described above, cannot be an exhaustive categorisation of all product bases of appeal. These 29 codes could account for the 200 reactions in the two data subsets used for their generation. However, several codes were particularly infrequently used and theoretical saturation may not have been reached within this sample of the data. These data sets were context-bound⁹ and product specific suggesting this coding system may also be. The investigation of these propositions will be presented in the code application sections below.

Affect codes

The second iterative analysis process aimed to identify and code the different affective or feeling components of the reactions within the data subsets. Having

⁹ Test-drive Observations had been removed from the CCI data prior to code generation

experienced the qualitative similarities between the CCI and SRD data during the generation of Stimuli codes the two data sets were merged. Codes were generated by listing all the words and phrases contained in the participant verbatim that described an affective state. Initial readings of the data showed that affective terms were used in two ways by participants when describing their reactions. Firstly, they were used to describe the participant's own experience of an emotional state or feeling. Secondly, emotional terms were used to characterise the stimulus being appraised - i.e. the car or one of its features conveying some kind of affective state. The description of these 'Me' and 'It' affects in the participant verbatim suggested the need for two sets of Affect codes. Each affective word or phrase identified in the verbatim was therefore assigned to one of two lists on this basis.

'Me' Affects

The first of these lists was used to generate 'Me' Affect codes. Every explicit use of an affective term by a participant to describe their own feeling state was listed. These were then supplemented with affective terms that, although not explicitly used by participants, were implicit in their descriptions of their reactions. Redundancies were removed from the list by merging synonyms under the most salient collective term. The table below presents the final list of 'Me' Affect codes generated from the subset of 200 reactions and participant verbatim is presented to demonstrate the coding of both explicit [single bracketed] and implicit [[double bracketed]] affects.

[sur] surprise	[app] appreciation	[ama] amazement, wonder
[des] desire	[imp] impressed, respect	[sup] superior
[del] delight	[lov] love	[ple] pleasure, good
[int] interest	[con] in control, at ease.	[inc] included
[str] struck, stunned	[pla] playful	[sec] secure, safe
[ant] anticipation	[sat] satisfaction	[dis-sat] dissatisfaction
[dis-app] disappointed		

CCI/Obs495 - *"I like the seat release on both sides of the front seats [app]. Not really new idea but they've done it in a clever way. Well thought out detail [[imp]]"*

SRD/Obs272 - *"This was the most amazing car [ama]. It looks good, felt great [[app]] and could fill a gap in our car needs."*

CCI/Obs529 - *"Those are lovely [lov]. It's the damped movement. So much effort has gone into all the details like that [[imp]]"*

CCI/Obs91 - *"Great idea [[imp]]. Good to hide things in. You could put your camera in there or even your handbag. They're a good size and you'd never know they were there from outside. [[sec]]"*

SRD/Obs25 - *"very simple, just 3 dials. Cream leather with piping to match the hood. Makes you feel wonderful [ple], like a movie star [sup]."*

'It' Affects and product characterisations

The same process was then followed to generate 'It' Affect codes. All explicit and implicit examples of this second type of affective content in the bounded statements were listed. During this process it was recognised that this use of affective terms by participants was actually a subset of a broader product characterisation process that was frequently present in participants' reaction descriptions. Not all characterisations

made by participants were affective, however evidence for this characterisation process was both frequent and salient within the data subset. As a result an inclusive list containing both affective and non-affective items was generated. All implicit and explicit product characterisation terms were therefore recorded and redundancies in the resulting list were removed by grouping synonymous items under a salient collective term. The table below presents the resultant Characterisation list generated from the data subset.

[fan] fantastic	[agg] aggressive, menacing	[cla] classy
[ple] pleasant	[gr] great	[era] modern, retro, futuristic
[und] understated	[sex] sexy	[bea] beautiful
[nea] neat	[spo] sporty	[sl] sleek
[fun] fun, playful, toy-like	[wei] weird, quirky	[sty] stylish
[aero] aeronautical	[exp] expensive	[ott] over the top
[ch] cheap	[trnd] trendy, cool	[ele] elegant
[eff] efficient	[fac] facial, face-like, eyes	[purp] purposeful
[str] strong, sturdy	[dat] dated	[bor] boring
[fam] familiar, friendly	[clev] clever	[mal] male
[tech] technical	[prac] practical	[inno] innovative
[reb] rebellious	[pow] powerful	[sup] superior
[naut] nautical	[yng] young, youthful	[saf] safe
[gor] gorgeous	[fl] flash	[fem] feminine, female
[flu] fluid	[rad] radical	[lux] luxurious

Saturation was not reached within the 200 reactions being used for code generation with new characterisations being frequently identified and producing an extensive yet non-exhaustive list of terms. Despite including affective content this characterisation process was identified as a distinct cognition type that had taken place during many of the evaluation reactions described. This Characterisation process therefore became the first code generated for the cognitions coding scheme.

Cognition codes

The next iteration of the code generation focussed on identifying the implied cognitive content of the delight reactions. This process was driven by the question - what cognitions are taking place? To generate initial codes every explicit description of a thought process provided in the verbatim was listed. This list was then supplemented with cognition items that covered mental process implicit in the data. As was the case with the affect coding, it was quickly recognised that the cognitions evident in the data fell into two high level categories. The first category of cognition where those associated with the process of perceiving and identifying the stimulus as appealing. This first type of cognition were therefore labelled - appeal cognitions. The second cognition type was more frequently explicit in participants' descriptions and corresponded with participants describing what the stimulus made them think as directed in the SRD and CCI instructions. These cognitions were those associated with participants describing their consequential state having perceived and identified a stimulus as appealing. This second type of cognition was labelled - consequence cognitions. These two categories were used to generate two associated lists of codes as presented overleaf¹⁰.

Appeal Cognitions

Appeal cognition codes were generated by focussing on which cognitions were taking place during the process of the product appealing. The source of this insight was the interpretation of participants' descriptions of how the stimulus appealed, contained in

¹⁰ This process is equivalent to axial coding as described by Straus and Corbin, (1998)

the second bounded statements. The question asked of the data here was 'how did it appeal?' not 'what appealed?' as used in the stimuli code generation. Statements were written to explain the appeal process taking place on a reaction by reaction basis. These statements were based on any explicit participant verbatim available and the interpretation of the overall reaction description. Redundancy was removed by merging similar statements and identifying a salient category title. Several cognition types were taken for granted in the appeal process contained within every reaction. These included the unconscious sensation, attention and perception process that took place in all reactions and were not accessed by the self-report method. The table below presents the list of appeal cognition codes generated from the data subset. Example verbatim is presented to demonstrate their use to code both explicit and implicit appeal cognitions.

[Com] Combination	e.g. it has this <i>and</i> this
[Pre] Presence	e.g. it has this
[ED] Expectation Disconfirmed	e.g. this is not as expected
[Opt] Optimum	e.g. it is just right, just the right amount of
[Ch] Characterisation	e.g. it is like
[Lin] Linear	e.g. it has lots of, very
[Ab] Absence	e.g. it has not got this
[EC] Expectation Confirmed	e.g. this is as expected
[TO] Trade Off	e.g. despite this you get this
[Ap] Appropriateness	e.g. it suits
[Ult] Ultimate	e.g. it is the best, it is perfect
[Sup] Superiority	e.g. it is better than

CCI/Obs43 - *"Dimples break air resistance [Pre]. A real feel of attention to detail."*

CCI/Obs408 - *"Release catch on the bonnet impressive [Pre]. Very easy [Lin] to access. Then you get the logo under the bonnet [Com] to add to the impression."*

SRD/Obs611 - *"The buttons for the suspension felt soft and a bit squidgy to the touch [Opt]. Felt nice."*

SRD/Obs570 - *"The boot lock is a sliding alpha badge that hides the keyhole [Ab]. Surprised me [ED]."*

SRD/Obs158 - *"Very stylish [Lin]. Timeless and classic looking [Ch]. Cream dials nicely spaced apart [Opt]."*

SRD/Obs202 - *"Price is very good [Lin] for this much quality [TO]."*

Consequence Cognitions

Consequence cognition codes were generated by focussing on participants descriptions of what they thought as a result of identifying an appealing product stimulus. These codes were only generated on the basis of the explicit contents of the 2nd bounded statement associated with each reaction. The data were reviewed on a reaction by reaction basis and a list of statements were generated covering the cognitive and behavioural consequences of the positive stimulus appraisal. The question asked of the data was 'now something has been identified as appealing what is the participant thinking?'. Redundancies were removed by merging similar statements and identifying salient category titles. Not all reactions in the data subset

contained explicit indicators of this type of cognition leaving many un-coded. The table below presents the list of consequence cognition codes generated from the data subset. Example verbatim is then presented illustrating the use of the codes.

[B] Benefit Recognition	e.g. because it has this it/I can.....
[QI] Quality Inference	e.g. because of this I believe it is high quality
[PI] Performance Inference	e.g. because of this I believe it will perform/work well
[II] Ingenuity Inference	e.g. because of this I believe the person who designed/made this is clever
[Dif] Differentiation	e.g. because it has this it is different from....
[Im] Imagining	e.g. because it has this it makes me imagine/dream about...
[ES] Expectation Setting	e.g. because it has this I believe they all should be like this
[IC] Influence Choice	e.g. because it has this it might make me choose it
[PH] Product Halo	e.g. because it has this the rest of the product must be....
[CP] Consider Purchasing	e.g. because it has this I might consider buying it
[A] Approach	e.g. because it has this I want to approach it
[RA] Repeated Attention	e.g. because it has this I paid more attention to it
[VJ] Value Judgement	e.g. what I get for what I give seems very good
[BA] Brand Associations	e.g. because it has this it makes me think of these brands
[Id] Identification	e.g. because of this it suits me

CCI/Obs90 - *"Rear one is safe, only opened from front seats so kids can't climb out. [B]"*

CCI/Obs488 - *"This car has big fun factor whilst having a cheap balanced appeal [VJ]. Appeals to me as a young person [Id]. Has a kind of rebellious feel to it too - against old drivers kind of thing [Im]. It makes people look at you [Dif]. It's a real head turner trendy."*

CCI/Obs567 - *"Coat hooks - nice - well delivered - shows the good build quality [QI] of this car [PH]."*

SRD/Obs229 - *"Want to get in it but you can't [A]. Looks sporty like a GTI. Great chunky looking styling."*

SRD/Obs528 - *"The rear seats do everything - even massage and ventilate. A great toy couldn't stop playing [RA] - even the headrests are electric. Makes you feel more important than the driver... like your being chauffeured around [Im]."*

SRD/Obs547 - *"Very similar to the 60's roadster style i.e. Cobra, Aston [BA]. Suits the style of the BMW roadster"*

6.2.2 Refinement of the coding scheme

The processes of open and axial coding described above, (see Straus, 1987 and Straus and Corbin, 1998) have produced a semi-structured scheme that is grounded in the participant verbatim. This scheme fractures the data and indexes it enabling interpretation to take place at the level of common themes that run through it. The subsequent analysis can therefore take place at a conceptual level, rather than at the detailed level of the data itself, (Strauss, 1987 and Silverman, 1993). The initial *a priori* framework used to interrogate the data (Stimulus, Affect, Cognition, Consequence) was itself revised during this initial code development to produce six distinct multi-level coding schemes - product basis/reaction type, stimuli nature, appeal cognitions, characterisations, 'me' affects and consequent cognitions.¹¹

The analysis then proceeded with the aim of defining the structure of the concepts contained within these schemes to produce a conceptual model and a final coding scheme to be applied to the full data set. The initial use of four 'lenses' to scrutinise the data produced overlap between the six resulting coding themes. The analysis therefore adopted a categorisation and diagramming process to formalise the structure of concepts contained in the data. The first stage was to identify the categories and hierarchies that accounted for the diversity of each coding scheme. Individual codes in each scheme were grouped according to their similarity and appropriate higher level codes were generated to index the category they collectively represented. As such the resulting high level category codes were defined according to their constituent lower level codes. These high level categories were then used to revisit the participant verbatim with the goal of defining the dimensions and properties of each. This was a process of refining the coding scheme by generating new codes to cover previously missed examples of these categories and to remove or incorporate constituent codes that were only very occasionally used. The coding scheme was then structured to remove redundancies across categories by merging associated codes. The final coding scheme resulting from this process is presented on page 172. The full data sets were then re-visited to establish the coding scheme's fit with Observations that had not been used for its generation

6.2.3 Structuring the coding scheme

Throughout the research diagramming has been used as a means to integrate the constituents components of the phenomenon being studied. Early in-progress versions of these conceptual models have been presented elsewhere, (Burns and Evans, 2001, Evans et al, 2002) and represent integrated interpretations of the stimuli, affective and cognitive components of the delight reaction during the early stages of the qualitative analysis. This diagramming process enables interpretation to take place at the level of the concepts identified in the data rather than at the level of the raw data itself (Silverman, 1993). This facilitates the development of integrated theory through the manipulation, integration and linking of these concepts (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The coding scheme that has been generated is grounded in the full variety of the 200 mixed strength positive appraisal reactions contained in the data subset used for its generation. It has been refined and structured by returning to the full data set of 1283 Observations. Integrating this variety into an organised interpretation of the phenomenon studied requires specifying the relationships between the higher level

¹¹ Some authors distinguish between code generation processes according to the use, or not, of *a priori* structures (e.g. King, 1998). The prologue used here to query the data means that this process of code generation is most like 'thematic coding' (King, 1998) rather than the purely inductive approach of 'open coding' dictated in grounded theory (e.g. Strauss, 1987 and Straus and Corbin, 1998). The prologue was based on the analysis of the data collected during the EPS and as such is part of the broader grounded theory approach used in this research.

concepts contained in the coding scheme. The concept categories were therefore organised according to the appraisal context within which they occurred, and evidence for the relationships between them were sought by returning to the full data set. The model presented on page 173 is the cumulative result of this diagramming process and represents the pattern of relationships observed in the data. At this stage of the analysis the model represents the multiple components of positive vehicle appraisal reactions rather than delight reactions¹². Contained within the model and the coding scheme are likely to be components present in all appraisal reactions which do not distinguish delight from any other less strong positive reactions. The next sections of this chapter describe the application of the final coding scheme to the full data set and the comparison of delight reactions with less strong positive reactions. Frequencies of codes across the two extreme strengths of reaction are compared to identify the distinguishing characteristics of the strongest reactions reported.

The model, presented after the coding scheme, seeks to present the high level components identified in the data in terms of the interaction between the product and its appraiser. As such these concepts are located within the model according to their theoretical place in this interaction. The model does not seek to represent the sequence of activity taking place in the reactions. Rather, it models the components of these reactions, and the diversity of patterns and interactions which make up positive vehicle appraisal.

¹² Codes were generated from a sub set of mixed strength reactions including (L)east strong, (A)verage strength and (D)elight reactions.

**PAGE
NUMBERS
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ORIGINAL**

- 0.0 Reaction Type
 - └ 0.1 Attribute-based
 - └ [AS] specific
 - └ [AC] cumulative
 - └ [AM] mixed
 - └ 0.2 Holistic
 - └ [HO] overall, product as a whole
 - └ [HC] cumulative
 - └ [HM] mixed
 - └ [HE] example
- 1.0 Stimuli
 - └ 1.1 Sensory Basis
 - └ [ap] appearance
 - └ [ves] vestibular, somatic senses
 - └ [fel] feel to the touch
 - └ [sou] sound
 - └ [sme] smell
 - └ 1.2 Static Properties
 - └ [mat] materials
 - └ [hei] height
 - └ [wei] weight
 - └ [siz] size
 - └ [sha] shape
 - └ [loc] location, layout
 - └ [col] colour
 - └ [no] number of
 - └ [tex] texture
 - └ 1.3 Dynamic Properties
 - └ [sp] speed
 - └ [oper] operation, movement
 - └ 1.4 Abstract Properties
 - └ [pr] price
 - └ [br] brand
 - └ [flex] flexibility
 - └ [func] function performed
 - └ [erg] ergonomics
 - └ [comf] comfort
 - └ [co] co-ordination, integration
 - └ [bu] build
 - └ [vis] visibility
 - └ [spa] spaciousness
 - └ [uf] user-friendliness, ease of use
 - └ [sim] simplicity
- 2.0 Cognitive Appeal Process
 - └ 2.1 Perceptions
 - └ [Pre] presence of stimulus
 - └ [Ab] absence of stimulus
 - └ [Lin] linear, lots of, very
 - └ [Opt] optimum, just right
 - └ [Comb] combination
 - └ [TO] trade off, comparison
 - └ [B] benefit
 - └ 2.2 Expectancy
 - └ [ED] expectation disconfirmed
 - └ [EC] expectation confirmed
 - └ [ES] expectation set
 - └ [WK] well known
 - └ 2.3 Judgements
 - └ [A] appropriate, suitable
 - └ [U] ultimate, the best
 - └ [S] superior, better
 - └ [D] distinctive, different
 - └ [N] novel, new
 - └ [BA] brand association
 - └ [VJ] value judgement
 - └ 2.4 Inferences
 - └ 2.4.1 Focussed
 - └ [FQ] quality
 - └ [FP] performance
 - └ [FI] ingenuity
 - └ 2.4.2 Halo
 - └ [HQ] quality
 - └ [HP] performance
 - └ [HI] ingenuity
 - └ [PH] generalised
 - └ 2.5 Characterisations
 - └ [Phy] physical
 - └ [Tem] temporal
 - └ [Ani] animistic
 - └ [Aft] affective
 - └ [Neg] negative
- 3.0 Consequent Experience
 - └ 3.1 Motivations
 - └ [RA] repeated attention
 - └ [A] attracted, drawn
 - └ [CP] consider purchasing
 - └ 3.2 Projections
 - └ [I] imagining, dreaming
 - └ [SM] suits me
 - └ [SO] suits others
 - └ [IC] influence choice
 - └ [NF] need fulfilment
 - └ 3.3 Affects
 - └ 3.3.1 Pleasure/Arousal
 - └ [rel] relaxed
 - └ [sat] satisfaction
 - └ [sur] surprise
 - └ [str] struck, stunned
 - └ [ple] pleasure
 - └ [ha] happy
 - └ [pla] playful
 - └ [del] delight
 - └ [ama] amazement
 - └ [dis-ap] disappointment
 - └ [dis-sat] dissatisfaction
 - └ 3.3.2 Object Oriented
 - └ [lk] like
 - └ [app] appreciation
 - └ [lov] love
 - └ [int] interest
 - └ [ant] anticipation
 - └ [des] desire, want
 - └ [imp] impressed
 - └ 3.3.3 Esteem
 - └ [sup] superior
 - └ [diff] different
 - └ [con] in control, at ease
 - └ [sec] secure
 - └ [inc] included, understood

The final coding scheme applied to the full data set

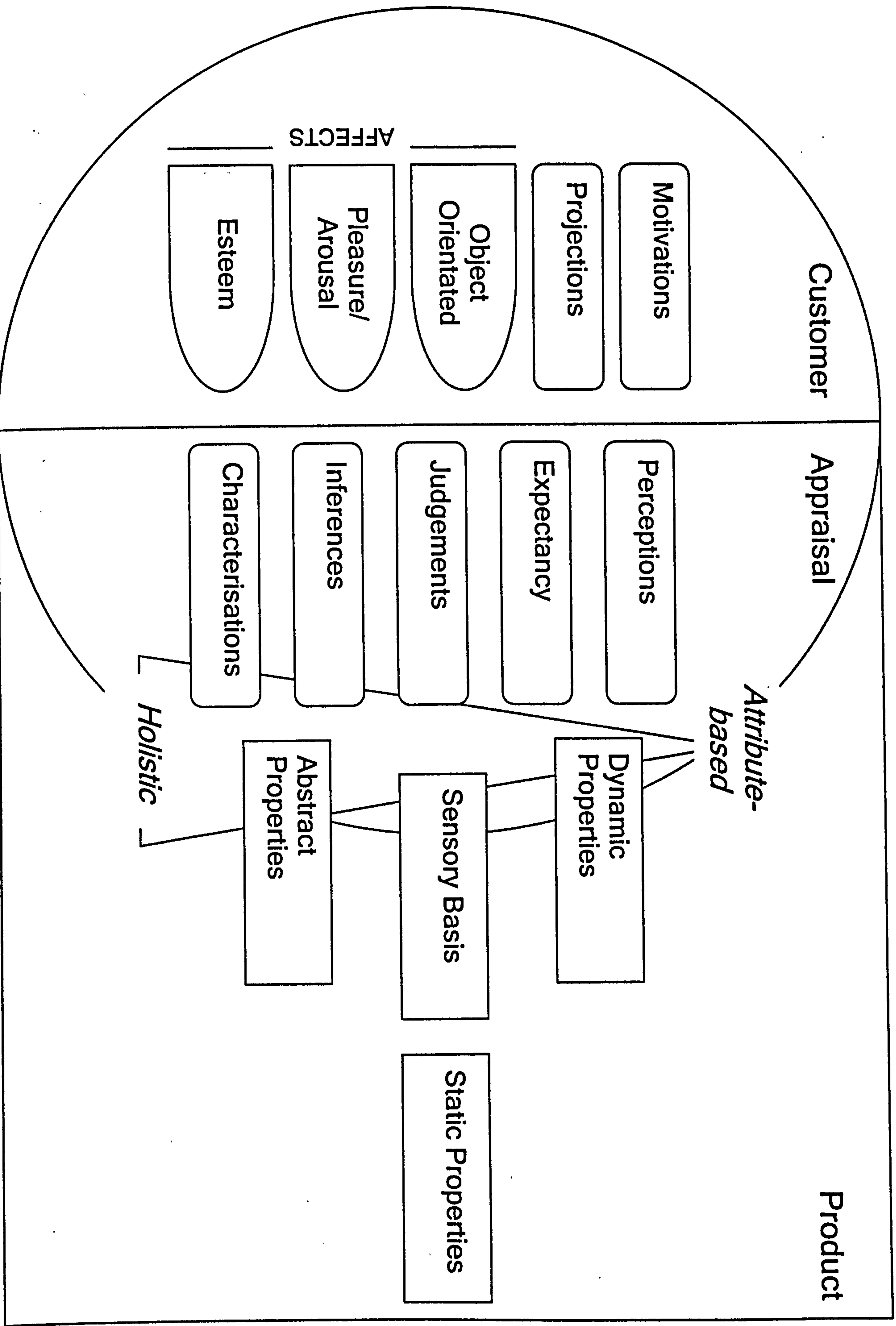


Figure 6.1: A structural model of the vehicle positive appraisal process

6.2.4 Theory Integration

At this stage of the analysis the model presented above represents an integrated understanding of the phenomena studied; it is a theory. The concepts, structure and interrelationships it models are abstractions of the data constructed by the researcher via the analysis process described. However, this is a theory of positive customer appraisal during static vehicle evaluation, rather than of customer delight. As an abstraction it does not accurately represent a single Observation contained in the data set but rather the diversity of all the reactions studied. Consequently, it should be able to account for every Observation in the full data set. This will be established through the blind coding of the full SRD and CCI data sets. The theory will then be used to identify patterns of appraisal that distinguish delight reactions from less positive reactions within the static evaluation context. Disconfirmatory evidence and negative cases will then be sought through comparison with the test-drive evaluations captured with the CCI method.

6.3 Application of the coding scheme

The final coding scheme, as presented above was then applied to the full data sets collected in the CCI and SRD studies. As a result of this activity comments on the applicability, and therefore validity, of these interpretations will be made by making comparisons between the different research contexts used. Furthermore the distinctive characteristics of delight reactions will be identified by comparing between the strongest and weakest positive reactions in each data set. To conduct this final stage of the analysis two new data fields were created to perform a blind coding process. Both the CCI and SRD full data sets were copied into new electronic spreadsheet documents. As was identified in Chapter 5 this produced two lists of Observations, each a description of a positive evaluative reaction, 567 and 716 items long respectively. The CCI data set contained 10,527 words of verbatim collected from 16 participants describing 345 static and 222 test-drive mixed strength positive reactions. The SRD data set contained 12,132 words of verbatim provided by 50 participants describing 716 static mixed strength positive reactions. These lists were merged and given a further identifier to indicate the research context as either CCI or SRD. This procedure created a data field containing 1283 reactions and 22,659 words of participant verbatim. 549 Median strength reactions (those scoring 4 on the 5-item scale) were discarded from the analysis as ambiguous median strength reactions. This left delight reactions (scoring 5 and labelled D) and less positive reactions (scoring 1, 2 or 3 and labelled L)¹³. The resulting distribution of reactions of each strength in the three research contexts was as follows;

SRD Static 157 L reactions	15.1 words per reaction
SRD Static 251 D reactions	17.1 words per reaction
CCI Static 130 L reactions	16.2 words per reaction
CCI Static 75 D reactions	20.8 words per reaction
CCI Test-drive 79 L reactions	14.8 words per reaction
CCI Test-drive 42 D reactions	24.3 words per reaction

The findings of the EPS suggested that the delight reaction is in itself a form of interpersonal communication. Characteristic behaviours associated with the reaction included the drawing of other people's attention to the source of delight and the

¹³ This process of skimming the data was described in more detail in Chapter 5, page 150. The mean reaction strength score given by participants was 3.7 in the CCI data set and 4.1 in the SRD data set.

delight reaction itself was only observed when participants were accompanied. This proposal is supported by the lengths of verbatim provided by participants when they were delighted compared to when they reported their least strong positive appraisal reactions. Participants seemed to have more to say about the car when they were delighted by it, particularly in the CCI setting.

6.3.1 Blind coding process

Each of these 734 Observations was trimmed to remove all data fields other than a numerical identifier, the car identification, and the two fields containing the bounded statements of participant verbatim. The list was then randomised prior to coding. The numerical identifiers were hidden, enabling the blind coding of the data whilst retaining a means to remarry the Observations with the quantitative and context information that had been removed. Each reaction was then indexed according to its explicit or implicit content using each of the low level codes in the scheme. When coding the researcher endeavoured to empathise with the participant whose reaction he was coding. To facilitate this process images of the cars involved were taken from brochures and the internet and considered alongside the captured verbatim to aid the interpretation of ambiguous statements. As such, codes were applied on the basis of the manifest content of the verbatim and the researcher's interpretation of it. No code was applied more than once for a single Observation. Observations were therefore coded on the basis of their content not the number of times that a particular reaction component occurred. Many participant statements could be interpreted in multiple ways and the researcher sought to code all the possibilities. Finally, an Object-Oriented affect was coded for every reaction on the basis that, by simply reporting the reaction, participants were demonstrating appreciation of the object being appraised. These Object-Oriented affect codes were applied on the basis of manifest statement content and the overall tone of the statement. After the lengthy process of final coding the data field was re-ordered according to the numerical identifiers and re-joined with the original quantitative and context information. The frequency of each code was then calculated across D and L reactions in both CCI and SRD data sets and between static and test-drive reactions in the CCI data. Frequencies were calculated using spreadsheet filters to produce counts for each code's application in the six different sized reaction groups.

6.3.2 Results

The table overleaf presents the frequency with which each code was applied across the six groups of reactions, where a frequency of 0 indicates the code was not used and a frequency of 1 indicates it was used to code every reaction. Colours have been applied to the table according to the frequency of the code presented in each cell. This has been done to illustrate the frequency patterns across the research contexts and between the reaction strengths¹⁴.

<i>Code frequency</i>		<i>colour</i>
> 0.20	(code applied to more than 1in5 reactions)	Red
0.15 to 0.19		Orange
0.10 to 0.14		Yellow
0.05 to 0.09		Green
< 0.05	(code applied to less than 1in20 reactions)	Blue

¹⁴ The frequencies presented in the table are the result of the researcher's interpretation of the data. They account for both implicit and explicit statement content and should not be viewed as quantitative absolutes. They demonstrate the researcher's interpretation of the data and an attempt has been made to code inclusively for the different ways in which statements could be interpreted. The frequencies are presented here to convey the overall patterns in the data, not to establish irrefutable findings.

Research method
Consumption context
Strength of reaction
Number of reactions

Self Report	
Static	
L	D
157	251

Car Clinic	
Static	
L	D
130	75

Car Clinic	
Test-drive	
L	D
79	43

Codes

Frequencies

Codes	L	D	L	D	L	D
0.0 Reaction Type						
└ 0.1 Attribute-based						
└ [AS] specific	0.60	0.40	0.55	0.45	0.66	0.38
└ [AC] cumulative	0.06	0.07	0.14	0.19	0.11	0.17
└ [AM] mixed	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.05	0
└ 0.2 Holistic						
└ [HO] overall, product as a whole	0.13	0.31	0.12	0.15	0.08	0.26
└ [HC] cumulative	0.11	0.17	0.12	0.15	0.09	0.19
└ [HM] mixed	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.01	0	0
└ [HE] example	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.03	0	0
1.0 Stimuli						
└ 1.1 Sensory Basis						
└ [ap] appearance	0.76	0.78	0.65	0.65	0.25	0.19
└ [ves] vestibular, somatic senses	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.16	0.34	0.64
└ [fe] feel to the touch	0.15	0.14	0.18	0.16	0.31	0.21
└ [sou] sound	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.14	0.21
└ [sme] smell	0	0.01	0	0	0	0
└ 1.2 Static Properties						
└ [mat] materials	0.20	0.16	0.15	0.11	0.08	0
└ [hei] height	0.03	0.01	0.08	0.04	0.03	0.14
└ [wei] weight	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.07
└ [siz] size	0.12	0.09	0.24	0.12	0.16	0.10
└ [sha] shape	0.44	0.37	0.37	0.32	0.14	0.07
└ [loc] location, layout	0.21	0.15	0.25	0.13	0.2	0.07
└ [col] colour	0.11	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.02
└ [no] number of	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.01	0.02
└ [tex] texture	0.03	0.02	0.02	0	0	0
└ 1.3 Dynamic Properties						
└ [sp] speed	0	0.02	0.02	0	0.14	0.07
└ [oper] operation, movement	0.24	0.20	0.30	0.47	0.62	0.64
└ 1.4 Abstract Properties						
└ [pri] price	0.01	0.04	0	0.05	0	0
└ [br] brand	0.01	0.04	0	0.05	0	0
└ [flex] flexibility	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.05	0	0.05
└ [func] function performed	0.17	0.15	0.35	0.32	0.16	0.19
└ [erg] ergonomics	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.11	0.05
└ [comf] comfort	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.07
└ [co] co-ordination, integration	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.11	0.04	0
└ [bui] build	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.03	0.02	0
└ [vis] visibility	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0.05	0.07
└ [spa] spaciousness	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.05
└ [uf] user-friendliness, ease of use	0.06	0.03	0.08	0.13	0.18	0.19
└ [sim] simplicity	0	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.02
└ [prac] practicality	0.01	0	0.02	0	0	0
└ [eco] economy, efficiency	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0	0
└ [sub] subtlety	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0	0
└ [atd] attention to detail	0.10	0.12	0.16	0.29	0.06	0.12
2.0 Cognitive Appeal Process						
└ 2.1 Perceptions						
└ [Pre] presence of stimulus	0.20	0.14	0.37	0.25	0.13	0.19
└ [Ab] absence of stimulus	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.09	0.10
└ [Lin] linear, lots of, very	0.56	0.67	0.48	0.70	0.71	0.69
└ [Opt] optimum, just right	0.11	0.22	0.25	0.17	0.25	0.24
└ [Comb] combination	0.17	0.18	0.12	0.28	0.09	0.07
└ [TO] trade off, comparison	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.15	0.12
└ [B] benefit	0.24	0.16	0.28	0.23	0.29	0.45
└ 2.2 Expectancy						
└ [ED] expectation disconfirmed	0.27	0.19	0.19	0.17	0.24	0.26
└ [EC] expectation confirmed	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.08	0
└ [ES] expectation set	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	0
└ [WK] well known, familiar	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.01	0

Frequency of code use in the indexing of SRD and CCI Observations

2.3 Judgements						
[Ap] appropriate, suitable	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.04
[U] ultimate, the best	0.01	0.10	0	0.11	0	0.07
[S] superior, better	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.02
[D] distinctive, different	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.02
[No] novel, new	0.05	0.02	0.08	0.08	0.03	0.07
[BA] brand association	0.03	0.03	0.02	0	0.03	0.02
[VJ] value judgement	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.05	0	0
2.4 Inferences						
2.4.1 Focussed						
[FQ] quality	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0
[FP] performance	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.04	0	0.05
[FI] ingenuity	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.19	0.05	0.05
2.4.2 Halo						
[HQ] quality	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.08	0.01	0
[HP] performance	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.03	0	0.05
[HI] ingenuity	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.08	0.01	0
[HG] generalised	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01	0
2.5 Characterisations						
[Phy] physical	0.22	0.38	0.22	0.33	0.22	0.33
[Tem] temporal	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.08	0.02	0.08
[Ani] animistic	0.06	0.11	0.08	0.13	0.08	0.13
[Aff] affective	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.02	0.07
[Neg] negative	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01
3.0 Consequent Experience						
3.1 Motivations						
[RA] repeated attention	0.01	0.01	0	0.07	0.01	0.10
[A] attracted, drawn	0.03	0.08	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.07
[CP] consider purchasing	0	0.02	0.01	0	0	0
3.2 Projections						
[I] imagining, dreaming	0.02	0.08	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.07
[SM] suits me	0.03	0.09	0.03	0.08	0.05	0.24
[SO] suits others	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.07	0.01	0.07
[IC] influence choice	0.01	0.01	0	0.01	0.01	0.02
[NF] need fulfilment	0.07	0.08	0.14	0.19	0.10	0.10
3.3 Affects						
3.3.1 Pleasure/Arousal						
[rel] relaxed	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.14
[sat] satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.08	0
[sur] surprise	0.12	0.05	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.14
[str] struck, stunned	0.03	0.08	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.05
[ple] pleasure	0.02	0.07	0.05	0.19	0.13	0.24
[ha] happy	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0.10
[pla] playful	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.14
[del] delight	0.01	0.02	0	0.01	0	0.02
[ama] amazement	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.08	0	0.02
[dis-ap] disappointment	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0
[dis-sat] dissatisfaction	0.02	0	0.02	0	0.01	0
3.3.2 Object Oriented						
[lk] like	0.41	0.33	0.35	0.47	0.47	0.55
[app] appreciation	0.33	0.17	0.48	0.09	0.39	0.05
[lov] love	0.06	0.18	0.02	0.09	0	0.21
[int] interest	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.02
[ant] anticipation	0	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05
[des] desire, want	0	0.07	0.02	0.01	0	0.02
[imp] impressed	0.10	0.25	0.19	0.47	0.18	0.36
[ht] hate, dislike	0.01	0	0.01	0	0	0
[con] confused	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0.01	0
3.3.3 Esteem						
[sup] superior	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.07	0.01	0.07
[diff] different	0.02	0.01	0.01	0	0	0
[con] in control, at ease	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.16	0.38	0.43
[sec] secure	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.09	0.29
[inc] included, understood	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.17	0.06	0.14

Frequency of code use in the indexing of SRD and CCI Observations

6.4 Findings

This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the code frequencies presented above. When reading the frequencies across the table it is important to bear in mind the different conditions under which the data were collected. The SRD data were provided by 50 participants who had the chance to evaluate cars from over 50 manufacturers at one of two UK motorshows. In contrast the CCI data were collected by interviewers from 16 participants whilst they evaluated only four cars. The SRD data therefore contains both a greater number and diversity of reactions whilst many of the CCI reactions are different participant's reactions to the same product stimulus. The test-drive evaluation also took place after the static evaluation in the CCI context. As such the test-drive context represents the dynamic appraisal of the vehicles and contains very few reactions to product attributes that could have been evaluated in the immediately preceding static appraisal situation. In the following sections example Observations are included to illustrate the application of codes and increase the transparency of the analysis. When example Observations are presented they appear in a table as follows, with applied codes shown in blue;

Observation number	Research method	Evaluation context	Reaction strength	Car appraised	1 st bounded participant statement	2 nd bounded participant statement
392	SRD	Static	D	Honda NSX	Headlight Dip Adjustment	The way the button works. Push it to click up and then adjust before pushing back down.

6.4.1 Reaction types

Research method	Consumption context	Strength of reaction	Self Report Static	Car Clinic Static	Car Clinic Test-drive
			L D	L D	L D
0.1 Attribute-based					
	[AS] specific		0.60 0.40	0.55 0.45	0.66 0.38
	[AC] cumulative		0.06 0.07	0.14 0.19	0.11 0.17
	[AM] mixed		0.04 0.01	0.05 0.03	0.05 0
0.2 Holistic					
	[HO] overall, product as a whole		0.13 0.31	0.12 0.15	0.08 0.26
	[HC] cumulative		0.11 0.17	0.12 0.15	0.09 0.19
	[HM] mixed		0.06 0.02	0.01 0.01	0 0
	[HE] example		0.01 0.02	0.01 0.03	0 0

Each reaction was coded on the basis of the explicit content of the participant's description of the part of the car that appealed to them. Reactions were classified into one of seven categories that constitute a continuum from the specific to global. The frequency table above suggests that in all research contexts the majority of these positive reactions were at the specific end of this continuum and received the [AS] code. Reactions given this code were those where the participant identified a single reason for a specific car feature's appeal.

210	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Wing mirror	This is the best thing about the car. The mirror has blue glass really excellent. Makes everything look sunny in it. Makes me feel sunny and happy. [AS]
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Despite this fact many reactions reported were shifted towards the global end of this continuum. The frequencies identified seem to indicate that this shift towards more holistic product appraisals is more common in the stronger D reactions than the weaker L reactions. The [AS] code was used more frequently in L reactions compared to D reactions across all three research contexts and codes for more global reactions ([HC] and [HO]) were used more frequently in D reactions compared to L reactions.

339	SRD	Static	D	Lotus M250	Styling	I liked everything about this car. The styling of the front lights, the tight gaps between the arches and tyres, the central exhaust pipes, thin spoked alloys that show the disk brakes and callipers. [HC]
-----	-----	--------	---	------------	---------	--

153	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Overall Feel	This car comes in a package. You couldn't take one thing from this car and put it in another and make it as good. Its all the features in combination and the build quality that make this feel like a 30k car. [HO]
-----	-----	--------	---	-----	--------------	--

Reactions coded [AC] were those where participants reported several underlying reasons for a single feature's appeal. As such they are a less specific, broader type of appeal reaction. The [AC] code frequencies also support this trend with the same bias towards D reactions but only in CCI research contexts.

642	SRD	Static	D	Maserati 3000	Doors	These doors are incredible. They are beautifully finished and the fit is perfect. The closing clunk is real quality and the trim is very smart with excellent use of wood leather to provide a very emotional feeling of being special. Other visitors kept opening them. [AC]
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The remaining reaction types ([AM], [HM] and [HE]) occurred relatively infrequently across all contexts with some evidence for the expected bias in mixed reactions towards less strong appraisals, particularly for the [AM] type. Mixed reactions contained both positive and negative consumer reactions to the same product stimuli and seem to be more frequent in the L group. The figure overleaf presents the continuum represented by the six reactions types, upon which the trends in the data suggest a shift to the global in D reactions compared to L reactions.

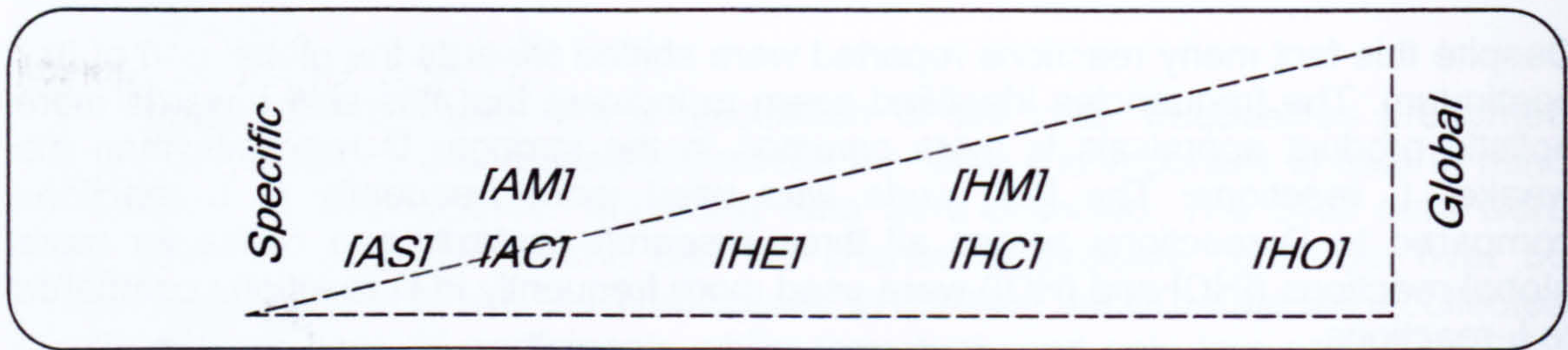


Figure 6.2: The continuum from Specific to Global type appraisals including theoretical positions of the coded reaction types

The graph below plots these code frequencies and illustrates the trend towards more global reaction types in the D groups compared to the L groups.

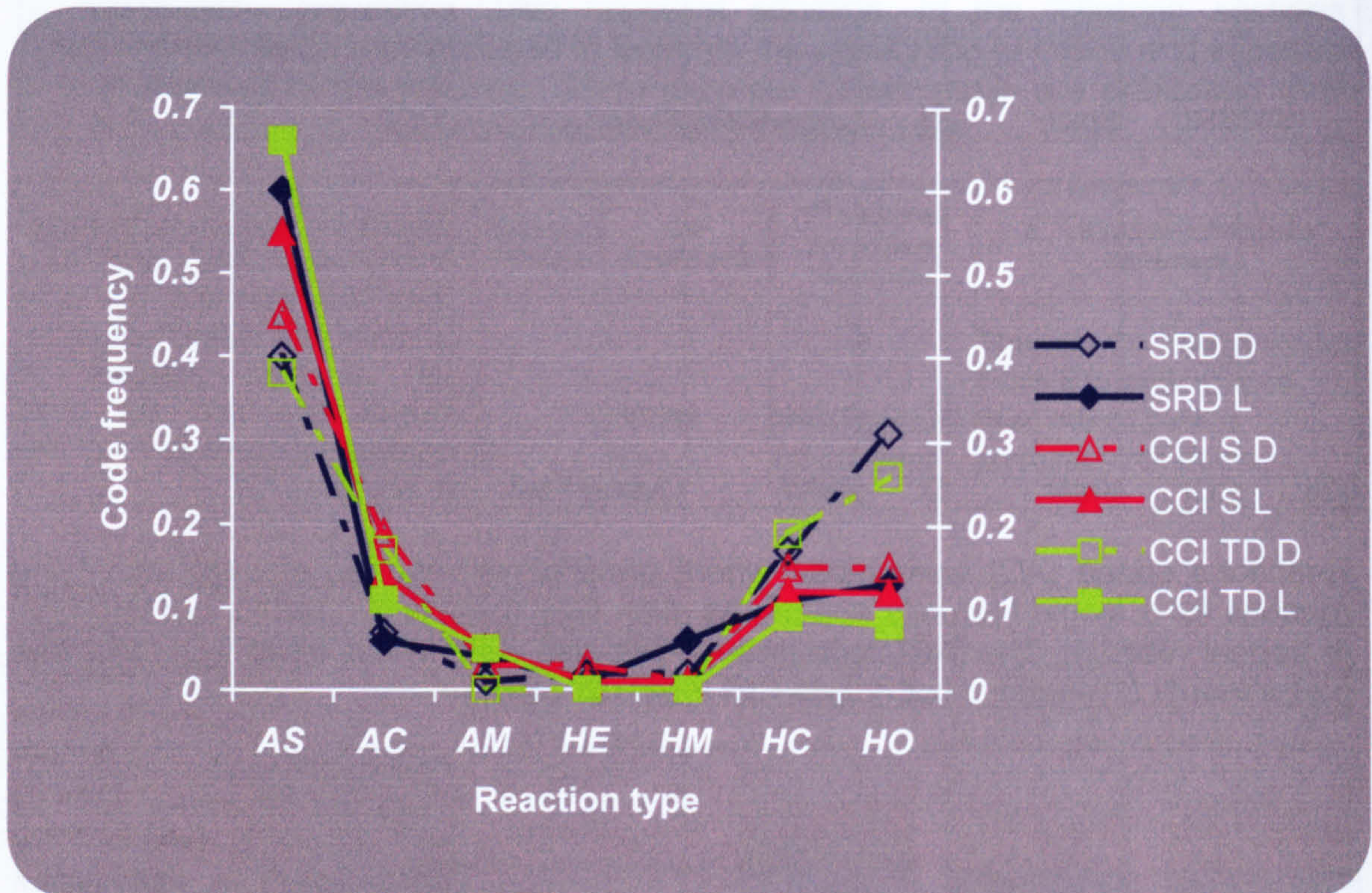


Figure 6.3: Reaction type code frequencies of D and L reactions across three research contexts

Four types of customer delight reaction are particularly common in the data sets. Attribute based reactions are reactions to a constituent product attribute. These features and attributes can have either a narrow ([AS]) or broad appeal ([AC]) and still evoke a delight reaction. In addition, holistic reactions can be cumulative ([HC]), where the customer makes an overall judgement citing several individual attributes as contributing factors to their delight reaction. Alternatively, holistic reactions can evoke delight on a purely global basis where the product, or an area of it, appeals as a gestalt or whole ([HO]).

593	SRD	Static	D	Alpha Romeo 147 Styling front	this is amazing. The whole thing - the lights the sweep the grille the alpha V - positively obscene. I really want this car. [HC]
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77	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Whole Car	Makes you feel special, you're driving a coupe and you look good. [HO]
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- *Product-based antecedents of pre-purchase customer delight reactions vary from the specific to the global.*
- *4 types of delight reaction frequently occur during pre-purchase car evaluation contexts;*
 - *narrow reactions to a single product attribute with a singular basis of appeal*
 - *cumulative reactions to a single product attribute with multiple bases of appeal*
 - *cumulative reactions to the whole product based upon the appeal of multiple attributes*
 - *overall reactions to the product based on its holistic appeal*
- *Higher frequencies of global reaction types occur in the D group of reactions*
- *Higher frequencies of specific reaction types occur in the L group of reactions*

6.4.2 Stimuli

Participants' descriptions indicate that a large variety of vehicle features, properties and attributes were the basis of the types of reaction described above. There are only very small comparative differences between the physical stimuli of strong positive D reactions and the weaker positive L reactions. The large variety of vehicle properties positively appraised by participants resulted in the development and use of a coding scheme that is potentially applicable to any such product attribute. It is therefore unsurprising to see no distinction between delight reactions and less positive appraisals using this part of the coding scheme. What is evident is that delight has a large number of potential sources in this category of product. Individual differences are likely to dictate whether the same vehicle attribute delights one customer, whilst it is simply liked by another.

Sensory Basis

<i>Research method</i>		<i>Self Report</i>		<i>Car Clinic</i>		<i>Car Clinic</i>	
<i>Consumption context</i>		<i>Static</i>		<i>Static</i>		<i>Test-drive</i>	
<i>Strength of reaction</i>		<i>L</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>D</i>
	L [ap] appearance	0.76	0.78	0.65	0.65	0.25	0.19
	L [ves] vestibular, somatic senses	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.16	0.34	0.64
	L [fe] feel to the touch	0.15	0.14	0.18	0.16	0.31	0.21
	L [sou] sound	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.14	0.21
	L [sme] smell	0	0.01	0	0	0	0

Here, the frequency table illustrates clear differences in the nature of vehicle evaluation taking place in the different consumption contexts. Although other senses do get a look in, vehicle evaluation in the static research contexts was predominantly appearance based. The limited scope offered in this real-world pre-purchase context, for interaction with the 'total' product results in the customers evaluating vehicles, and

being delighted by them, on a somewhat limited basis; primarily by how they look and feel to the touch.

401	SRD	Static	D	Mini Cooper	Dashboard	The dashboard is aluminium. Really Retro looking [ap]. Looks great and the texture is great [fe].
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In contrast, the test-drive research context provided the opportunity for participants to evaluate more of the 'total' product. The frequency table illustrates a much broader sensory basis for appraisal reactions when the car is being driven. The vestibular or body senses, those responsible for our perception of balance and movement, become the most important and a more evenly balanced sensory basis becomes evident.

296	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Overall Feel	Feels very smooth [ves]. Moves quickly and speed bumps don't through you about. Well pleased. Feel relaxed.
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- *The sensory basis of customer delight reactions is dependent on the consumption context.*

This finding suggests that customer delight within a pre-purchase consumption context will have different antecedents to that in an ownership context. The limited basis of evaluation that is available in pre-purchase contexts does not negate the occurrence of delight reactions, nor presumably their impact in terms of consumption behaviour. It seems that product manufacturers need to understand the different bases for customer delight across the product/consumer life-cycle if initial positive appraisals are to be maintained or reinforced during ownership.

Static Properties

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[mat] materials	0.20	0.16	0.15	0.11	0.08	0
[hei] height	0.03	0.01	0.08	0.04	0.03	0.14
[wei] weight	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.07
[siz] size	0.12	0.09	0.24	0.12	0.16	0.10
[sha] shape	0.44	0.37	0.37	0.32	0.14	0.07
[loc] location, layout	0.21	0.15	0.25	0.13	0.2	0.07
[col] colour	0.11	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.02
[no] number of	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.01	0.02
[tex] texture	0.03	0.02	0.02	0	0	0

The static properties of products identified in participants' descriptions highlight the sensory basis of their evaluations. The materials used, the shape of product attributes and their colour are all indicative of the appearance based appraisal taking place in the static contexts.

466	SRD	Static	D	Audi coupe	TT Dashboard and Interior design	Big [siz] circular [sha] dials gave a classic feel but digital displays in red [col] made it look really futuristic. It had a cockpit like feel with metal [mat] golfball shape gear stick and racing design steering wheel lots of grey and black metal - "space-age" feel to cockpit.
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These are correspondingly less frequent bases of positive appraisal reactions in the test-drive context. Here, height becomes more important in the evaluation of the four cars as its impact on seating position, comfort, and visibility presumably became apparent as the cars were driven.

561	CCI	Test Drive	D	Renault	Driving Position	Excellent driving position. Great being this high up. [hei] Great all round visibility - surprised that I like it.
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The size of the product as a whole, or of its constituent attributes, seems to have an impact in both contexts since it logically influences both appearance-based (as in Obs466 above) and dynamic evaluation (e.g. the size of the car when manoeuvring).

115	CCI	Test Drive	D	Fiat	Engine/driving	Nippy, sporty, like a mini with power steering. Oh I like this....little dinky, fun, like a mini [siz]
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Other static properties appearing in participant's reaction descriptions have touch (texture) and/or vestibular (weight) sensory bases and are cited with correspondingly low frequency in people's appraisals. Finally within the static evaluation contexts participants reported positive appraisals of the number and location of certain product features. The relatively high frequencies of the location code's use is indicative of the fact that it incorporates participants' descriptions of car layouts and unusual locations of features both of which seem important in the appraisal of this product and presumably influence abstract properties such as ease-of-use and ergonomics (see below).

684	SRD	Static	D	Mini	6 airbags [no]	I like it when safety is a priority and slightly surprised to find this in a small car. It makes driving so much more relaxed when I know the car will protect me.
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152	SRD	Static	D	TVR Chimera	Door release	The door release is concealed under the wing mirror. [loc]
-----	-----	--------	---	-------------	--------------	--

200	SRD	Static	D	Volvo S80 2.4	Driving Position	The dash layout [loc] and the driving position are superb. Excellent quality and comfort.
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Dynamic Properties

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[sp] speed	0	0.02	0.02	0	0.14	0.07
[oper] operation, movement	0.24	0.20	0.30	0.47	0.62	0.64

In addition to the static properties of the cars, which could be appraised without further interaction with the product, dynamic properties could also evoke customer delight reactions. These properties are dynamic in as much as they required the customer to interact with, use or operate the car or feature for them to become apparent. The speed code ([sp]) was used to index any participant's description or qualification of a quickness of movement. Understandably this occurred more frequently during test-drive situations where participants cited such things as the car's acceleration or the quickness of its gearchange as the basis of their positive reactions.

296	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Overall Feel	Feels very smooth. Moves quickly [sp] and speed bumps don't through you about. Well pleased. Feel relaxed.
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On the other hand the operation code ([oper]) was used to cover more general dynamic aspects of the product and its movement which seems to have been a more frequent basis for positive customer appraisal reactions both strong (D) and weak (L) across the research settings. These included reactions to the movements of product attributes not related to their scalar speed and other interaction properties such as the user interface associated with certain features. The relatively frequent use of the operation code to index participants' reports indicates an important non-functional basis of customer delight in this product category.

448	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Rear window mechanism	Look at that action - nice.. Really nice [oper]
-----	-----	--------	---	-----	-----------------------	---

392	SRD	Static	D	Honda NSX	Headlight Dip Adjustment	The way the button works. Push it to click up and then adjust before pushing back down. [oper]
-----	-----	--------	---	-----------	--------------------------	--

- *Dynamic properties are more frequently cited as sources of positive appraisal during the test-drive setting*
- *The Operation of the product is a frequently cited source of both D and L reactions*

Abstract Properties

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[pri] price	0.01	0.04	0	0.05	0	0
[br] brand	0.01	0.04	0	0.05	0	0
[flex] flexibility	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.05	0	0.05
[func] function performed	0.17	0.15	0.35	0.32	0.16	0.19
[erg] ergonomics	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.11	0.05
[comf] comfort	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.07
[co] co-ordination, integration	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.11	0.04	0
[bui] build	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.03	0.02	0
[vis] visibility	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0.05	0.07
[spa] spaciousness	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.05
[uf] user-friendliness, ease of use	0.06	0.03	0.08	0.13	0.18	0.19
[sim] simplicity	0	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.02
[prac] practicality	0.01	0	0.02	0	0	0
[eco] economy, efficiency	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0	0
[sub] subtlety	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0	0
[atd] attention to detail	0.10	0.12	0.16	0.29	0.06	0.12

The last group of vehicle properties cited by participants as the basis of their positive appraisals were more abstract. This group is distinguished by the fact that they require some form of interpretation of the product stimulus by the participant. The majority of these abstract properties are desirable scalar qualities that the participant judges the product to possess. Particularly frequent examples of such abstractions leading to positive appraisals are attention to detail ([atd]), user-friendliness or ease of use ([uf]), and co-ordination or integration ([co]). The later code was used to index examples of participants citing the co-ordination of distinct parts of the car or their integration in terms of their working together. This is again indicative of more holistic appraisal processes taking place.

249	SRD	Static	D	Honda S2000	Seats	The red leather looks brilliant against the metallic grey paint [co].
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148	SRD	Static	D	Chevrolet Corvette	Instrument lights	The instrument lights illuminate when the door is opened [co].
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Spaciousness ([spa]) is another frequently cited scalar source of positive appraisals as is visibility ([vis]). The frequency table indicates that the later quality was much more frequently the basis of positive appraisals during test-drives where this abstract property of the product is likely to have become both apparent and presumably beneficial to the participants. Another such vehicle quality that appears to have been discovered by participants during product usage was its ergonomics ([erg]), although it seems to have been more often the basis of less positive appraisals.

550	CCI	Test Drive	D	Ford	Visibility	You can see everyone. Such good visibility [vis] front and rear makes it much easier to drive.
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The one scalar quality that participants more frequently cited as the basis of their delight reactions compared to their less positive appraisals, was attention to detail (coded [atd]). The frequency table shows the trend, supported across the different

research contexts, that distinguishes L and D reactions on the basis of this code. It seems that attention to detail was frequently cited by participants in both D and L reactions but in all research contexts the frequency of this code is higher in D reactions than in L reactions. These code frequencies suggest that attention to detail is a particularly important source of customer delight, at least in this class of products.

501	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Interior styling	I'm gob-smacked - its so nice in here. The dials are lovely everything feels the same and its got some lovely details. Real attention to detail [atd] everywhere. The shapes and materials are gorgeous. It's a lovely place to be.
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The most frequently cited abstraction cited as the basis of both L and D reaction was usually a function performed by a particular car feature (coded [func]). Together with the car brand (coded [br]), functions might not be considered scalar qualities. The [func] code was not used to index high levels of functionality (which was covered by the practicality [prac] code) but rather was applied when participants recognised the function performed by a vehicle feature as appealing.

191	CCI	Static	D	Renault	Hidden Storage	Excellent idea. 10 out of 10. You can keep things cool in there or hide your valuables. [func] Great idea that would be good in all cars.
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- *User-friendliness, attention to detail, coordination/integration and function performed are the abstract properties most frequently cited as sources of positive appraisal*
- *Attention to detail is more frequently cited in D reaction than L reactions across the research settings.*

Summary

The participant verbatim demonstrates that the majority of positive appraisals, both weak (L) and strong (D), were based upon combinations of different types of property present in the product and their appeal to different senses. These combinations were usually made up of static properties, dynamic properties and abstract properties that participants judged to be present in the product, although occasionally these different types of property were seen to act in isolation. Each Observation usually received more than one stimuli code and the frequency table demonstrates this¹⁵. The table shows that generally there are no large differences in the frequency of codes between delight reactions and weaker positive reactions, the exception being 'attention to detail'. However, there do seem to be differences dependent on the consumption context studied. Within these multi-property stimuli, several stand out as particularly common sources of positive appraisal reaction. These distinct properties are the function performed by a feature, the operation of a

¹⁵ The frequencies do not add to 1 in each column.

feature (the way it works), the appearance of the car or parts of it (resulting from their size, shape, colour and the materials used), the location of features within the car or the car's layout, the attention to detail within the car, the co-ordination between or integration of different car parts or features, and their usability. These properties, and their combination, can result in positive appraisal reactions ranging from the very specific to the global or holistic, which participants report as delight.

124	CCI	Static	D	Ford	Stereo	Good ergonomics [erg] all well laid out [loc] and simple [sim]. Very easy to use [oper] [uf]- I've never seen it before but I already know how to use it and what functions its got [ap]. Its also got a nice security device [func] which means you only have to take a small piece away from the car. [AC]
501	SRD	Static	D	Mercedes SLK	Whole car	Beautiful [ap], quality, engineering [bui], Electric roof [oper] [func], brushed alloy dash [mat].... EverythingI'm starting to save.... [HC]

6.4.3 Cognitive Appeal Process

Each Observation was also coded on the basis of the cognitive activity implicit or explicit in the participant's description of their reaction. This section will discuss the cognitions associated with the appeal of the stimuli types described above. The participant verbatim contained evidence for a variety of cognition types that made up this appeal process. These cognition types were categorised into the following groups; Perception, Expectancy, Judgement, Inference and Characterisation. Each Observation was therefore indexed with one or more codes falling into these categories. Participants' descriptions often contained significant amounts of information about the nature of their reactions and included multiple types of cognition. As such a single Observation was rarely indexed with a single cognition code. The researcher also endeavoured to code all possible interpretations of the verbatim.

Perception

Research method	Self Report	Car Clinic	Car Clinic			
Consumption context	Static	Static	Test-drive			
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D		
[Pre] presence of stimulus	0.20	0.14	0.37	0.25	0.13	0.19
[Ab] absence of stimulus	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.09	0.10
[Lin] linear, lots of, very	0.56	0.67	0.48	0.70	0.71	0.69
[Opt] optimum, just right	0.11	0.22	0.25	0.17	0.25	0.24
[Comb] combination	0.17	0.18	0.12	0.28	0.09	0.07
[TO] trade off, comparison	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.15	0.12
[B] benefit	0.24	0.16	0.28	0.23	0.29	0.45

The first cognition type identified in participants' reports were perceptions. These cognitions are those associated with how participants' perceived or experienced the stimuli. Again each reaction rarely contained evidence of a lone perceptual process

and the frequency values in each column bear this out. Furthermore, as has already been described above, many reactions were cumulative in nature and as such contained descriptions of a number of stimuli and their appeal. The first code in the table ([Pre]) was used to index a participant's reaction to the presence of a car feature as opposed to a reaction to the nature of a car feature.

233	CCI	Static	D	BMW	TV	Wow - on board telly – great [Pre]. Not the easiest to use but that's not the point.
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The frequency table shows elevated incidences of this code in the CCI static evaluation context. This is most likely to be due to the inclusion of a gadget-laden car in the small group of four used in that research setting. Here multiple participants reacted to the presence of the many features this car contained, skewing the frequency of this code. However the table does indicate a generally high frequency of this type of reaction across the research contexts and reaction strengths. Several other reactions were characterised by the participant reacting positively to the absence of a property or feature that they would usually expect in a car. This type of reaction was more frequent in the test-drive context, where participants reacted to the absence of qualities such as noise whilst driving.

577	SRD	Static	D	TVR Tamora	Door release	Door opening button is under the wing mirror - this removes the need for unsightly door handles [ab]. It squidges nicely then it clicks. Unbelievably cool.'
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163	CCI	Test Drive	L	BMW	Overall Feel	Feels quality - not like a sports car, more of a luxury car. I feel like I could drive this all day. Feels relaxing. It has a quality sound whilst driving too, not much road noise [ab].
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In contrast to reactions to the presence or absence of a stimuli, the majority of Observations contained reactions to the scalar nature of the stimuli. Scalar reactions of two types were identified. The most frequent perception cognition in the data was coded as a linear reaction ([Lin]). Reactions receiving this code were those where participants recognised the car to have large or small amounts of a particular quality and were usually characterised by the use of the word 'very'.

142	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Sequential Gearbox	Very smooth [Lin] this fancy gearshift. Very fluid [Lin] gearchanges. I actually prefer not having to dip the clutch to change gears. Its also so quiet [Lin] you almost don't notice it changing
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The other type of scalar reaction identified was coded as optimum ([Opt]). In contrast to the linear type, where the implication is that the more or less of the quality in question the better in the eyes of the customer, the optimum type was defined by the participant identifying the scalar level of a quality as 'just right'.

190	CCI	Static	D	Renault	Rear Seatbelt Guide	Makes the seatbelt sit in just the right place on your shoulder [Opt] - very comfortable [Lin]. But it also looks great. Really curvy [Lin] suits the rest of the car.
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As can be seen, reactions often contained both linear and optimum type perceptions but, contrary to the examples above, could only receive each code once. Also contained within the categorisation of perceptions were cognitive operations that made up the reaction as a whole. Two types were identified - combination [Comb] and trade offs [TO]. Combinations were indicative of cumulative reaction types where participants' positive appraisals were the result of combining several constituent elements. However the [Comb] code was occasionally applied to non-cumulative reactions (see example below - CCI/Obs451). Trade offs occurred when the participant perceived something positive about the car despite or in comparison to another property¹⁶.

451	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Noise	Everything operates so silently - lovely. [Comb]
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501	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Interior styling	I'm gob-smacked - its so nice in here. The dials are lovely everything feels the same [Comb] and its got some lovely details [Comb]. Real attention to detail everywhere. The shapes and materials are gorgeous. It's a lovely place to be.
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76	SRD	Static	D	Peugeot 607	Packaging	Sleek yet roomy car [TO]
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The final type of perception evident in participants' descriptions of their delight reactions (and their weaker positive appraisals) was the perception of the benefits delivered by the antecedent of their reaction. When participants explicitly framed their reactions in terms of the benefits offered by the car or one of its features the Observation was indexed with the code [B]. The frequency table shows that this benefit recognition was common across reaction strengths and research contexts.

2	SRD	Static	D	Range Rover Linley	Headrest TV's	Excellent idea. It'll keep the passengers quite [B].
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Summary

The frequency of these perception types indicate that generally the same perceptual processes occur in the weaker reactions as the delight reactions. The same is the case across consumption situations. The exceptions are the operations of combining and making trade offs which seem to distinguish the static and test-drive situations in the CCI method. A possible explanation for this finding is that the combining of multiple separate product elements is likely to be a cognitively intensive process and therefore less likely to occur whilst concentrating on driving the car. Whilst evaluating a car statically participants could be said to have the cognitive freedom to go through

¹⁶ The [TO] code was used to index comparisons rather than strict trade-offs. The TO abbreviation was used to facilitate the filtering process which would have confused the [Comb] code with a [Comp] code.

this combination process. In contrast, making a trade-off between two properties might require less cognitive effort.

- *Customer delight reactions contain 4 types of perception cognition*
 - *identifying the presence or absence of product features or properties*
 - *noting the levels of scalar qualities*
 - *recognising the benefits offered*

- *These perceptions can act alone or in combination via perceptual operators*
 - *Combinations*
 - *Comparisons*

Expectancy

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[ED] expectation disconfirmed	0.27	0.19	0.19	0.17	0.24	0.26
[EC] expectation confirmed	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.08	0
[ES] expectation set	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	0
[WK] well known, familiar	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.01	0

In addition to the perception cognition types outlined above the participant verbatim also demonstrated various roles for expectation-based cognitions in the appeal reactions reported. Codes in this expectancy group were given when participant descriptions included implicit or explicit roles for expectation in the positive appraisals. The most frequent type of expectancy cognition evident in the data was the disconfirmation of expectations (coded [ED]). As highlighted in Chapter 2 this cognition type involves the participant's previously held expectations not being supported by the product they are evaluating. As the frequency table shows, this form of expectancy cognition is equally common in delight reactions and weaker positive appraisals and across the research contexts. The particularly high frequency of this code is indicative of its use to code both reactions where expectation levels were exceeded and those where the object of appraisal was unexpected. Both implicit and explicit examples of the use of this code are provided below.

Implicit disconfirmation of expectations¹⁷ -

705	SRD	Static	D	Audi A2	Bonnet Flap	The front grill on the car opens up to allow the water to be filled etc. [ED]. Extremely useful design feature
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Explicit disconfirmation of expectations¹⁸ -

292	SRD	Static	D	VW Polo 16v	Interior design	A car that I would very seriously consider purchasing. Much more style than I would have thought in such a small car. [ED]
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¹⁷ Use of the [ED] code to index a reaction to the unexpected - radiator grills on cars do not normally open up to reveal such items. These functions are normally located elsewhere, under the bonnet.

¹⁸ Use of the [ED] code to index a reaction where the exceeding of expectations is explicit.

As described in Chapter 2, expectation disconfirmation has previously been identified as a defining feature of customer delight (Oliver et al, 1997 and Rust and Oliver, 2000), and the data do suggest it is indeed a frequent component of the reaction. However they also indicate that it is equally frequent in less positive appraisals. Although occurring with comparative infrequency, a small number of delight reactions were reported that demonstrated explicit roles for the confirmation of expectations (coded [EC]). This type of expectancy cognition involves previously held expectations being supported by the product being evaluated, or the reinforcement of prior positive appraisal.

438	SRD	Static	D	Alfa Romeo 156	Styling whole shape	-Perfectly reflects my perception of the brand [EC] - pure sculpture!
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340	SRD	Static	D	Ferrari	Styling	I'm massively biased as an Italian but these are the most gorgeous cars on earth and I want all of them. [EC]
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Demonstrating the proposed importance of customer delight reactions and the potential impact of pre-purchase product evaluation, several participant reports included explicit evidence of expectations being set (receiving the code [ES]).

11	SRD	Static	D	Range Rover 2000	Stereo controls on wheel	Extremely useful feature....every car should have it. [ES]
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199	SRD	Static	D	Volvo V40 Estate	Interior Trim	The leather and wood on the show car was a lesson to the other manufacturers in combining quality and feel and smell. [ES]
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Although not strictly an expectation based cognition a final type, included in this group, was typified by a participant's perception of something as well known or familiar to them. This process of recognition was coded [WK] and was included here because of the implied cognitive process of reference to pre-appraisal beliefs or knowledge. Although this process is analogous to the expectation reference process this code was used to index the participant's reference to something well known rather than the perception of the car in relation to this. This means that Observations receiving the [WK] code often received other expectation based codes particularly the [ED]¹⁹ but also occasionally the [EC]²⁰ code.

565	SRD	Static	L	Mini	Switches	The switches are copies of those in the original mini. [WK] It was nice to see they'd kept something inside to hark back to this [EC]. They have a nice positive feel and a click between their two states. Shame BMW had to put plastic bits between them so they don't stand out from the dash
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¹⁹ For example when well known product attributes were delivered in unexpected ways or found in atypical locations.

²⁰ For example when it is the familiarity of the attribute that appeals.

476	SRD	Static	D	Porsche 911 Carrera2	Styling - Fronttime - awe inspiring	Classic 911 styling [WK] taken one step further [ED]- the ability to look retro and fresh at the same time
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Summary

The data demonstrate various roles for pre-existing knowledge and beliefs about the product being evaluated. The Observations collected suggest expectations can be set, exceeded, confirmed, and re-affirmed and that participants frequently reacted to the unexpected. By far the most frequent expectancy cognition in the delight reactions captured was expectancy disconfirmation ([ED]) with up to 1 in every 4 delight reactions being characterised by an implicit or explicit role for this cognitive process (CCI test drive frequency = 0.26). Despite the fact that the majority of reaction descriptions, as reported by participants, did not contain any evident role for expectations it cannot be ruled out in such cases. The data collection methods used in this research are not sensitive to unconscious processes. As such unconscious roles for expectations cannot and have not been examined and could be said to have influenced every delight reaction. The very fact that a customer attends to and reports a particular product, or attribute thereof, is indicative of a salience process taking place. Other products and features did not stand out enough for participants to notice and react to; they could be said to have remained unnoticed because they matched perceptual expectations. The very act of noticing and reacting to a feature on the other hand could be indicative of expectation disconfirmation taking place unconsciously at the level of perception.

- *Conscious expectation disconfirmation is a frequent but not ubiquitous component of customer delight reactions.*
- *The data cannot support or refute a role for the unconscious disconfirmation of expectations increasing the salience of the antecedents of delight reactions identified.*

Judgement

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[Ap] appropriate, suitable	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.04
[U] ultimate, the best	0.01	0.10	0	0.11	0	0.07
[S] superior, better	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.02
[D] distinctive, different	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.02
[No] novel, new	0.05	0.02	0.08	0.08	0.03	0.07
[BA] brand association	0.03	0.03	0.02	0	0.03	0.02
[VJ] value judgement	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.05	0	0

Participant's reactions were also often characterised by the making of explicit judgements about the product or its constituent attributes. The frequency table indicates that the judgement of the stimulus as either distinctive or novel does not distinguish D reactions from L reactions²¹. The same is the case for superiority. Participants judged products or features to be comparatively superior with similar

²¹ Except novelty in the test-drive situation - this might indicate that novelty is a more salient differentiator when driving the vehicle than when evaluating it statically.

frequency across all reaction types and contexts. However, in contrast, the judgement of the stimulus as the best, perfect or comparatively 'the ultimate' does seem to distinguish between the two strengths of reaction. Over all contexts, 1 in 10 delight reactions included such a judgement by the customer compared with less than 1 in 100 L reactions. The potential implication of these findings is that judged superiority is not often enough to delight the customer, but that the antecedents of delight are often those judged to be the best by customers. Alternatively, this finding is indicative of the potential impact of the delight reaction in terms of the making of comparative judgements. However a caveat must be applied here. The ultimate code ([U]) was used whenever participants identified the stimulus as the best, perfect, or ultimate. However there was not necessarily an external basis of comparison in such cases. These cars or attributes may have been judged as perfect in their own right (i.e. a non-comparative judgement, e.g. CCI/Obs144), ultimate compared to competitor vehicles (i.e. an external comparison, e.g. SRD/Obs86), or the best thing about the car being appraised (i.e. an internal comparison, e.g. CCI/Obs210). In these terms this code partly reflects the superlative tone of the reaction as reported by the participant.

144	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Steering	Feels light but still getting good feedback from the road. Perfect steering. [U]
86	SRD	Static	D	Jensen S-V8	Dashboard Dials	Best in the show. [U] Really different looking. All the other cars have dials that look the same.
210	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Wing mirror	This is the best thing about the car. [U] The mirror has blue glass really excellent. Makes everything look sunny in it. Makes me feel sunny and happy.

The frequency table suggests that two other judgement types seem to distinguish D reactions from L reactions, but only under certain conditions. 1 in 20 delight reactions in the test-drive situation incorporated a judgement of the stimulus as appropriate or suitable (coded [Ap]), compared with 1 in 100 L reactions. It appears that this recognition of 'the right way to do things' has similar salience but a greater impact when the car is being used, compared to the simpler static evaluation where it is still recognised but tends to produce both weak and strong positive reactions. However this has to be considered speculation due to the small number of delight reactions captured in the test drive setting (42), only two of which constitute a frequency of 0.05.

A more reliable finding is that value judgements (coded [VJ]) are more frequent in delight reactions than less positive reactions, at least during static car evaluation. This demonstrates that value judgements are made early in the pre-purchase car evaluation process (i.e. on first acquaintance with the product) and they have the potential to delight potential-customers. The absence of such reactions from the test drive situation is presumably due to the fact that such a judgement can be made during static evaluation and therefore in the sequence of the CCI method these were likely to have been made by participants prior to the test-drive.

600	SRD	Static	D	Seat Toledo VT	Interior materials	The feel of the upholstery – the whole thing just oozed quality. For this price – wonderful [VJ]
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The remaining judgement type identified in the data was the making of a brand association. This code ([BA]) was used to index occurrences of the participant likening the car to another, usually superior, brand. The frequency table shows that this an infrequent judgement type in appraisal reactions across the research settings.

Summary

The reported product evaluations collected here often contained judgements made by the participant about the antecedent of their reaction.

- Judgements of superiority, novelty and distinctiveness occur with similar frequency in delight reactions and less positive reactions during static evaluation.
- The antecedents of delight reactions are judged to be 'ultimate' with greater frequency than those of less positive reactions.

Inference

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
2.4.1 Focussed						
[FQ] quality	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0
[FP] performance	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.04	0	0.05
[FI] ingenuity	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.19	0.05	0.05
2.4.2 Halo						
[HQ] quality	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.08	0.01	0
[HP] performance	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.03	0	0.05
[HI] ingenuity	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.08	0.01	0
[HG] generalised	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01	0

Many of the positive appraisal reactions collected contained evidence of a cognitive inference process taking place as part of the participant's response to the product. The Inferences represent assumption making on the part of the participant reporting the reaction. Inferences of different types were identified and could be grouped according to their nature (i.e. what was inferred), and their breadth of scope (i.e. about what). Each Observation including such inferences provided an insight into the potential power of features evoking positive reactions in terms of the favourable impact they can have on the customer's view of the product. Inferences fell into two groups, focussed and halo, the later of which imply a more powerful positive impact on the attitude of the customer toward the product as a whole. The former are potentially less powerful since the inference is focussed solely on the stimulus being appraised rather than being generalised to the whole. Similarly the inferences made were different in nature. Inferences of three main types were identified, each of which could be focussed or a halo effect. Quality Inferences (coded [FQ] and [HQ]) involved the participant making a subjective judgement of quality based upon the antecedent stimulus being appraised.

Focussed - inference about the quality of the stimulus alone

91	SRD	Static	D	Jaguar XK8	Wheels	Big and looks well made [FQ]. Makes Jensen's alloy wheels look crude.
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Halo - inference about the quality of the whole made on the basis of the stimulus

631	SRD	Static	D	Audi A2	Louvered Sunroof	Double overlapping sunroof in dark glass gives a real quality feel to a small car [HQ]. Innovative wind defender pops up as roof opens.
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Likewise Performance Inferences (coded [FP] and [HP]) involved the participant making a prediction about the performance of the feature or product being appraised.

Focussed-

566	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Sequential Gearbox	Excellent gear change. Fun or smooth. Feels very safe and reassuring would probably be very good in the snow [FP].
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Halo -

684	SRD	Static	D	Mini	6 airbags	I like it when safety is a priority and slightly surprised to find this in a small car. It makes driving so much more relaxed when I know the car will protect me [HP].
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Particularly common in static evaluation contexts were Ingenuity Inferences. Here the participant inferred intelligence or effort in the design of the stimulus being appraised or generalised to the whole product.

Focussed -

606	SRD	Static	L	Saab 9-5	drinks holder	Nice action as it lowers down and the circle cup holder bit rotates to the horizontal. Its neat and moves very smoothly - clever! [FI]
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Halo -

529	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Coat hooks	Those are lovely. It's the damped movement. So much effort has gone into all the details like that [HI]
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A final type of generalised product halo was identified and indexed using the code [HG]. The code was used when the nature of the inference was unclear or stated in a general way by the participant²².

473	SRD	Static	D	Lexus SC430	Alloy wheels	Unique polished chrome alloy wheels which look fantastic and really add to the overall concept [HG] - stylish - luxurious - brilliant
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²² No focused general inference code was developed since it logically would have applied to every observation, whereas the generalised product halo code was used specifically when a favourable (but unspecified) generalisation was made from a constituent product attribute to the product as a whole.

527	SRD	Static	D	Mercedes S-Class	Trunk closes itself	Just really clever - "wow it shuts itself" and it looks great when it does it. Rest of the car must be good [HG].
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The frequency table seems to show no clear trends across contexts or reaction strengths. The Focussed Ingenuity Inference is the most frequent inference type made within the data set and indicates that car attributes that are perceived to be clever or ingenious by customers often evoke positive evaluative reactions including delight. Within static evaluation contexts, halo effects seem to be more frequent in D reactions than L reactions (with the exception of the Halo Ingenuity Inference within the SRD context) although the differences in frequencies are marginal. The impact of a single gadget-laden car in the CCI context can be seen particularly in the frequencies of Ingenuity Inferences of both focussed and halo types, but also in the Halo Quality Inference.

- *Positive appraisal reactions including delight during static evaluation are frequently characterised by the customer making favourable inferences about the product.*
- *The 3 distinct types of Inference cognition occurring in static evaluation reactions involve customers making assumptions of Quality, Performance and Ingenuity as part of their positive appraisal.*
- *Inference can be focussed on the antecedent of the delight reaction or generalised from it as a product halo.*

Characterisation

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[Phy] physical	0.22	0.38	0.22	0.33	0.22	0.33
[Tem] temporal	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.08	0.02	0.08
[Ani] animistic	0.06	0.11	0.08	0.13	0.08	0.13
[Aff] affective	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.02	0.07
[Neg] negative	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01

The final cognition type associated with the appeal of the stimulus being appraised was Characterisation. Characterisations had initially been identified as the participant's assignment of 'affective' characteristics to the product itself. However during the development of the coding scheme this was identified as a subset of a broader cognitive characterisation activity. As a result characterisations were assigned to one of five groups. Typically, this cognitive activity was indicated within the verbatim by the participant's use of adjectives to describe the stimulus. As such all five characterisation types involve the participant describing the antecedent of their reaction as being "X". Physical Characterisation (coded [Phy]) involved the participant describing the reaction stimulus as having a favourable or desirable physical characteristic. This included the use of terms such as strong, elegant, gorgeous, technical, precise etc. Temporal Characterisations (coded [Temp]) involved the use of time based descriptions of the product. These included the use of terms such as classic, retro, futuristic, modern, sci-fi etc. Animistic Characterisations (coded [Ani]) involved the participant imparting animal or human characteristics upon

the product stimulus, including the use of terms such as sexy, phallic, sporty, beastly etc. Observations also received this code when participants described the car as having facial or somatic features or as being masculine or feminine. As mentioned above Affective Characterisations (coded [Aff]) included participants using emotional or affective words to describe the product stimulus itself (as distinct from the use of affective words to describe the participant's own affective state). Such words included fun, wonderful, awesome, cheeky, lovely, fantastic. Also included in this group were negative emotional words used positively by participants; for example - aggressive, mischievous, gruesome. However, these occurrences also received the final characterisation code ([Neg]) for the use of a negative characterisation by the participant. Other examples of such characterisations tended to occur in mixed reactions ([AM] and [HM]) and involved the use of such words as complicated, jerky, plain, over-the-top.

The following Observations are illustrative and provide multiple examples of the use of the characterisation codes. However, during the coding process each observation could only receive each characterisation code once so that frequencies in the table are illustrative of the number of reactions indexed with the code and not the number of times the code could have been applied to the full verbatim.

435	SRD	Static	D	Audi TT coupe	Spoiler	I don't normally like spoilers as they often ruin the lines of nicely designed cars but this really adds to the shape. The car has a chunky [Phy] curvy [Phy] rear end and this small understated [Phy] spoiler looks great on it. Its reminiscent of the Lotus Elise a bit.
466	SRD	Static	D	Audi TT coupe	Dashboard and Interior design	Big circular dials gave a classic [Temp] feel but digital displays in red made it look really futuristic [Temp]. It had a cockpit like [Phy] feel with metal golf ball [Phy] shape gear stick and racing design steering wheel lots of grey and black metal - "space-age" [Temp] feel to cockpit.
326	SRD	Static	D	Lotus M250	Interior design	Interior is really different especially the handbrake and dials. The dials run down the middle of the centre console like a spine [Ani].
305	SRD	Static	D	Marcos Mantis GT	The whole car	Totally awesome [Aff] car. The whole thing is novel. It's the whole shape and appearance of the car. Totally eye catching its Awesome [Aff].
647	SRD	Static	D	Peugeot 206 Gti	Front grille + intake	Very aggressive [Aff] [Neg] frontal treatment transforms the 206 - makes you want to own one.

As the examples above show, each Observation could receive more than one different characterisation code, and the values in the frequency table again bare this out. Also evident in the table are clear trends in the frequency of Characterisation Cognitions between the reaction strengths. Despite the use of negative emotions in a favourable way by delighted customers, as evidenced above (e.g. SRD/Obs647), the majority of negative characterisations occurred in L reactions such as the one below.

166	SRD	Static	L	Audi TT roadster	Radio Flap	Flap hides the stereo and it looks good. Nice idea but it felt really tacky [Neg].
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All the other characterisation types however occur more frequently in the D group of delight reactions than in the less positive L reactions. Physical Characterisations are the most frequently made and this reflects the fact that this code was used to index participant's use of general positive adjective language to describe the physical nature of the stimulus. This group therefore became a catch-all for characterisations that did not fit the other categories. Animistic Characterisations also occurred with greater frequency in D reactions. This group includes the coding of the words 'sexy' and 'sporty' as animistic characterisations²³ which pepper the descriptions of D reactions. The frequencies of the Affective Characterisation code are indicative of the use of stronger more emotional language by delighted participants to characterise the stimulus being appraised. These trends are also evident across the static evaluation and test drive contexts. All characterisation types could often be associated with the perception codes [Lin] and [Opt]. As such these characterisations might be considered additional desirable abstract properties of the product, resulting from interpretation by the customer and perceived in terms of their level within the product.

- *Product Characterisation occurs with greater frequency in customer delight reactions than less positive appraisals.*
- *Positive Product Characterisations of 4 types have been identified, Physical, Temporal, Animistic and Affective.*

6.4.4 Consequent Experience

The final group of codes was used to index information contained within the participant verbatim relating to the consequent experience of the participant resulting from the appraisal they described. This consequent experience was both cognitive and affective in nature and code groups were developed accordingly. Each observation was coded for content relating to what the participant thought and what the participant felt as a result of their positive appraisal of the car (or one of its features). This involved indexing any information pertaining to the participant's Motivations and Projections (both cognitive activities) and their emotional internal state (affects). This latter group of codes required a greater amount of interpretation on the part of the researcher and the application of Affect codes on the basis of any explicit reaction content and an overall interpretation of the tone of the reaction.

²³ On the grounds that both sex and sport are animal activities.

Motivation

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[RA] repeated attention	0.01	0.01	0	0.07	0.01	0.10
[A] attracted, drawn	0.03	0.08	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.07
[CP] consider purchasing	0	0.02	0.01	0	0	0

Three types of motivation were identified in the participant verbatim and coded on an explicit basis. Each is indicative of the potential impact the delight reaction can have in behavioural terms. Observations occasionally contained evidence of repeated attention to the stimulus evoking the positive reaction, as had been identified through the observation of these reactions in the EPS. Such instances were given the code [RA] and the frequency table suggests this is a characteristic of delight reactions rather than less positive reactions in the CCI method. However the same bias is not evident in the SRD data (perhaps due to the use of observers in the CCI who may have collected more behavioural information but were absent in the SRD method). This code was used to index content suggesting a motivation to continue interacting with the product having appraised it.

528	SRD	Static	D	Mercedes S-Class	Electric rear-seats	The rear seats do everything - even massage and ventilate. A great toy couldn't stop playing [RA] - even the headrests are electric. Makes you feel more important than the driver... like your (sic) being chauffeured around.
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Another motivation type identified and apparently occurring more frequently in delight reactions than less positive appraisals was the motivation to approach the stimulus (coded [A]) and again had been observed in the EPS. This code was used to index content suggesting the participant being drawn or physically attracted to the stimulus and the bias toward D reactions is evident across the research contexts.

585	SRD	Static	D	Lotus M250	Handbrake	The novel shape of the handbrake - "Get a grip on this" [A]
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Finally, a very limited number of reactions contained explicit content suggesting the participant would be motivated to consider purchasing the car appraised (coded [CP]).

292	SRD	Static	D	VW Polo 16v	Interior design	A car that I would very seriously consider purchasing [CP]. Much more style than I would have thought in such a small car.
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Summary

The methods used here in the DS were not specifically designed to capture the behavioural component of delight reactions. However, as part of their reported reaction descriptions, participants did provide insights into their motivations and behaviour towards the products delighting them. These insights support the

observations made of delight reactions during the EPS of the delightful stimulus grabbing and maintaining the customer's focus of attention.

Projection

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[I] imagining, dreaming	0.02	0.08	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.07
[SM] suits me	0.03	0.09	0.03	0.08	0.05	0.24
[SO] suits others	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.07	0.01	0.07
[IC] influence choice	0.01	0.01	0	0.01	0.01	0.02
[NF] need fulfilment	0.07	0.08	0.14	0.19	0.10	0.10

A further cognitive component of the participants' experience resulting from their appraisals, and evident in their reports, involved the process of projecting the product into their own lives. Projections of five types were identified. Examples of participants imagining their future product use, or dreaming and fantasising about what the product would mean to them were given the code [I]. Instances of this projection were more frequent in delight reactions than less positive reactions suggesting a sometime role for fantasy in the experience of delighted customers.

597	SRD	Static	D	Mercedes SLK	Pedals	Sat in this expectedly classy car which supposedly does everything well BUT put my foot on the accelerator pedal and suddenly I was Damon Hill [I]. This car has a racing style accelerator pedal - didn't expect it - Blown away.
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The next two types involved participants projecting from the product to the self or others by making statements analogous to "it suits me/others" (coded [SM] and [SO] respectively). Again the frequencies seem to suggest a bias towards delight reactions, especially for the Suits Me projection. This suggests customers are delighted by product stimuli that they believe suit them, however the fact that they see products as suitable for others does not seem to negate the experience of delight.

98	SRD	Static	D	Citroen Saxo VTR	Exterior Door handles.	Vertical door handles are perfect for women with long finger nails (contrasted with a Alfa push button type earlier that broke my nail.) [SM]
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540	SRD	Static	D	Citroen Picasso	Food trays	Food trays and drinks holders in the back of the front seats. This is an excellent idea for back seat passengers. [SO]
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A small number of reactions contained manifest projections forward to a potential choice situation, illustrating the potential of the product attributes concerned. Both the fact that such occurrences appeared infrequently in delight reactions and also appeared in less strong reactions indicates that the impact of customer delight in a choice situation cannot be established with these data.

480	SRD	Static	D	Morgan 4/4 seater	2Rear brake light	Central rear brake light design is innovative and stylish. Very different and a definite selling point [IC]
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The final form of projection identified in participants' reports was the recognition of the potential of the product to fulfil a need. The frequencies of occurrence of this need fulfilment projection (coded [NF]) show only a slight bias towards delight reactions with it occurring with relatively high frequency even in weaker L reactions.

422	CCI	Static	D	Ford	Boot	Just shuts in one go - keeps your hands clean [NF].
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Observations receiving this need fulfilment code were frequently also given the Benefit recognition code described above (as was the example given above). Although this was not always the case, since the statement of need fulfilment may not have been explained in terms of the benefit offered (as below), this does illustrate the author's effort to code multiple interpretations of the data.

565	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Toolkit	Lovely looking and nice feel to it. Just nice to have [NF]. A good detail
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This group of cognitions seem to illustrate a process where the customer sees the product fitting into their lives. The relatively high frequencies of these Projection codes throughout the data, and particularly in delight reactions, is suggestive of the fact that the product's relevance to the customer can be an important aspect influencing its positive appraisal.

▪ *Customer Delight often involves the customer identifying the personal relevance of the product through projective cognitive processes.*

Affects

The final aspect of the reaction descriptions to be coded was the affective state of the participant. Three types of affective state, resulting from product appraisal, were identified in the verbatim. The first type, Object-Oriented, were the directed affective states experienced by participants towards the object being appraised. The second, Pleasure/Arousal, were the non-directed affective states experienced by the participant varying along the basic emotional dimensions of pleasure and arousal. The third, Esteem-based, were non-directed affective states with potential self-reinforcing or ego benefits.

Object-Orientated Affects

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[lk] like	0.41	0.33	0.35	0.47	0.47	0.55
[app] appreciation	0.33	0.17	0.48	0.09	0.39	0.05
[lov] love	0.06	0.18	0.02	0.09	0	0.21
[int] interest	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.02
[ant] anticipation	0	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05
[des] desire, want	0	0.07	0.02	0.01	0	0.02

	[imp] impressed
	[ht] hate, dislike
	[con] confused

0.10	0.25
0.01	0
0.01	0.01

0.19	0.47
0.01	0
0.01	0

0.18	0.36
0	0
0.01	0

Every Observation received a code for the implicit or explicit feeling the participant felt towards the stimulus on the basis that simply reporting the reaction constituted at least appreciation (coded [app]). As such, reactions were coded both on the basis of their manifest content and the researcher's interpretation of their tone. The codes used cover four levels of appreciation - [ht] dislike/hate, [app] appreciation, [lk] like, and [lov] love.

211	SRD	Static	D	VW Beetle	Interior styling and seats	Very comfortable with a lovely (<i>sic</i>) finish and feel to the dash. I hate [<i>ht</i>] the vase but the leather is (<i>sic</i>) real quality feel and smell.
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138	SRD	Static	D	Audi S3 Quattro	Interior Trim	Bright yellow 2 tone 1/2 sued trim. [<i>app</i>]
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365	SRD	Static	D	Nissan Primera	M-6 CVT gearbox	I like [<i>lk</i>] this a lot. Its very easy to use.
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441	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Electric Seats	I love that [<i>lov</i>]- excellent gizmo. Could play all day.
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Two further feeling states coded were indicative of a stimulated but not necessarily decided participant; [*int*] interest and [*ant*] anticipation.

706	SRD	Static	D	Smart	Whole car	Funky and practical interior extremely cool exterior. Beautiful, unusual funky little car [<i>int</i>] and very comfortable too.
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205	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Kickplate	Looks great – makes you want to get in and drive [<i>ant</i>].
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The final two positive affective states coded were evident in the descriptions of participants apparently moved or profoundly influenced by the product; [*imp*] impressed and [*des*] desire/want.

72	SRD	Static	D	Smart	The whole car	This was the most amazing car. It looks good, felt great and could fill a gap in our car needs. [<i>imp</i>]
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702	SRD	Static	D	Audi TT coupe	Styling whole	The exterior of this car is sleek and compact. It's a very very lovely car. "Eye Candy". I want one! [<i>des</i>]
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A final, presumably negative feeling state coded, but very infrequently identified in the positive appraisals, was confusion [*con*].

160	CCI	Static	L	BMW	Television	Technical, flash looking but not sure how to use it [con]. Looks functional, german and complicated. It's a new idea but I probably wouldn't use it everyday.
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Summary

The frequency table shows some predictable trends in the frequency of different types of Object-Oriented affects across the different strengths of reaction. Less positive feelings towards the product ([ht] and [app]) are more frequent in L reactions than D reactions. At the same time higher frequencies of stronger positive feelings toward the product ([lov]) appear in the D reactions compared to the L reactions. These biases appear to pivot around the most frequently coded level of appreciation - like [lk]. These effects are also stable across the research and consumption contexts studied, suggesting that D reactions were stronger than L reactions in terms of the customer's appreciation of the stimulus being appraised. It seems contradictory to have substantial numbers of reactions in the D group coded as merely appreciation and liking (particularly since the numerical scale used by the participants, and the basis of the L/D classification, was anchored with the term 'like'). This is indicative of the paucity of verbatim associated with some Observations and the researcher's use of a blind coding process where the reactions' L/D classifications were unknown.

The same bias towards the D reactions is evident for the strong positive Object-Oriented feelings of impressed ([imp]) and desire ([des]), with the trend for the former supported across the different research contexts. Interest ([int]) occurs with similar frequency across reaction strengths and research contexts, whilst anticipation ([ant]) is most common in D reactions during the test-drives of cars. Several reactions receiving this code in the CCI data indicate a role for the sound of the engine as it is turned on and revved.

338	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Engine Noise	Initial noise when you turn it on is very nice. Deep rumble sound. Associate sound with high speed and sporty performance car. [ant]
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- *Customer delight reactions are characterised by higher frequencies of strong positive feelings towards the product.*
- *Less positive appraisals are characterised by higher frequencies of weaker feelings towards the product.*
- *Interest in the product and a liking of the product occur with similar frequency in customer delight reactions and less positive appraisals.*

Pleasure/Arousal Affects

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
L [rel] relaxed	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.14
L [sat] satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.08	0
L [sur] surprise	0.12	0.05	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.14
L [str] struck, stunned	0.03	0.08	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.05

160	CCI	Static	L	BMW	Television	Technical, flash looking but not sure how to use it [con]. Looks functional, german and complicated. It's a new idea but I probably wouldn't use it everyday.
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Summary

The frequency table shows some predictable trends in the frequency of different types of Object-Oriented affects across the different strengths of reaction. Less positive feelings towards the product ([ht] and [app]) are more frequent in L reactions than D reactions. At the same time higher frequencies of stronger positive feelings toward the product ([lov]) appear in the D reactions compared to the L reactions. These biases appear to pivot around the most frequently coded level of appreciation - like [lk]. These effects are also stable across the research and consumption contexts studied, suggesting that D reactions were stronger than L reactions in terms of the customer's appreciation of the stimulus being appraised. It seems contradictory to have substantial numbers of reactions in the D group coded as merely appreciation and liking (particularly since the numerical scale used by the participants, and the basis of the L/D classification, was anchored with the term 'like'). This is indicative of the paucity of verbatim associated with some Observations and the researcher's use of a blind coding process where the reactions' L/D classifications were unknown.

The same bias towards the D reactions is evident for the strong positive Object-Oriented feelings of impressed ([imp]) and desire ([des]), with the trend for the former supported across the different research contexts. Interest ([int]) occurs with similar frequency across reaction strengths and research contexts, whilst anticipation ([ant]) is most common in D reactions during the test-drives of cars. Several reactions receiving this code in the CCI data indicate a role for the sound of the engine as it is turned on and revved.

338	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Engine Noise	Initial noise when you turn it on is very nice. Deep rumble sound. Associate sound with high speed and sporty performance car. [ant]
-----	-----	------------	---	-----	--------------	--

- *Customer delight reactions are characterised by higher frequencies of strong positive feelings towards the product.*
- *Less positive appraisals are characterised by higher frequencies of weaker feelings towards the product.*
- *Interest in the product and a liking of the product occur with similar frequency in customer delight reactions and less positive appraisals.*

Pleasure/Arousal Affects

Research method	Self Report		Car Clinic		Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static		Static		Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D	L	D
[rel] relaxed	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.14
[sat] satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.08	0
[sur] surprise	0.12	0.05	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.14
[str] struck, stunned	0.03	0.08	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.05

[ple] pleasure	0.02	0.07	0.05	0.19	0.13	0.24
[ha] happy	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0.10
[pla] playful	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.14
[del] delight	0.01	0.02	0	0.01	0	0.02
[ama] amazement	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.08	0	0.02
[dis-ap] disappointment	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0
[dis-sat] dissatisfaction	0.02	0	0.02	0	0.01	0

The next group of affects identified and coded were non-directed feeling states having components of pleasure and/or arousal. The experience of these feelings can be thought of as having a location within two dimensions according to the constituent levels of these two components. The locations of these and many other affect words in such a two dimensional space have previously been empirically established by means of semantic differential modelling, (Russell, 1980). The locations presented on the plot below are approximations of the positions calculated by Russell, (1980). Double brackets are used to indicate affect codes identified during this research and not located by Russell. Their position on the plot is a common sense judgement made by the author and reflects his use of the code. Pleasure/Arousal Affect codes were applied on the basis of both manifest content and the overall tone of the participant statements. However, in this case, no assumption could be made about participants' minimum level of feelings based on the mere reporting of the reaction. As the frequency table shows, this meant that not every Observation received a Pleasure/Arousal affect code. Such reactions contained insufficient content to make a judgement of the participant's non-directed affective state.

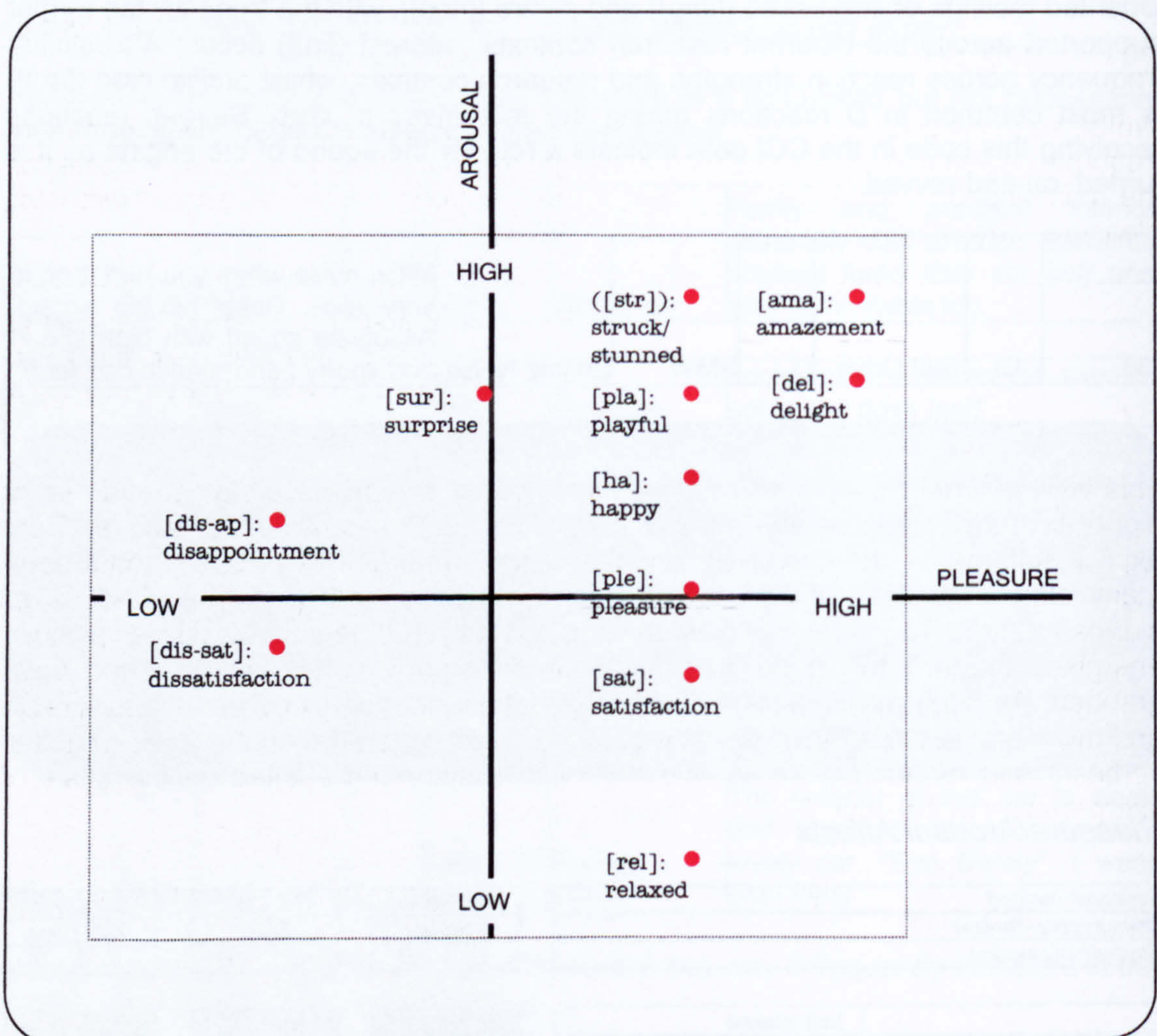


Figure 6.4: Mapping of affective states on dimensions of Pleasure and Arousal based on Russell, (1980)

The next thing to notice about the frequencies of these codes is the apparent infrequent occurrence of delight (coded [del]) in D reactions. As the reader will be aware, delight is the focus of this research and the methodological efforts that have been made to ensure its capture for study have been outlined already. D reactions are assumed to be delight reactions since participants rated them as such on a numerical scale²⁴. The infrequency of the use of the [del] code during the analysis of their content is the result of using it only to index the explicit use of the word by participants in their reaction descriptions. Since participants were asked to record any experiences of delight during their product evaluations it is perhaps unsurprising that they use the word infrequently in their reports. However, the remaining code frequencies seem to suggest that the D group of reactions are indeed delight-like (i.e. high pleasure high arousal.)

Surprise, a hypothetically non-polar state of arousal, (Oliver et al, 1997 and Izard, 1977), was evident with similar frequency across reaction strengths and research contexts. An interesting exception being the 251 D reactions captured in the SRD method, where surprise was evident comparatively infrequently in participants' descriptions of these very positive appraisals.

214	SRD	Static	D	VW Bora V6 4Motion	Satellite Navigation	Integrated sat nav and stereo system is really nice. A real surprise. [sur]
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570	SRD	Static	L	Alpha Romeo Spyder	Trunk release	The boot lock is a sliding alpha badge that hides the keyhole. Surprised me. [sur]
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Whilst surprise occurs across reaction strengths, pleasure (coded [ple]) was more frequently evident in the descriptions of delight reactions than L reactions, suggesting the combination can constitute delight and supporting the existing 'surprising pleasure' view of delight, (e.g. Oliver et al, 1997).

317	CCI	Test Drive	D	Renault	Brakes	Good brakes. Sharp and easy to press. Feels really safe to have so good brakes. Makes driving a pleasure. [ple]
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This view is further supported by the frequencies of the affective states made up of higher levels of pleasure and arousal (excluding delight as discussed above). Both explicit statements, the use of exclamation marks, and the overall energised tone of many statements lead to the use of codes for amazement ([ama]) and struck or stunned ([str]). The later code was used to index content indicating a positive energised reaction to the product suggesting the participant's attention had been grabbed. As such the code was used for reactions judged to be more pleasurable and more aroused than surprise. The [str] code was generated on the basis of actual verbatim and as such is an *in vivo* code but it was often applied on the basis of interpretation of the implicit tone of the statement.

246	SRD	Static	D	Honda S2000	Front styling	The frontal treatment is very striking. [str]
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²⁴ They are the reactions that participants rated as their most positive appraisals.

83	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Door Open Warning	"Ooh"- Looks good, highlights the individual door. Good safety feature, clever. Clever only came on when we moved off. [str]
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In contrast, the amazement code ([ama]) was nearly always used to code explicit evidence of highly positive, highly aroused reactions - when participants used words such as "wow", "gob-smacked" and "unbelievable". Amazement was therefore considered as a more pleasurable and positive affect than struck/stunned.

593	SRD	Static	D	Alpha Romeo 147	Styling front	this is amazing [ama]. The whole thing - the lights the sweep the grille the alpha V - positively obscene. I really want this car.
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501	CCI	Static	D	BMW	Interior styling	I'm gob-smacked [ama]- its so nice in here. The dials are lovely everything feels the same and its got some lovely details. Real attention to detail everywhere. The shapes and materials are gorgeous. It's a lovely place to be.
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The frequencies of these codes suggest a bias towards D reactions although in certain research contexts the differences between D and L reactions do not appear great²⁵. These findings do suggest that D reactions were stronger in terms of arousal and pleasure than L reactions and therefore were more delight-like in terms of the existing 'surprising pleasure' view of the phenomenon. But in addition to this, they also demonstrate the variety of affective states that participants reported as delight.

The most obvious pattern in the frequency table is the marked difference in the nature of D reactions in the test-drive context compared with the static evaluation contexts. Whilst delight reactions in the static car evaluation situations of the CCI and SRD methods are characterised by participants experiencing high arousal high pleasure feelings such as amazement, other less aroused but potentially more pleasurable affects such as happy and playful are comparatively infrequent. In contrast, the D reactions reported during the test-drive situation show a much broader range of pleasure/arousal feeling states making up the most positive appraisal reactions. The high arousal high pleasure affects are still common, with the exception of amazement as discussed. However, three less aroused but still pleasurable affects occur with comparatively high frequency in the test-drive situation whilst being absent, or at best rare, during the static evaluations; relaxed [rel], playful [pla] and happy [ha]. Here the most positive appraisal reactions, reported as delight by participants, do not so closely match the 'surprising pleasure' view of this phenomenon. It seems that the greater opportunity to evaluate the 'total product' offered in the dynamic test-drive context provides the potential for more diverse affective experiences.

298	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Steering	Power steering is nice. Effortless driving. Corners well round the roundabout. Feels like it glides. Feel relaxed. [rel]
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²⁵ Amazement, perhaps fortuitously, is not common whilst driving a car.

333	CCI	Test Drive	D	Fiat	Overall Feel	Puts you in a good mood when you sit in it this car - fun, mischievous cheeky. Its very easy to drive and that makes you feel confident.. Can have lots of fun and enjoy yourself in this car [pla]. Feels like its got something even if it hasn't.
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506	CCI	Test Drive	D	Renault	Spaciousness	Car feels much bigger than it is. Real feeling of space in here. Space to look around. Love the feeling of so much space. Sort of happy-bus feel [ha].
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The remaining affect types identified in this category occur with relative infrequency in the reported reactions. Negative affects were identified and tended to occur in the L group of reactions as would be expected.

628	SRD	Static	L	Peugeot 607	Seats	Very comfortable seats - shame about the wood inside [dis-ap]
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Meanwhile satisfaction (coded [sat]) only occurred with any regularity in the L reactions reported during the test-drive situation.

420	CCI	Test Drive	L	Fiat	Driving Position	Loads of headroom and legroom and depth for legs. Can reach everything from the driving position[sat] - important for me.
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Summary

The pleasure and arousal based affects identified in the participant verbatim support the researcher's claim to have studied customer delight, with greater levels of high pleasure high arousal based feeling states evident in D reactions than in L reactions. Delight reactions during static evaluation tend to involve affective states involving the highest levels of arousal. This narrow 'wow' type reaction is the most prevalent form of customer delight reaction in the limited static evaluation situation. In contrast the data captured during test-drive situations suggest a broader range of feeling states which customers report as delight. Whilst the 'wow' reactions still occur, some delight reactions are characterised by low arousal with pleasure - i.e. relaxed. Others involve feelings of enjoyment, fun and contentment.

- *Customer delight during static product evaluation is affectively-narrow, involving high pleasure high arousal feelings constituting surprising pleasure.*
- *Customer delight during dynamic product evaluation is affectively-broad, involving more diverse pleasure and arousal feelings in addition to surprising pleasure.*

Esteem-based Affects

Research method	Self Report	Car Clinic	Car Clinic	
Consumption context	Static	Static	Test-drive	
Strength of reaction	L	D	L	D
[sup] superior	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.07
[diff] different	0.02	0.01	0.01	0
[con] in control, at ease	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.16
[sec] secure	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.04
[inc] included, understood	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.17

The final type of feeling state identified in the participant verbatim were also non-directed but could not be framed in terms of pleasure and arousal. The common element of this group of affects was their potential impact on the psychological well-being of the participant. Each would have a theoretical impact on esteem by supporting the ego or reducing anxiety²⁶. As before, Observations were coded on the basis of manifest content and the overall tone of the reaction. And as was the case with Pleasure/Arousal based affects, no assumption on a minimum level of Esteem-based affect could be made, resulting in many reactions not receiving a code in this group.

The frequency table demonstrates that two of the esteem-based affects identified seem to occur with greater frequency in D reactions. Both of these affects have hypothetical ego-reinforcing functions. Reactions receiving the code [sup] contained content indicating the participant was feeling superior or better than others as a result of the product.

3	SRD	Static	D	Range Rover Linley	The car as a whole	The look is fantastic - majestic, imposing, superior..."don't mess with me", "I've arrived!" [sup]
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Also occurring with greater frequency in D reactions were Observations receiving the [inc] code. This code was used to index content suggesting the participant felt that they had been understood and considered in the design of the car. As such the code marked the experience of feelings of inclusion and importance by participants.

146	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Roof	The low roof makes it feel like a sporty car. Does make it feel less airy and room but it makes me feel like the car is built around me [inc]. Looks good from the outside and makes you feel safe inside.
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The remaining ego-reinforcing affect, different (coded [diff]), occurred infrequently across reaction types and research contexts.

It seems then that customer delight reactions can contain ego-supporting feelings whilst less positive appraisals are comparatively devoid of such affects. However, the frequency table indicates that these differences between reaction strengths are large only in the Observations captured in the CCI method, whilst the bias is less strong in

²⁶ Psychoanalytic theories of psychology see humans as ultimately ego-defensive. Human behaviour, both conscious and unconscious, is viewed in-terms of its impact on the relationships between the id (the unconscious drives operating via the pleasure principle), the superego (the unconscious conscience) and the ego (the conscious self, arbitrating between the two). Conflicts existing between the competing id and superego manifest themselves as psychological anxiety or dissonance. To maintain psychological harmony the ego seeks to reduce anxiety and maximise esteem. (Reber and Reber, 1999).

the SRD method. Again this may be an artefact of the use of interviewers in the CCI method who tended to prompt and receive more information from participants than the self-report free elicitation.

The two remaining affective states identified have anxiety reducing potential for the participant. Observations receiving the code [con] contained verbatim indicating the participant felt in control or at ease. Those receiving the code [sec] contained content suggesting the participant felt secure or safe. Both types suggest a role for empowerment and confidence in the delight reaction.

447	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Sequential Gearbox	its simple to use and it kinda lets you do it yourself. I can let the car do it when I want and then as soon as I want a go I just take over [con]. Brilliant flexibility. Smooth changes in auto then it lets you have a go - brilliant feeling.
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454	CCI	Test Drive	D	BMW	Overall Feel	This car is really cossetting - it wraps you up away from the world outside [sec].
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The frequency table shows a bias towards D reactions for the occurrence of the [con] code. Customer delight reactions can often include feelings of empowerment engendered by the participant having control over their situation and being at ease with it. Again however, the data from the SRD method demonstrates the occurrence of this affect type with equal frequency in D and L reactions. Generally, in control/at ease was the most frequently given esteem-based affect code, and the data shows it to be particularly important in positive appraisal reactions during the test drive situation. Here participants actually experienced the impact of such feelings whilst driving the cars (i.e. empowerment and reduced anxiety or effort). The same trend is evident for feelings of security and safety and the two affect states may well be associated. Again, during test-drives the salience of the situation may increase the impact of such feelings (i.e. reduced perception of danger and reduced vulnerability).

Summary

The participants' reported appraisal reactions contained indications of two types of esteem-based affective states. The first, including superior ([sup]) and included/understood ([inc]), have the potential to reinforce the participant's ego by enhancing their self-image and occurred more often in D reactions than L reactions.

- *Customer delight reactions often include ego-supporting affective states such as feelings of superiority and inclusion.*

The second, including in control/at ease ([con]) and secure ([sec]), have the potential to support the participant's ego through the reduction of anxiety and effort, and occurred more often during the test drive situation.

- *Positive product appraisals during dynamic evaluation often include feelings of empowerment such as security and control.*

These findings demonstrate the diversity of the affective nature of the customer delight reactions captured. The later finding lends further support to the suggested increased affective-breadth of appraisals during the test-drives of vehicles.

6.4.5 Summary and conclusions

The preceding sections have demonstrated how the coding scheme has been developed and applied in the qualitative analysis of the positive appraisal reactions reported by the participants. By taking four initial lenses through which to examine the reactions - stimuli, cognitions, consequences and affects - the diversity of customer delight reactions has been uncovered. In fact the most telling insight gained into the phenomenon being studied has been the revealing of its cognitive and affective diversity and the variety of the antecedents that can evoke it.

The iterative coding process, taking different perspectives on the same participant verbatim, resulted in the coding of multiple interpretations of its content. These interpretations have been scrutinised by seeking both confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence across research settings and evaluation contexts. As codes and findings have been introduced above observations demonstrating each have been presented. Usually in each example the application of a single code has been presented. As the reader is no doubt aware each Observation actually received many codes representative of the four code groups used (reaction type, stimulus, cognitive appeal process, consequent experience). The following examples are given to demonstrate the full coding of four delight reactions;

A specific attribute-based delight reaction [AS] -

596	SRD	Static	D	Mercedes CL 55 AMG	Seat massage system	[AS] Probably totally unnecessary [Neg] but I want it! [des] I love [lov] gizmos [func] and this has got to be the ultimate [FI] [Pre] [U]. I would bore all of my friends silly about this [RA] [I] [sup].
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A cumulative attribute-based delight reaction [AC] -

380	SRD	Static	D	Audi TT Roadster	Air Vents and Gearstick	[AC] Metal [mat] disks with dimples [sha] gives a sexy [Ani], precise [con], Engineered [Phy] feel [FQ] [fe]. Looks [ap] as good [Lin] as it works [oper] [lk]
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A cumulative global delight reaction [HC] -

83	SRD	Static	D	Smart	The whole car	[HC] Very innovative [Li] [Nov] car - cheap to run [eco] [HP], insure, put on the road [pri] . Roomy inside [spa] - ideal [U] 1st car for 1st time drivers [SO]. Stylish [ap] [Phy] and excellent value [VJ]. [imp]
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An holistic overall delight reaction [HO] -

421	SRD	Static	D	TVR Chimera	Whole car	[HO] Classic [Temp] roadster [ap]- makes you just want to put the roof down and drive very fast [HP] round country roads! [ant] [I] Fun! [Aff] [pla] Completely delighted [del] by all [Comb] aspects of this car.
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6.5 Theory Development

The data and findings discussed in the previous sections were used to progress the induction of theory grounded in these data. As a result of the EPS an initial representation of this descriptive theory of customer delight was presented as a structural representation of the phenomenon as it had occurred in the naturalistic research setting used. This framework is presented below. The findings of the DS now permitted the development of this emergent theory through the description of the phenomenon using different methods and evaluation contexts. This section presents the theory of customer delight during pre-purchase product evaluation resulting from the DS in the form of a descriptive model.

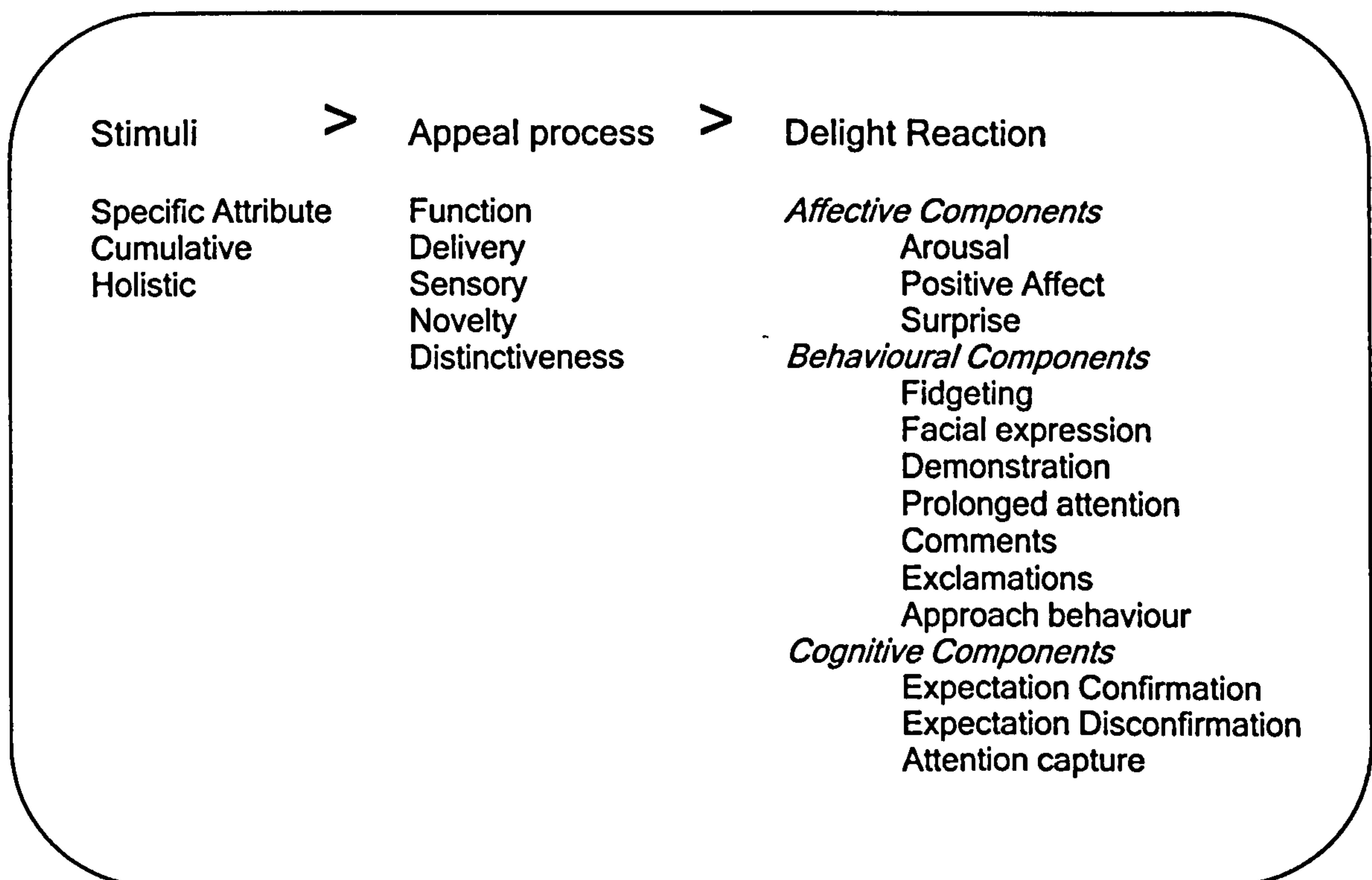


Figure 6.5: Emergent theory of the customer delight reaction resulting from the EPS.

This theory guided the design of the DS and the analysis of the qualitative data it collected. The expansion of this theory can be seen in the structured coding scheme developed for the analysis and presented on pages 172 and 173. As a result of the analysis the theory was refined to produce an integrated representation of the positive appraisal process studied. This refinement of the theory is presented below and models the diversity of the positive appraisal reactions captured in the DS.

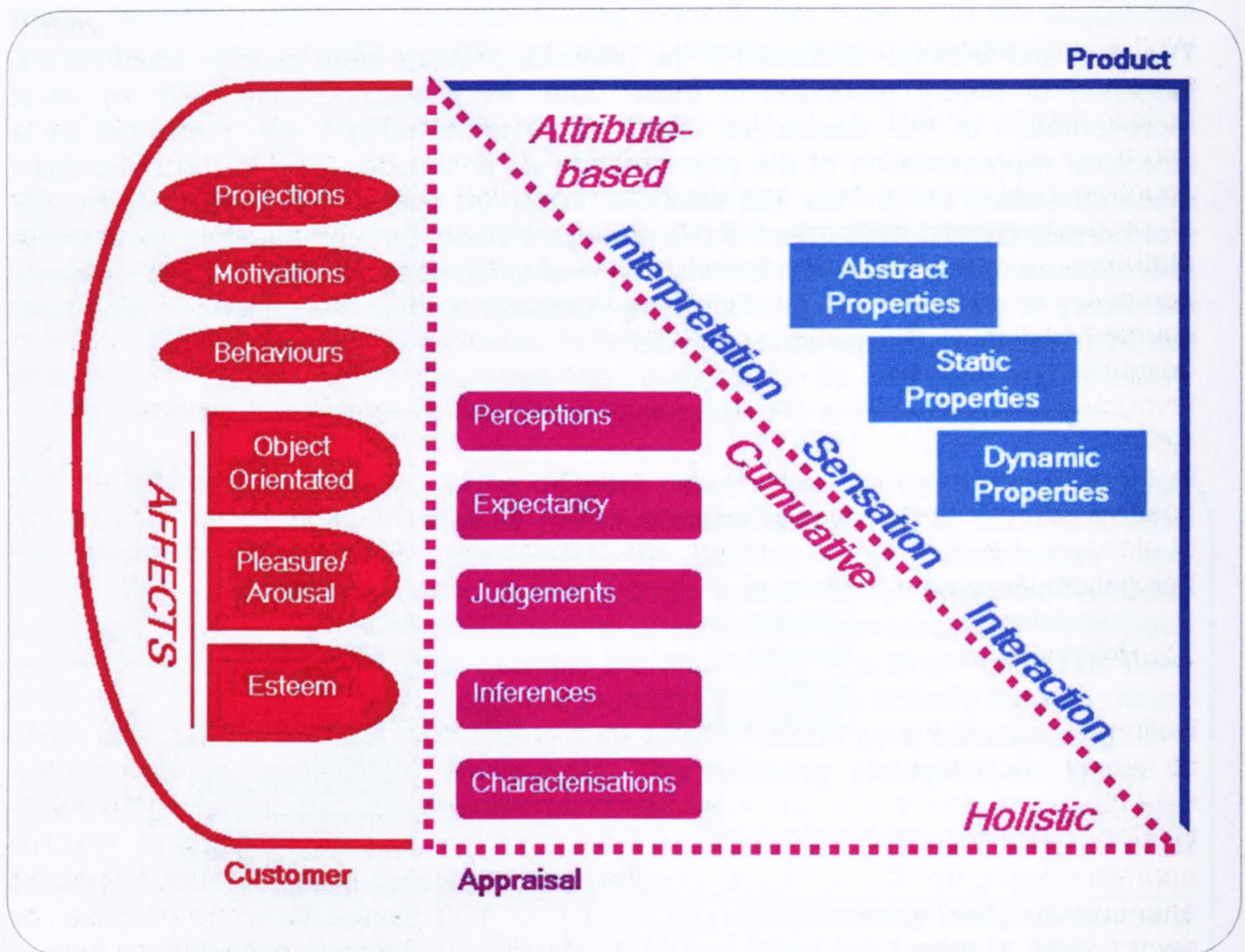


Figure 6.6: A descriptive model of positive appraisal reactions, including customer delight, during product evaluation.

The model presents the product basis, cognitive appeal process, and customer experience of the positive appraisal reactions reported by participants. Note the inclusion of Behaviours as a category of experience based upon the findings of the MCO method. The model does not yet represent a descriptive theory of customer delight but is an integrated understanding of both the weak and strong positive product appraisal reactions studied.

The theory was then used to differentiate between the strongest and weakest positive appraisal reactions reported. The research findings resulting from this qualitative analysis were presented through a discussion of the patterns evident in the code frequencies and can be summarised as follows;

Positive Appraisal

The majority of the reactions captured were attribute-based reactions to specific car features or properties. The product's appearance, the function and operation of its attributes, and the perception of extreme and optimum levels of scalar qualities it was perceived to contain were the most frequent antecedents of positive appraisals both weak and strong. The process of appeal in both strengths of reaction most frequently included the perception of benefits, the disconfirmation of expectations and the making of ingenuity inferences. Need fulfilment projections, feelings of surprise, liking the product and of being in control/at ease were common features of all the positive appraisal reactions captured.

Customer Delight

Whilst the majority of the reactions captured were attribute-based reactions to specific car features or properties, delight reactions were more often cumulative or holistic than less positive reactions. This suggested that the integration of attributes into the product as a whole and the global appraisal of the product were a frequent source of delight in this product category. Delight was a response to a broad diversity of product stimuli, from very specific product features, through combinations of attributes, to general properties of the whole car or areas of it. The attention to detail perceived in the product and the absence of expected attributes were more frequently sources of delight than less positive reactions. Compared to L reactions, reported delight contained higher frequencies of judging the product as ultimate and favourable characterisation of the product. Delighted participants reported higher incidences of being attracted or drawn to the product and projecting it into their lives in the form of imagining its use and identifying it suited them. Compared to less positive appraisal reactions, delight was more frequently reported to contain feelings of pleasure, being struck or stunned, amazement, love, being impressed, superiority, being included/understood.

Context effects

Delight reactions, their antecedents and their nature were context specific. The basis of sensory appeal and the properties of the product identified as appealing were dependant on the evaluation context. Weight, dynamic properties, ergonomics, visibility, user-friendliness/ease of use were more common sources of positive appraisal during test-drives than during the static evaluation of the product. Repeated attention and feeling relaxed, playful, happy, in anticipation, in control/at ease, or secure were all more common components of delight in the test-drive situation than in the static evaluation situation. Delight reactions occurring during test-drives were made up of a larger variety of positive feeling states. Delight reactions occurring during static evaluation were affectively-narrow in comparison, usually being made up of high levels of appreciation and surprise.

Chapter 7 concludes the process of theory induction by using the model to distinguish the components of delight reactions as identified in both the EPS and DS.

6.6 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 5 described the methods used and the data sets collected during the Descriptive Study (DS), concluding with a descriptive quantitative analysis of the data collected. This chapter began by relating the qualitative analysis process used to develop the structured coding scheme and the presentation of a model of the customer appraisal processes that had been captured. The coding scheme was then applied to the full data sets with the aim of identifying the distinctive nature of delight reactions compared to less positive reactions on the basis of this modelled appraisal process.

During the quantitative analysis the 1283 reactions had been categorised into three groups according to their strength as rated by the participant. Median strength reactions, labelled A, were discarded from the qualitative analysis as ambiguous. This left the strongest delight reactions, labelled D, and the least strong positive reactions, labelled L. The aim of the qualitative analysis was to make comparisons between the strongest and weakest reactions occurring in the two appraisal contexts studied, static and test-drive. The blind coding process used to index the content of participants' reaction descriptions was described. The participant verbatim

associated with each reaction was separated from the strength and context categorisations, given a numerical identifier and randomised prior coding. These descriptions of the participants' thoughts and feelings associated with each reaction, and the product stimuli they were reacting to, were then given codes of four types based on their manifest content and the researcher's interpretation of it. Firstly the nature of each reaction was coded according to its attribute or holistic basis - i.e. reactions to specific car features or overall reactions to the car or areas of it. Then the constituent properties of the car or features identified by participants as responsible for their positive reaction were coded. The final two code types indexed reactions on the basis of the cognitive and affective nature of the appeal process and the consequent experience of the participant reporting the reaction. Once the coding had been completed the coded verbatim was re-married to the strength and context categorisations using the numerical identifier.

The results of this coding process have been presented as a frequency table identifying the proportion of reactions in each group receiving each code. This allowed comparisons to be made between delight reactions and less strong positive appraisals on the basis of the reaction types, stimulus properties, the cognitive and affective nature of the appeal process and the consequent experience of the customer. The same comparisons could also be made between reactions taking place in a static evaluation context and those taking place during test-drives.

This chapter, and hence the DS, ended with differentiation of the strongest positive appraisal reactions from the least positive on the basis of the modelled appraisal process. The delight reaction and its antecedents were shown to be context specific. Delight reactions were more often global judgements than less positive appraisals. Delight reactions were affectively-broad during dynamic product evaluation and affectively-narrow during static product evaluation.

The progression of the theoretical induction through the qualitative analysis resulted in the presentation of a descriptive model of positive appraisal reactions during pre-purchase car evaluation. This model is a structural representation of the reactions analysed, including customer delight, within the product evaluation contexts studied.

Chapter 7

Discussion of the research findings and their contribution

Aim

To present the theoretical contributions of the research framed in terms of the existing literature.

7.0 Chapter Summary

This chapter takes the findings of the Descriptive Study (DS) and integrates them with the findings of the Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS) in the presentation of the emergent theory of customer delight during pre-purchase product evaluation. Throughout the thesis the author has demonstrated the emergence of this theory and its grounding in the analysis of the data collected. This context-bound theory will now be compared with the existing literature and the contribution to knowledge it makes will be discussed.

7.1 Research objectives and questions

The research objectives and questions addressed by this research were generated on the basis of the literature review (presented in Chapter 2). The importance placed in the achievement of customer delight by practitioners in both product and service sectors was highlighted and the business strategies proposed for its achievement were summarised. The literature concerning the nature and roles of consumption emotions was presented and its alignment to two schools of thought was discussed. The Affective paradigm emphasises the primacy and importance of feeling states in general within consumption situations such as product choice. In contrast the Cognitive paradigm emphasises the cognitive basis of specific consumption emotions such as satisfaction and delight and their impact on indicators of business success. Whilst the Affective perspective has not specifically studied customer delight and its relevance in consumption settings, the Cognitive perspective has modelled this phenomenon in terms of the cognitive consumer and the positive disconfirmation of her expectations. Mirroring this cognitive view, the Manufacturing literature has progressed to the point that the impact of product quality on customer satisfaction levels, including delight, has been modelled in terms of customer expectations. The prevalence of this expectation-based view of customer delight was demonstrated in the prescriptive literature. Here, the predominant routes suggested to product developers for the achievement of customer delight are firstly to give customers exceptional levels of the things they want in products and secondly to surprise customers with the product features that they never knew they needed. Whilst the Cognitive perspective had specifically studied customer delight, it had done so only in service settings. It had adopted definitions of delight that allowed the measurement of its predefined components; surprise, expectation disconfirmation, positive affect and intention to repurchase, without first investigating its nature in consumption settings. Furthermore, the Manufacturing literature had modelled the product-basis of delight by seeking customers' responses to the presence or absence of researcher-defined product features. The literature contained no investigations into the naturalistic occurrence of customer delight and its product-basis, and none that had sought to identify the customer's perspective of this consumption emotion. The objectives of this research were therefore framed as follows;

- *explore the nature of customer delight reactions during the evaluation of tangible products;*
- *identify and describe the antecedents of customer delight reactions in terms of the product characteristics that evoke them;*
- *define delight from the customer's perspective, rather than on the basis of existing theory; and*
- *comment upon the appropriateness of the industrial approaches proposed for achieving customer delight.*

These research objectives guided the development of a phenomenological case study methodology (described in Chapter 3). The case selected for study was the pre-purchase evaluation of cars and a multi-method approach was designed to answer the eight research questions. Answers to these questions provided by this research are now presented.

1. How do products delight customers?

Five product-based routes to delight have been identified. In support of the Kano Model of product quality, (Kano, 1995), products can contain unexpected features that answer latent needs and delight the customer. Products also delight the customer when they contain unexpected levels of desirable scalar qualities. Unaccounted for by Kano, products can also delight when certain scalar qualities are optimised rather than maximised. It is the perception of these qualities as 'just right' that delights the customer, not the judgement that they are 'better than expected'. Contrary to the Kano model features that are expected in the product can delight when they are delivered in unexpected ways. Finally products can delight customers at the level of the whole. This route to delight is characterised by customers citing multiple product attributes as the basis of a single delight reaction or by customers reporting a purely holistic appraisal.

2. Do 'delighter' features exist in products?

Individual product attributes and features can evoke customer delight. However many delight reactions are the result of global product appraisals where the customer cannot assign their delight to an individual product feature.

3. Is there a pre-purchase role for customer delight?

Delight was observed in a naturalistic pre-purchase consumption setting. Here, the delight reaction was much less frequent than weaker positive appraisal reactions. The research findings suggest that customer delight can be considered as a form of interpersonal communication, supporting the proposal that delighted customers can become advocates of the products they are delighted by. Delighted customers also demonstrated extended attention to the product feature that delighted them. Only limited evidence of the reaction's influence on other marketing variables was found. The majority of delight reactions were fleeting and delight was observed in product appraisals that, overall, had an indifferent outcome. Few delighted customers studied here demonstrated intention to purchase the product.

4. Are functional innovations and exceeded expectations the only routes to delight?

Although these were identified as frequent bases of customer delight reactions others could not be explained in terms of exceeded expectations and unexpected functionality. Expectation confirmation was the basis of several customer delight reactions across research settings, as was the perception of the product as 'just

right'. These routes to delight also rarely acted in isolation. The reader is referred to Question 1 above.

5. What does customer defined delight look like?

Naturalistic customer delight, as studied here in pre-purchase settings, was characterised by several observable behaviours. The positive affective nature of the reaction was demonstrated by smiling, laughing and the making of favourable comments and exclamations. Delighted customers demonstrated arousal not only via their exclamations but also through unconscious fidgeting and hand gestures. Delighted customers also exhibited approach behaviours and paid extended or repeated attention to the antecedent of their reaction, frequently demonstrating it to others. In contrast to the existing theoretical propositions delighted customers reported a cognitively diverse reaction. During static evaluation customer delight was reported to be affectively narrow, usually constituting surprising pleasure. However in a dynamic evaluation setting reports of delight included a greater range of affects including high pleasure and low arousal.

6. Is the disconfirmation of expectations always a component of customer delight during product evaluation?

The data collected in this research cannot rule out the disconfirmation of expectations occurring at a pre-conscious level during perception and sensation. As such it may have influenced the salience of product attributes reported as evoking delight reactions. However, the data do show that the conscious cognitive activity of comparing a product with prior expectations is not always a component of the delight reaction.

7. What is the nature of the affective and cognitive components of delight?

Three types of positive affect were identified as frequent components of the delight reaction; feelings towards the product, feelings made up of pleasure and arousal, and feelings resulting from anxiety reduction or ego support. Cognitive activities frequently associated with the delight reaction were; judgement making, expectation congruency and setting, inference making, and characterisations. Delighted customers also engaged in cognitive activities which have been labelled here as projections. Characteristic of this group of cognitions is the customer imagining, fantasising or dreaming about their use of the product that delights them.

8. What behaviours are associated with customer delight?

The reader is referred to Question 5 above.

7.2 The six key contributions of this research

The following sections will outline the six key contributions that this research has made to our knowledge and understanding of product-based customer delight. The emergent theory is discussed in terms of the existing literature and the modelled phenomenology of customer delight is grounded in the empirical findings of this Case Study.

7.2.1 Integrated theory generation

This research has succeeded in integrating two previously separate streams of enquiry that consider the product-basis of customer delight.

The findings of the current research support previous conceptualisations of customer delight and its product-basis. Across all the research methods used delight reactions were analysed in terms of the stimuli that evoked them, and their affective, cognitive and behavioural nature. In the Descriptive Study (DS) participants often reported delight, and in the Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS) were observed experiencing it, when a product exceeded their expectations, either through the provision of surprising levels of what they wanted or the inclusion of features that they had not foreseen. In the DS, the most positive reactions to products captured were indeed often characterised by surprise, the disconfirmation of expectations, and indicators of positive affect. In both the EPS and the DS delighted participants made overt statements of intention and overall judgements of the product based on their reaction to only part of it. In the EPS delighted participants nearly always drew the attention of others to the product, thus supporting the proposed importance of the reaction.

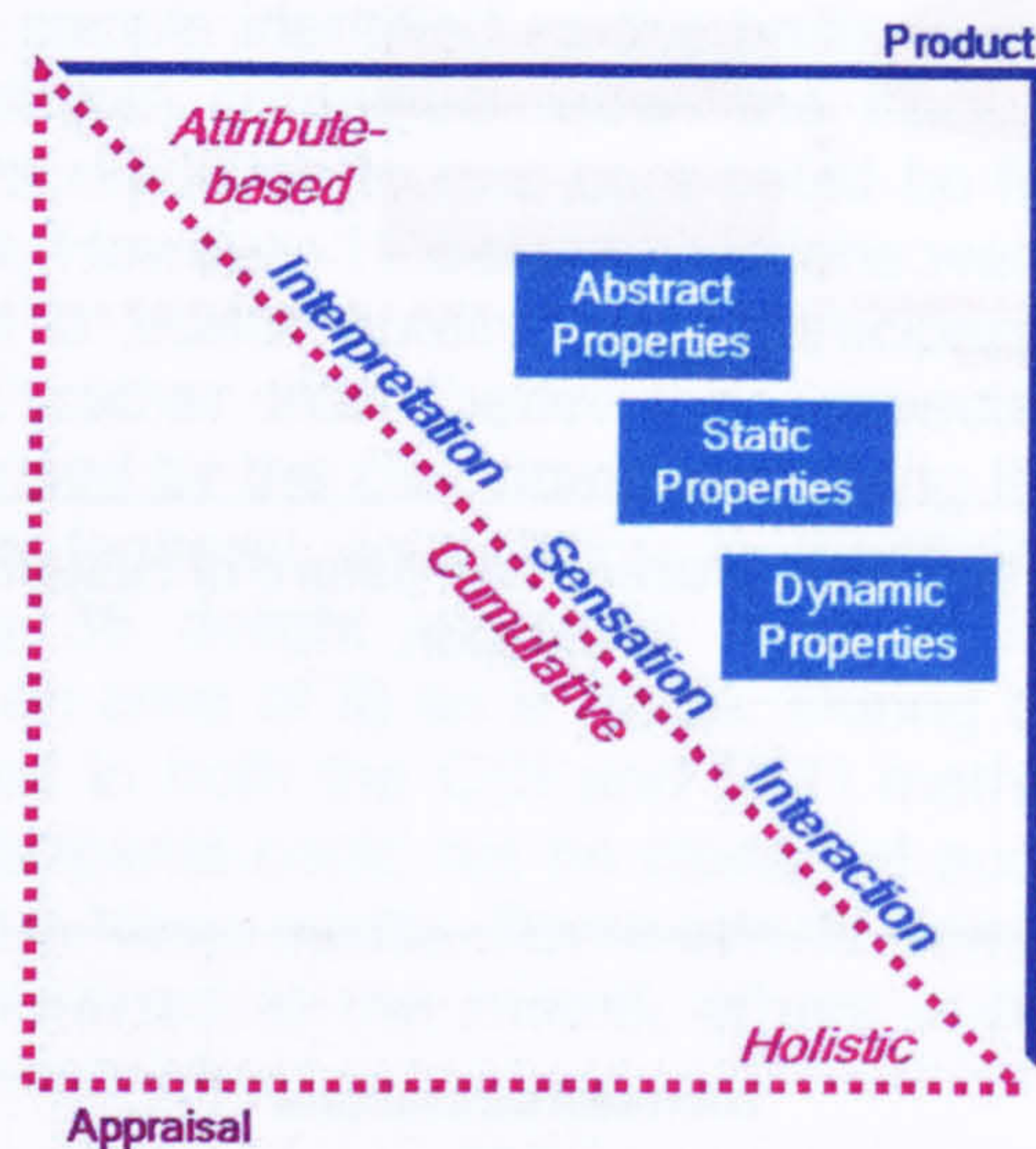
The product stimuli that people identified as the basis of their delight reactions also support the basic constructs contained within the Kano Model. During the CCI method 48 of 118 delight reactions to four cars could be framed as Kano Linear or Kano Attractive Qualities. However 11 delight reactions were based upon the appeal of an optimum level of a scalar quality, with participants indicating that it was perceived as 'just right' rather than 'better than expected'. A further 23 delight reactions were characterised by the participant identifying the unexpected delivery of otherwise typical vehicle features. In addition to these 82 attribute-based delight reactions the remaining 36 delight reactions reported in the CCI were overall reactions to the car (or an area of it) as a whole. During the qualitative analysis of delight reactions collected in both the CCI and SRD methods, the appeal of many stimuli described by participants could not be classified according to a single quality type as represented in the Kano model. Some stimuli demonstrated one or more of the routes to delight contained in the model, others appealed to participants via routes that it could not account for.

Delight was also observed and reported as a reaction to different levels of the product, from the specific feature, via cumulative reactions, to its holistic appeal. The findings of the research resulted in the development of descriptive theory, grounded in the context of the investigation. This theory was formalised as an enhancement and reframing of the Kano Model and a descriptive model of diverse customer delight reactions and their antecedents during pre-purchase vehicle evaluation. This research has therefore achieved the integration of the two theoretical standpoints at the point of product evaluation. The overall appraisal process and nature of the delight reaction has been modelled and the Kano Model, which only considers the product basis of delight and not the nature of this reaction, has been extended to incorporate the findings of this research. This extension of the model includes the three product-based routes to customer delight that had been empirically observed but previously unaccounted for; the distinctive delivery of Basic Qualities; Optimised rather than maximised Scalar Qualities; and the Holistic appeal of the product. The two models are presented below. The remaining contributions of this research are then presented in terms of the key findings that underlie this emergent theory.

7.2.2 Customer Delight - its product basis

The product-based antecedents of customer delight are diverse and their impact is rarely the result of a single identifiable route of appeal.

Delight reactions are more often the result of holistic appraisals than less positive product evaluations



The antecedents of the delight reactions reported by participants in the DS, and those identified in the EPS through the observations of a naturalistic pre-purchase consumption setting, have been modelled on a continuum from the specific to the global¹. During the MCO method, of 45 delight reactions identified in visitors to a single car: 38% were to the same specific vehicle attribute, 24% were global reactions to the car as a whole, and 13% were cumulative reactions to many attributes². In the qualitative analysis of the reports of participants in the DS, the antecedents of reactions were studied in more detail, revealing a greater range of reaction types. The most frequent type of positive appraisal reaction reported, was the narrow appeal of a specific vehicle attribute. However the data suggested a greater shift in the frequencies of reactions types towards the global end of the continuum in the D reactions, compared to the L reactions³. This trend was observed across the static and dynamic evaluation settings studied. Despite the research's bias towards identifying the attribute basis of customer delight, this trend towards holistic product appeal as the basis of delight reactions was supported in the quantitative analysis of responses in the SRD method. Participants' responses to eight coding questions asking them what factors played a role in the appeal of the product, included the trend that those reporting stronger reactions tended to cite more factors underlying the products appeal⁴.

¹ The model shows the attribute-based specific end of this continuum, the Cumulative mid point, and the Holistic global end.

² See Chapter 4, Page 117.

³ D reactions were the 368 strongest appraisal reactions reported in the descriptive study, and L reactions were the 366 least positive appraisal reactions reported.

⁴ See Chapter 5, Page 158.

The qualitative analysis of the reports of 66 participants reporting delight reactions in the DS, revealed three categories of property identified as the antecedents of positive product appraisal. The verbatim collected included participants identifying static, dynamic and abstract product properties, and their combinations, as the basis of positive appraisal reactions both strong and weak. Abstract properties were the result of participants' interpretation of the product, dynamic properties required the participant's interaction with the product, whilst static properties could appeal on a purely sensory basis. The same verbatim indicates that the sensory basis of the product's appeal depends on the type of evaluation taking place: static evaluation is predominantly appearance based, however during dynamic evaluation, participants reported a broader sensory basis to the product's appeal. The DS collected descriptions of 1283 positive appraisal reactions and their product antecedents. The patterns of product properties that participants identified as the basis of appeal were similar in both D and L reactions and across evaluation settings. The interpretation of the cars' 'attention to detail', an abstract property of the product, was more frequently the antecedent of a delight reaction than a less positive appraisal across evaluation settings. Other product properties frequently cited as antecedents of positive appraisals were; the operation and movement of features, the judged user-friendliness, function performed by a feature and static properties contributing to the appearance of the cars. Also common in reaction descriptions during static evaluation was judged co-ordination or integration in the product, again indicative of its holistic appeal.

Existing literature

The diversity of product stimuli identified as the basis of the appraisal reactions studied, and their similarity across reaction strengths, supports the Appraisal Theory view that emotional judgements reflect the nature of the judge rather than the nature of the product, (Bagozzi et al, 1999 and Elliot, 1998). Product-based stimuli do not fall into the category of survival relevant situations recognised as the antecedents and functional domain of emotions by Psychologists of the Psychoevolutionary School (e.g. Plutchik, 1980). However the stimulus basis of emotion is recognised by Psychoevolutionists and is fundamental to Cognitive Psychology's understanding of emotional phenomena (e.g. Arnold, 1960 and Lazarus et al, 1970). The identification of a bias towards holistic evaluation in delight reactions supports the Affective Choice Mode proposed by Mittal, (1988), whereby hedonic products are chosen on the basis of feelings evoked via their holistic appraisal. However, the findings do illustrate that holistic appraisal is not the only way in which hedonic products evoke feeling states. Both pre-existing theories of customer delight are inherently reductionist in terms of the antecedents of delight reactions that they identify. Oliver, (1992) and Oliver and Westbrook, (1993), both endeavoured to identify the attribute basis of expectation disconfirmation in car owners, despite viewing customer delight as an enduring phenomenon associated with cumulative satisfaction. The findings of these two pieces of research were contradictory with the former identifying positive feeling states as the result of dynamic properties experienced during ownership, and the later identifying that delight was the result of the aesthetics of cars. The Kano methodology maps researcher-defined product attributes according to customers' expectations inferred from responses to two questions considering the presence and absence of the feature in the product. Neither theory accounts for the holistic appeal of products, whilst the Kano methodology creates mutually exclusive categories of features that do not match the customer's perspective of product appeal. The model below represents the four distinct types of attribute appeal observed in this research and incorporates the holistic appeal of the product or attribute via multiples of these. Indicators of all the routes to customer delight were evident in the participant verbatim

in the DS and the observations of the EPS and the model demonstrates the attribute and holistic basis of customer delight.

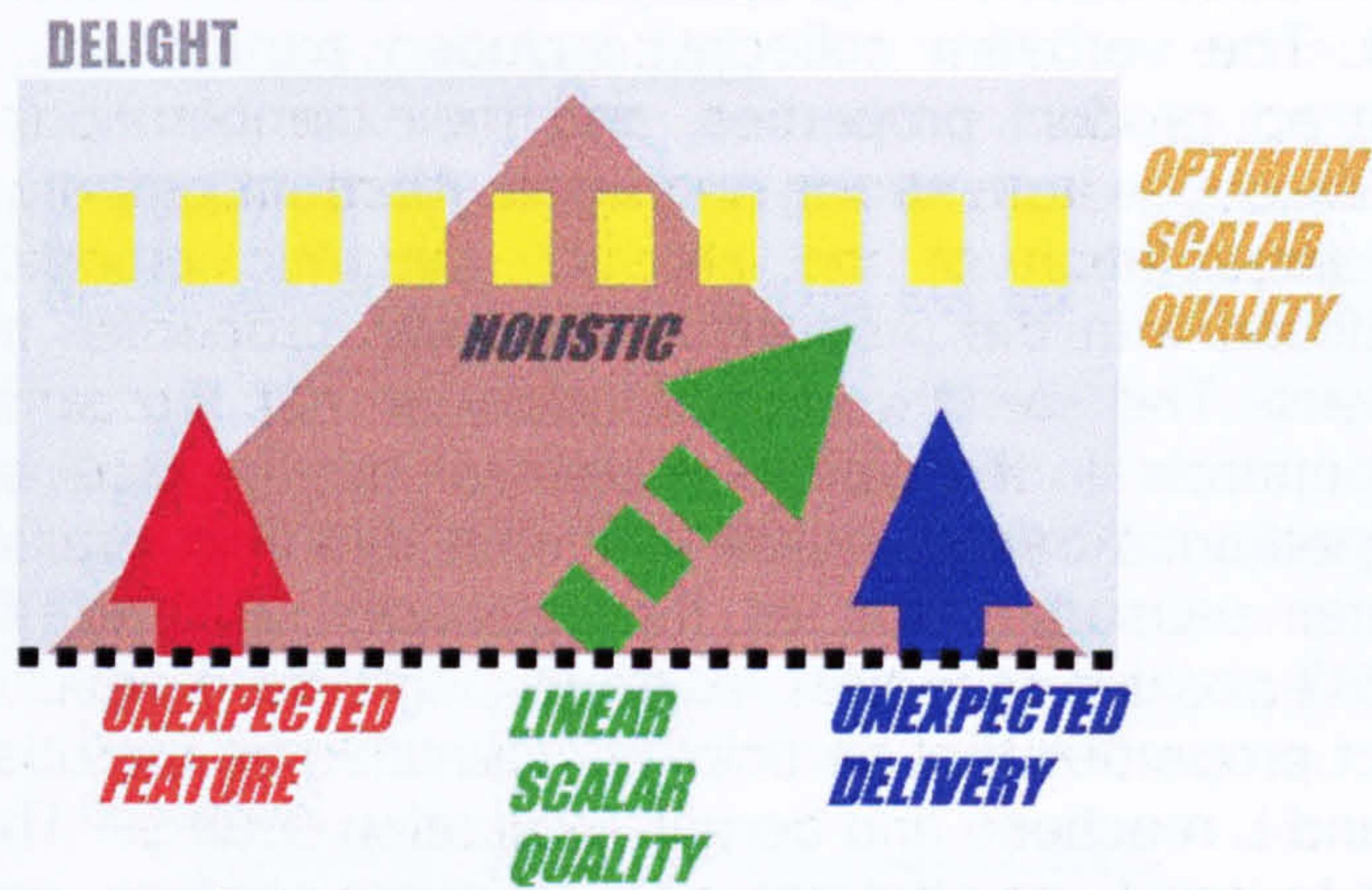
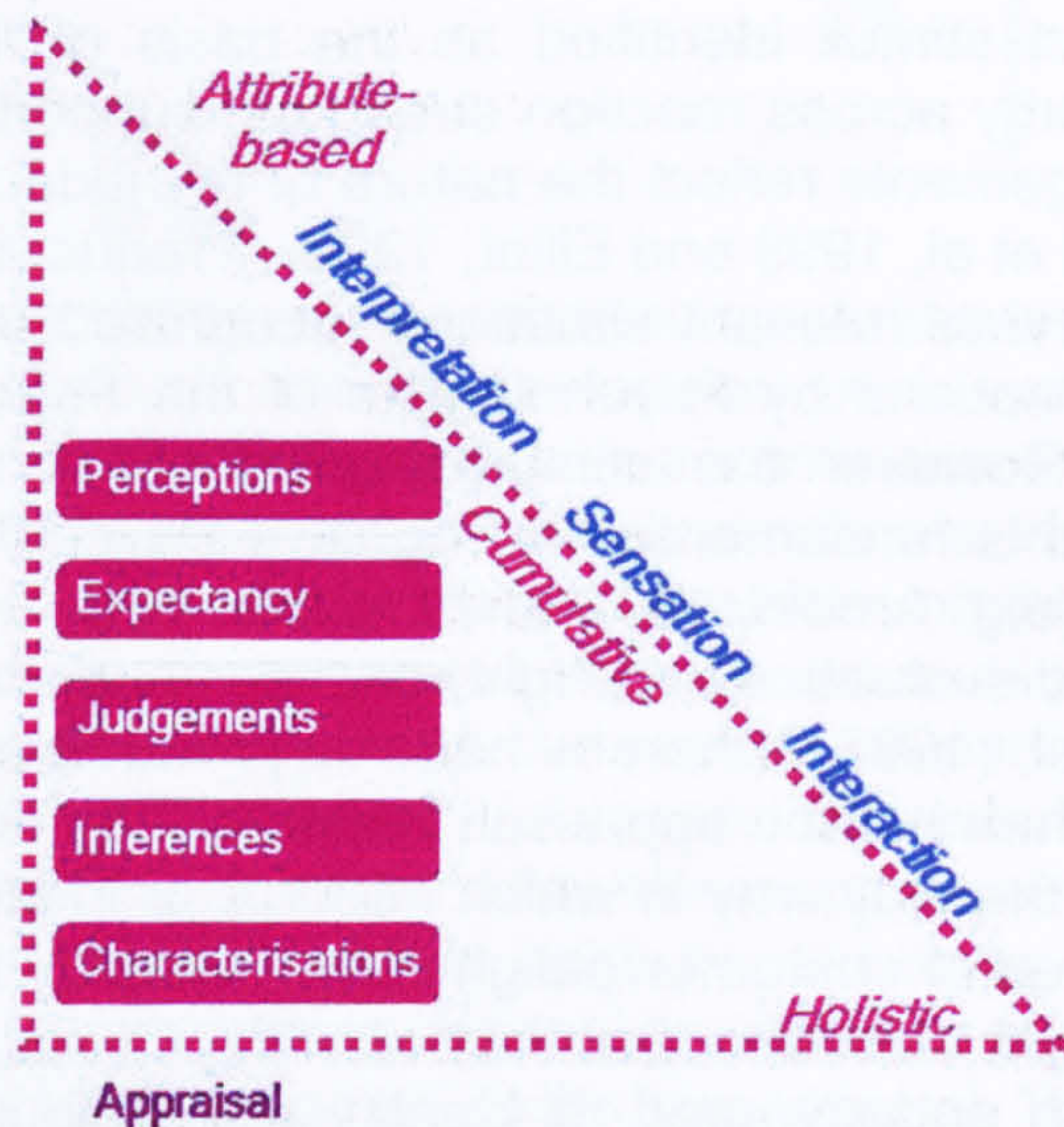


Figure 7.5: Product appeal via four attribute-based routes and their potential to delight the customer alone or in combination via holistic appeal

7.2.3 Customer Delight - cognitive diversity and complexity

The cognitive components of customer delight reactions are diverse and rarely limited to the positive disconfirmation of expectations.



In the MCO method, 23 of 45 delight reactions observed included the customer's overt expression of surprise. In the CCI data, 72% of D reactions and in the SRD data, 67% of D reactions were coded by participants as including surprise. The data did indeed suggest that delight reactions more often included feelings of surprise than less positive product appraisals. Furthermore, approximately 1 in every 4 descriptions of delight reactions collected in the DS contained verbatim that could be interpreted in terms of the conscious disconfirmation of expectations. However, participants' reaction descriptions included indicators of many other cognitive components of product appeal, and the DS data indicate that in approximately 30% of the delight reactions collected, the participant reported no feeling of surprise. In addition to the perceptual processes of sensation, interpretation and interaction discussed above, participants reported positive appraisal reactions resulting from

their perception of the presence or absence of product attributes; extreme scalar levels of product qualities, optimised levels of product qualities, and benefits perceived, plus indicators of the perceptual processes of combination and comparison. Frequencies of these perception types were similar across both strong and weak positive appraisals of the products, the exception to this parity was the 'absence' of a product feature which occurred more frequently in the strongest positive reactions across research contexts and evaluation settings. In addition to the disconfirmation of expectations, positive appraisal reactions to products were occasionally characterised by the confirmation of expectations, the setting of expectations and indicators of customers reacting to the well known or familiar. During the MCO method, 1 in 4 of the delighted visitors to the test-car indicated that they had prior-experience of it and yet they still demonstrated a delight reaction. Whilst some were reacting to changes to the car, the comments of others indicated that the test-car was reinforcing their prior positive appraisal of the car⁵. Although it appeared that conscious expectation disconfirmation was not a pre-requisite of all the delight reactions studied, it cannot be said that this process was not happening at an unconscious level, influencing the salience of product properties for customers.

Participants' reaction descriptions in the DS also included indications of a judgement making process assumed to be cognitive. Judgements of the product as perfect, ultimate or the best were frequently present in the strongest reactions and almost completely absent from the weakest reactions. Judgements of novelty in the participant verbatim distinguished the strongest reactions only in the dynamic product evaluation setting. Judgements of the product as distinctive or different had similar frequencies in all positive appraisals in static evaluation settings, the distinction in this indicator was context based and not strength of reaction based. These findings were supported through the quantitative analysis of participants' responses to a coding question citing the appeal of the product due to 'novelty' in both the CCI and SRD data.

Participants' reaction descriptions in the DS also demonstrated a role for the making of inferences or assumptions during the positive appraisal of products. Across all strengths of positive product appraisal, the most frequent inference type was an assumption of the intelligence or ingenuity of the organisation responsible for the product. Other inference types across reaction strengths and evaluation settings, included assumptions of quality and presumptions of performance. Although the trends were marginal, participants' reaction descriptions suggested that halo effects - where the participant made an inference about the whole product on the basis of a specific attribute - were more frequent in delight reactions than less positive appraisals.

Participant reaction descriptions in the DS demonstrated a role for the cognitive process of characterising the reaction stimulus in a number of ways. The participant verbatim collected suggests that this characterisation process was more frequent in delight reactions compared to less positive product appraisals. There were four ways in which delighted participants characterised products; as having favourable physical, temporal, animistic and affective characteristics. The importance of affective characterisation was further demonstrated by the strongest trend found in the quantitative SRD data. Participants coded the product's appeal at the emotional level in 85% of D reactions compared to only 35% of L reactions.

⁵ See Chapter 4, page 117.

The Existing Literature

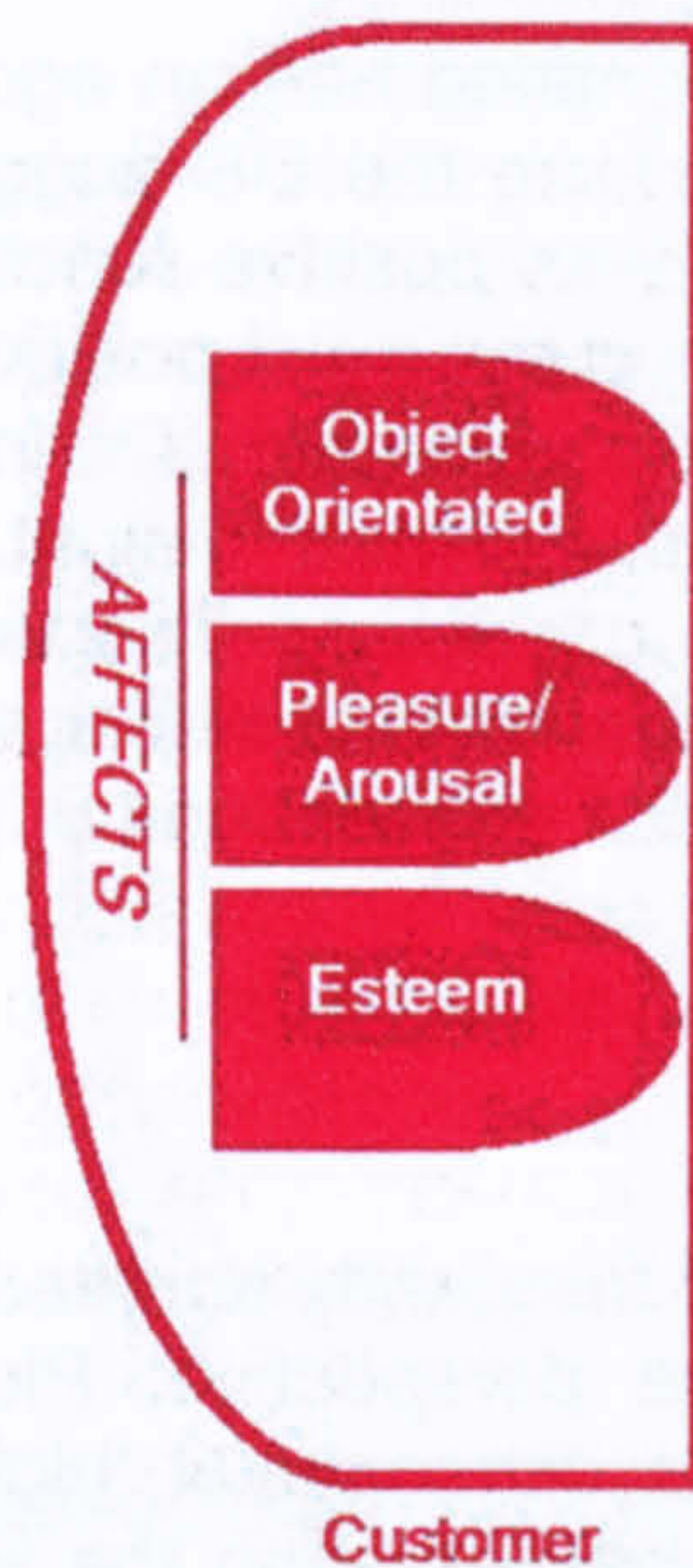
Oliver et al, (1997) present findings they claim demonstrate that conscious expectation disconfirmation is the causal basis of customer delight. Oliver et al suggest that there may be other routes to surprising pleasure, but acknowledge that their methods are not sensitive to these, as they were designed to establish disconfirmation's role. Anderson and Sullivan et al, (1993) questioned the role of expectation disconfirmation having observed a positive correlation between customer's reported expectation and satisfaction levels. This research supported a role for expectancy disconfirmation, as proposed by Oliver et al, (1997). However, the data collected also negates their claim of causality. Both the disconfirmation and confirmation of expectations were apparent in the reports of delighted participants which demonstrated a diversity of expectation congruency cognitions and other reference cognitions, thereby refuting the exclusive role of expectation disconfirmation as the cognitive basis of customer delight. The data therefore support the empirical findings of Anderson et al, (1993) and Vanhamme, (2000), who also demonstrate a non-exclusive role for surprise and disconfirmation of expectations in the highest levels of customer satisfaction. Fournier and Mick describe how their participants' expectation levels shifted over time and suggest that this removes the stable reference point that Disconfirmation Theory assumes. Spreng et al, (1996) identified the need to consider Desire Congruency, as well as Expectation Congruency, as a driver for increased customer satisfaction. The participant descriptions in the DS supported this idea. Many of the characterisations, inferences and judgements made by delighted participants can be interpreted in terms of the product delivering what customers desired, resulting in these cognition types. Inferences and judgements can be seen as evidence of cognitive short cuts as proposed by Mittal, (1988) and Garbarino and Edell, (1997) The cognitive diversity of self-reported customer delight reactions has been uncovered and modelled. The roles of conscious expectation disconfirmation, and several other cognitive activities, in the experience of customer delight during product evaluation have been demonstrated.

7.2.4 Customer Delight - context dependant affective-breadth

Three types of affective component have been identified as frequent constituents of customer delight reactions.

Customer delight reactions occurring during static product evaluation are affectively-narrow.

Customer delight reactions occurring during dynamic product evaluation include a greater diversity of affective states.



Participants' responses to coding questions in the SRD data indicated that the emotional appeal of the product distinguished their delight reactions from their less positive appraisals. As well as the use of affective language to characterise the antecedent of their reaction, participants' reaction descriptions in the DS included many indicators of three types of feeling state experienced by the customer; feelings towards the product, mixtures of pleasure and arousal, and feeling states with proposed self-supporting effects. The DS participant verbatim suggested that delighted customers experience stronger feelings towards the products being evaluated. Feelings of love and impressiveness / awe, were more frequent in the reaction descriptions of delighted participants. Other object-oriented affect types identified across reaction strengths were interest, and desire. In MCO observations, indicators of these favourable feelings towards the product were also present. 42 out of 45 naturalistic delight reactions included the motorshow visitor making a positive comment about the product. In 31 of these reactions appreciation of the product was demonstrated with an exclamation, and in 36 the delighted customer drew the attention of another person to the object of their approval.

The second type of feeling state identified in both the EPS and DS were affective states that can be considered to vary in terms of the dimensions of pleasure and arousal. Surprise was evident in participant verbatim across both D and L reactions. D reactions were characterised by higher frequencies of feeling states hypothesised to be both high pleasure and high arousal including struck / stunned, and amazement. Context affects were evident; amazement was infrequent during dynamic product evaluation, whilst static evaluation was most frequently characterised in terms of these high pleasure, high arousal feeling states alone. The vocalisations, facial expressions and body language observed in the EPS as characteristic of customer delight reactions corroborate the verbatim collected in the DS. In 33 of the 45 naturalistic delight reactions observed the participant smiled, and in 11 they laughed. As well as these demonstrations of pleasure, 25 reactions included fidgeting suggesting arousal. In contrast, the dynamic evaluation setting studied in the DS evoked reports of delight reactions that included a wider range of pleasure/arousal based feeling states. These included high pleasure / lower arousal feeling states such as relaxed, happiness and playfulness. The DS data suggest that the D reactions analysed were indeed delight-like in terms of the 'surprising pleasure' and 'aroused joy' definitions of the phenomenon. Whilst surprise occurred across positive reactions both strong and weak, pleasure was more frequent in reactions reported as delight.

The third type of affective state identified had an ego-supporting or anxiety-reducing esteem based function. The data from the DS suggests that feelings of superiority distinguish delight reactions from less positive reactions. Similarly feelings of being included or understood distinguished the most positive product appraisals across the research settings, both static and dynamic. During dynamic product evaluation feelings of security or safety distinguished delight reactions. This finding further increased the affective-breadth of delight reactions reported in the dynamic evaluation context. Across both consumption settings feelings of being in control or at ease occur frequently in participants' descriptions of positive product appraisals both D and L.

Existing Literature

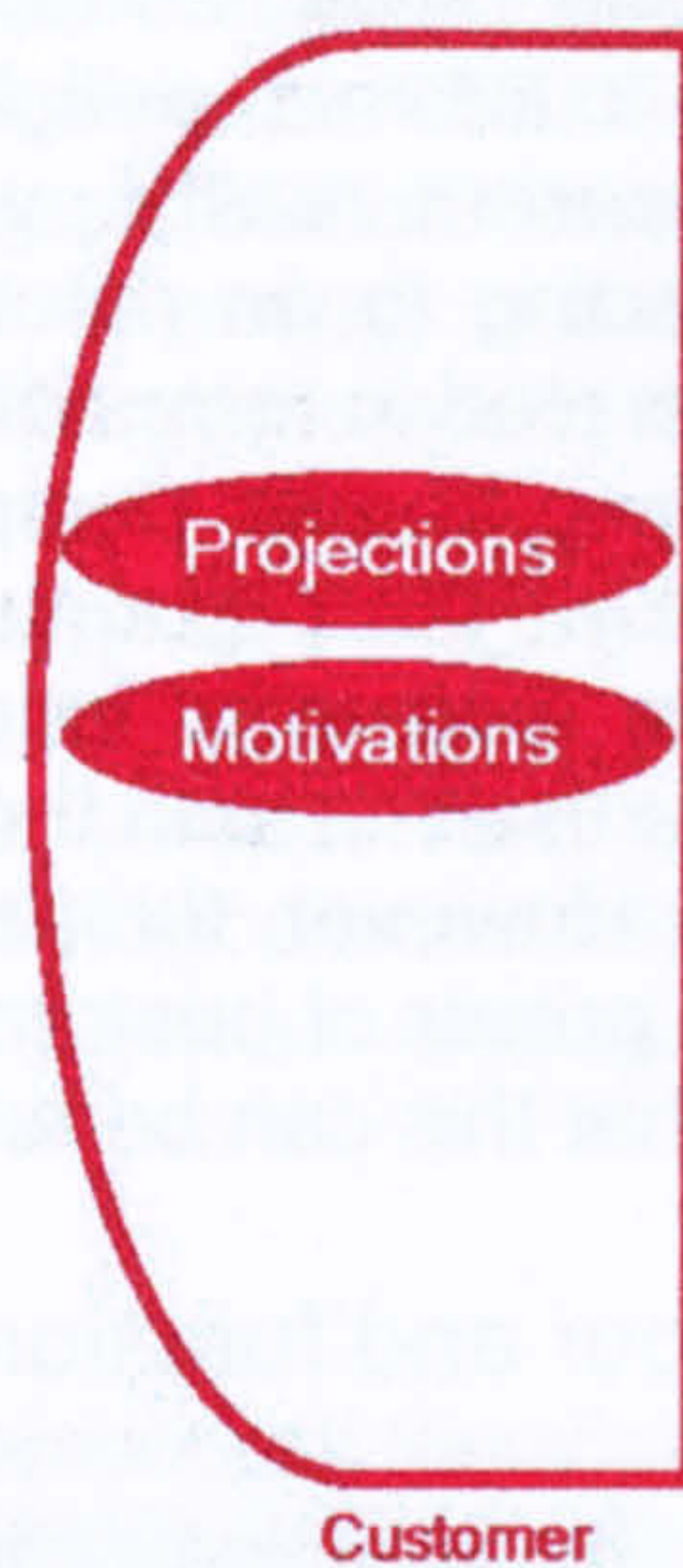
Two definitions of delight are most frequently adopted from Psychology by Consumer Researchers taking the Cognitive perspective; Plutchik's taxonomical 'surprising pleasure' and Russell and Izard's dimensional 'high joy high arousal'. Oliver and Westbrook, (1991), using scales incorporating the terms, identified higher levels of Joy, Surprise and Interest in participants reporting the highest levels of satisfaction. Oliver, (1992), again using measurement scales, identified enjoyment attributed to the dynamic qualities of cars. Oliver and Mano, (1993), using similar methods, identified high levels of arousal in subjects' evaluation of products categorised as hedonic⁶. In the specific study of customer delight, the feeling states modelled and measured are positive affect, arousal and surprise, (Oliver et al, 1997). In a phenomenological investigation into customer satisfaction, Fournier and Mick, (1999) propose both satisfaction-as-awe and satisfaction-as-novelty as relevant early consumption stage forms of the phenomenon. In a critique of Disconfirmation Theory, Schnieder and Bowen, (1999), argue that customer delight and outrage are better thought of in terms of people's needs for security, justice and self-esteem. These identified affects are also indicative of the personal relevance of emotions proposed by Appraisal Theory, (Bagozzi et al, 1999 and Fijda, 1988)

This research has empirically identified indicators of numerous affect types in self-reported customer delight reactions. The reactions studied match the simple 'high joy high arousal' and 'surprising pleasure' definitions of delight. Suggestions incorporating awe and esteem-based feelings have been empirically supported. The diversity of the feeling states occurring in the most positive product evaluations has been uncovered and modelled.

7.2.5 Customer Delight - motivations, projections and identification

Delight reactions often contain additional experiences indicative of the customer's identification with the product.

⁶ Including cars.



In addition to the cognitions associated with the product's appeal, participants' reaction descriptions during the DS included indicators for two additional mental processes that could be considered cognitions. The first type, more common in delight reactions than less positive product appraisals, were projections. The participant verbatim suggested that this type of mental process involved the customer identifying the personal relevance of the product. Occurring more frequently in descriptions of D reactions than L reactions, were examples of participants engaged in imagining or day-dreaming about their use of the product. This trend was evident across research methods and evaluation settings. The same evidence was found for the occurrence of participant verbatim indicating the customer recognised the product as suiting them. Positive product appraisal reactions, both D and L, included verbatim indicating that the participant recognised that the product would fulfil a need. When participants were explaining their reactions to an interviewer in the CCI method, their recognition that the product would suit others occurred more frequently in descriptions of D reactions compared to L reactions.

The second mental process evident in participants' descriptions of delight reactions were motivations. During the EPS a characteristic behaviour associated with the majority of overt delight reactions had been the participant's attraction or approach towards the product stimulus evoking their reaction. In the DS, the frequency with which descriptions of D reactions included verbatim indicating that the customer was attracted or drawn towards the product, was greater than in those of L reactions, across research settings. When an interviewer was present, more behavioural information seems to have been collected and these reaction descriptions included a higher frequency of indicators for the participant's repeated attention to the antecedent of their reaction, as had been observed in the EPS.

Existing literature

Motivation and movement is implicit in the word emotion and its Latin route - *emovere*, (Hoad, 1996). The Psychoevolutionary School of Psychology considers all emotions to serve evolutionary survival functions because they prepare or stimulate an animal for action, (Plutchik, 1980). This framing of emotions, including delight, makes explicit their motivational power and personal relevance. It is on exactly these grounds that customer delight has become a phenomenon of interest to Consumer Researchers and Business practitioners. Parties from both camps are interested in the emotional appeal of products and services because they wish to understand and influence customer behaviour. Whilst researchers have tried to measure and model customer delight's impact of business indicators (Jones and Sasser, 1995, Oliver et

al, 1997, Estelami, 2000 and Rust and Oliver, 2000) mixed results have been found. The identification of projections in customer delight reactions can be seen as a manifestation of Frijda's law of 'apparent reality', where imagination increases the realism of the evaluation setting leading to an emotional reaction (Frijda, 1988 and Elliot, 1998). They can also be interpreted in terms of the symbolic meaning of goods, (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). According to this perspective on consumption people partially define themselves in terms of the products they buy. Projections are also indicative of the self-focus hypothesised in emotion-driven choice and Appraisal Theory whereby people evaluate themselves with the product rather than the product itself, (Mittal, 1988 and Elliot, 1998). However, this research has not studied a choice situation. Indications of the emotive power of customer delight have been uncovered but the data does not demonstrate that this can be relied upon.

7.2.6 Customer Delight - behaviour and function

Customer delight reactions are characterised by specific types of observable behaviour.

Customer delight reactions are short-lived in the contexts studied.

Observable customer delight is a form of interpersonal communication.



Delight reactions observed in the naturalistic EPS research setting, support the occurrence of motivational experiences in delighted customers. In 28 of the 45 delight reactions identified, the customer touched the antecedent of their reaction. In 26 of the delight reactions the participant demonstrated repeated or prolonged attention to the antecedent, and in 80% of the delight reactions observed the customer demonstrated the antecedent of their reaction to another person. During the EPS, 23 delight reactions identified were brief and 22 were more enduring⁷, 18 occurred immediately after the customer had entered the car. Ten of the delighted customers made a comment indicating intention to buy or consider the car, three of whom had

⁷ 'Enduring' must be considered a relative term. The durations of customers' visits to the test car-in the EPS were not measured for the sake of analysis time. The motorshow visitor spending the longest time in the test-car was an elderly gentleman taking the weight off his feet for approximately 25 minutes.

already owned or driven the same model. Similar comments were infrequent in reaction descriptions collected during the DS. As described above, the observable facial expressions and body language associated with delight reactions in the EPS (including smiling, laughing and fidgeting) provided indicators of internal affective states identified subsequently in the participant verbatim collected in the DS.

The observation of the delight reaction during the EPS illustrated a potential function of delight. The overt behavioural components of delight reactions in the EPS, only became apparent once another person had arrived in the car. The process of demonstrating one's delight to another person was the only observable component of the reaction, other than repeated attention and approach behaviour.

Existing Literature

Bridges, (1932), described the emotional development of Canadian orphans, and in the process, the behavioural components of what she labelled 'delight'. Included in the characteristic behaviours she identified were; loud cries and spasmodically kicking legs, similar to components identified here in adults. Psychoevolutionists hypothesise an approach function for delight, (Plutchik, 1980). Researchers and business practitioners frame and define delight in terms of behaviours such as: intention to recommend, (McNealy, 1994, Albro, 1999 and Schneider and Bowen, 1999) intention to purchase, (Oliver et al, 1997) loyalty, (Anderson et al, 1993) and choice behaviour, (Garbarino and Edell, 1997). In the pre-purchase consumption settings studied here the behaviour of the delighted customers is limited by the attitude to behaviour debate. The data collected cannot be used to causally link customer delight with intention to purchase or loyalty. However, the findings of the EPS suggest that delighted customers will almost certainly demonstrate their delight to other people. Those that see word of mouth recommendation as a component of delight by definition, have been supported by the EPS. Customer delight was observed during the EPS only as a form of interpersonal communication or demonstration.⁸ The immediacy of the delight reactions captured during the EPS supports the primacy of affect, (Zajonc, 1980) and the Affective Choice Mode, (Mittal, 1988). Indeed come delight reactions were made immediately after entering the vehicle, and several of these were holistic reactions to the car. However, contrary to the proposed mechanism of Affective Choice Mode several of these immediate reactions were focussed on individual product attributes such as the gear stick.

7.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the contributions to knowledge made by this research. The emergent theory has been presented and discussed in terms of the existing literature. The two models representing this integrated theory account for the diversity of customer delight reactions observed and their product basis. The affective-breadth and cognitive diversity of customer delight reactions have been demonstrated in the context of product evaluation. Characteristic behaviours, motivations and processes of identification associated with the delight reaction have been identified. The research findings suggest that efforts to delight customers by giving them more than they expect, both of what they want and the things they never new they needed, may be only partially effective. Products do delight people by doing surprising or unexpected things and when they are much better than expected in terms of a scalar quality. However, the positive disconfirmation of expectations is only one of many cognitive processes that can occur during the experience of delight. Products delight customers in complex, multifaceted ways and not merely by having

⁸ The SRD method took this for granted, delight is unobservable without communication.

new features and exceptional levels of desirable qualities. Customers are delighted when products appeal to them holistically, when they convey intelligence and when they deliver something 'just right'. Products, and their smallest details, can make people feel playful, superior, secure, understood and in awe. And delighted customers are so moved by products that they cannot help telling others about them. The next chapter concludes this thesis by summarising the research and its contribution to knowledge. Recommendations for both future research and practice are submitted and the limitations of the research are discussed.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

Aim

To provide a summary of the thesis as a whole, demonstrating the contribution to knowledge it makes and suggesting directions for future research.

8.0 Chapter summary

Chapters 4 and 5 presented the two stages of this research, the Exploratory Pilot Study (EPS) and the Descriptive Study (DS). Chapter 6 presented the synthesis of a model of customer delight during product evaluation through the qualitative analysis of the data collected. Chapter 7 then brought the two stages of the research together by framing the emergent grounded theory of customer delight in terms of the existing literature. This chapter concludes the thesis. The main findings are summarised, a clear statement of the research's novelty and contribution to knowledge is made, and the author presents his view of the strengths and weaknesses of his approach. The chapter will conclude with suggestions for future research and recommendations for practitioners striving to delight their customers.

The EPS (described in Chapter 4) was used to explore the case and identify the naturalistic occurrence of customer delight, and the observable behaviours associated with it. Three methods were used; Interviews and two Observation methods. Car dealers and owners were interviewed to provide a background understanding of the choice and consumption of this product. The car evaluation process used by 918 motorshow visitors was observed and 66 of these were identified as being delighted. 45 naturally occurring delight reactions were captured on video and their behavioural components and product-basis were analysed in detail. The DS (described in Chapter 5) then used two self-report methods to uncover the customer's experience of the delight reaction in two distinct product evaluation settings; static and dynamic evaluation. 16 participants were interviewed whilst evaluating cars and 50 participants completed a self-report diary. The data collection formats used allowed the comparison between 368 delight reactions and the 366 weakest positive appraisal reactions across the two evaluation contexts studied.

The descriptions of delight reactions collected during the DS were analysed in terms of the affective, behavioural, and cognitive components and their basis in the product (reported in Chapter 6). The result of this analysis process was the author's proposal of an integrated model of customer delight and an extension of the prevailing model of customer satisfaction found in the Manufacturing literature. These models, and the emergent theory underpinning them, were then framed in terms of the existing literature (presented in Chapter 7).

8.1 Contributions of the thesis

The specific contributions made by this work will now be presented in terms of the novelty of the approach used and the new knowledge that it has generated. The prime contribution of this thesis is the integration of our empirical understanding of the nature and diversity of customer delight and its product basis. Whilst existing

expectation-based models of delight are supported by this research they are also built upon and supplemented with new insights into this reaction.

8.1.1 Novelty

Customer delight has only recently become the specific subject of empirical inquiry in the applied fields of Manufacturing, Consumer Research and Marketing. As a subjective internal phenomenon it has previously only been studied in terms of its observable effects, measures of its proposed components and the product qualities that can evoke it. Until now its defining nature has either been assumed or borrowed from other non-applied fields, without becoming the focus of investigation itself.

- To date, delight (its antecedents, its nature and its effects) have been mathematically modelled using quantitative measures. In contrast to these quantitative approaches, this thesis has adopted a predominantly qualitative phenomenological approach to investigate the nature and diversity of this consumption emotion.
- Whilst existing studies into the nature of the customer delight reaction have tested and extended existing theory (the Disconfirmation theory of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction) the aim of this research was the generation of new insights outside the constraints of existing theoretical standpoints.
- Previous work has also tended to study or infer delight from subjects' responses to stimuli provided by the researcher. This thesis aimed to redress this practitioner bias by seeking the customer's view of their own delight reactions. As such the antecedents of delight studied here were those identified by the person experiencing the reaction. Likewise, rather than analysing subject's ratings of their memory of it, the nature of delight was studied here by capturing it as it occurred naturalistically, via both observation and self-report mechanism.
- The scope of this thesis is also novel. Previously delight has been modelled as a post-purchase phenomenon within the context of service consumption. This research however, has specifically focused on a previously neglected pre-purchase product consumption context.

This thesis therefore represents the first attempt to study the phenomenology of customer delight within a specific product consumption context. The insights captured and their incorporation into theory are grounded in the contexts within which the research was conducted.

8.1.2. Contribution to knowledge

The adoption of a new approach to investigate customer delight during product-evaluation has resulted in the following contributions to our knowledge;

- An integrated theory describing customer delight has been proposed and is grounded in the contexts studied. This theory is integrated in terms of its consideration of the Affective, Behavioural and Cognitive nature of customer delight and its product-basis. The theory is presented in the form of two models that link the previously separate Consumer Research and Manufacturing literatures.
- The attribute and holistic bases of product appeal have been empirically identified from the customer's perspective. Five product based routes to delight have been identified and the importance of the product's holistic appeal has been demonstrated.

- The cognitive diversity and complexity of the customer delight reaction has been empirically observed. A non-exclusive role for the positive disconfirmation of expectations has been demonstrated and four additional categories of cognition that frequently occur during the experience of customer delight have been identified and modelled.
- The affective-breadth of the customer delight reaction and its context dependant nature have been demonstrated. Three categories of feeling state frequently reported as constituents of customer delight reactions have been identified and modelled.
- The observable behaviours associated with customer delight reactions have been captured and categorised in a naturalistic consumption setting. The characteristic behaviours identified support the importance placed in the reaction by business practitioners. As well as demonstrating approach behaviours and body language indicative of the affective nature of their reaction, delighted customers invariably communicated their reaction to others.
- Two additional components of the experienced delight reaction have been identified and modelled as motivations and projections. Motivations are indicative of the observable behaviours and proposed effects of the delight reaction, and can be generalised as motivations to approach the product. Projections include various mechanisms by which the customer identifies the personal relevance of the product.

8.2 Reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the research

8.2.1 Strengths

The findings of this research are grounded in real-world pre-purchase contexts and the investigation of these using methods designed to capture the naturalistic occurrence and experience of customer delight. This approach is inherently more valid than previous studies of this phenomenon that use measures of its proposed components and rely on the subject's memory of the reaction.

These findings are also grounded in customers' experiences of delight. They redress the prior practitioner-bias in our understanding of this consumption phenomenon and result in the generation of theory that better represents its real-world occurrence.

The research was motivated by a need explore, describe and contextualise customer delight. The Phenomenological methodology used was designed to achieve this aim and has proved its worth by providing new depth of insight into the nature and diversity of customer delight reactions.

The research has attempted to bring together two fields of enquiry with apparently different views of the relevance of emotional customer reactions to marketing stimuli. This thesis and the insights it presents are a contribution to academics and practitioners of both camps.

Like most exploratory research this thesis has produced a healthy balance of answers to the questions it sought to address and new questions that require investigation. The theory generated is grounded in a limited consumption context and provides a basis for further research in others.

Throughout, this research has been supported by several industrial collaborators who were willing to suffer the discomfort of participating in a lengthy exploratory enquiry.

The outcomes of this enquiry have benefited from this influence, ensuring they are both informative and actionable. These outcomes are of greatest relevance to the participating organisations but also provide valuable insights for practitioners in other product sectors.

8.2.2 Weaknesses

The phenomenological approach used to investigate customer delight here means that the findings of this research cannot be assessed in terms of traditional measures of reliability.

Neither can the insights gained through this phenomenological enquiry be viewed as objective truths or facts. They are the result of the author's interpretation of the large volume of qualitative data collected. Despite the transparency of the methods and analysis techniques used they are likely to remain open to criticisms of their subjectivity.

This enquiry has not empirically generated a general theory of customer delight. The theory proffered is grounded in a single product category and limited consumption contexts and cannot be statistically generalised from. Furthermore the methodology adopted has resulted in a descriptive theory of delight that has no predictive ability. It must be judged in terms of the specific insights it provides and the potential implications of these for broader general theories that purport to explain delight across consumption situations.

The research aimed to generate integrated theory by studying the complexity of customer delight and its components in depth. The selection of a single case study approach has enabled the fulfilment of this aim by providing the depth of insight required to integrate the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of the reaction with their product basis. The downside of this approach is that the focus of the inquiry was inevitably narrow, grounded as it was, in a single product category.

8.3 Recommendations for future research

Two proposals are made, based on the descriptive model of customer delight and its constituent elements. Firstly it is proposed that the observed or potential ability of a product and its constituent attributes to delight its customers can be mapped using the model. Secondly, it is proposed that the antecedents and nature of individual delight reactions are dependent on the context of consumption in which they occur and the individual experiencing the reaction, but that all such reactions are made up of the constructs contained in the model. These two proposals have not been fully tested in this thesis. To do so requires the longitudinal study of the phenomenology of customer delight through different stages of consumption and across product categories.

To test the model, future research should endeavour to collect further confirmatory and disconfirmatory evidence from across consumption situations and product categories. Of particular interest would be the use of the model or coding scheme to map the emotional profile of the most positive customer appraisal reactions across the life cycle of the product. Whilst the specific properties responsible for delight reactions will inevitably change from product to product, it is assumed that the reaction identified here in cars will be similar in complex products such as buildings, other transportation products, electronics goods and other consumer durables.

It is also presumably of interest to Manufacturing and New Product Development practitioners, to find out where different products fall on the continuum from holistic to attribute based appeal. Some durable products, such as pens, watches and jewellery, are likely to lie much further towards the holistic type of appeal than cars. Other products, such as houses, home electronics, and white goods, are likely to be shifted towards the attribute end of this continuum, with greater numbers of attribute based appeal reactions. In fact cars and other 'products' like houses might represent the furthest products can shift towards attribute based appeal. These hypotheses need to be tested using a means of collecting delight responses, that does not bias towards either end of the continuum, across consumption stages for various product classes.

The findings of this research demonstrated the context-specific nature of product appeal, both in terms of its sensory basis and the affective nature of the most favourable consumer reactions. Future research is needed to clarify the sensory basis and affective nature of the most desirable customer reactions across multiple contexts. A specific research question arising from this research is what is the impact of the customer delight reaction, as modelled here, in a naturalistic choice situation. More generally, phenomenological approaches are required to study other consumption emotions both positive and negative. Similarly, the impact of emotional continuity or diversity throughout the ownership experience seems an important area worthy of further study. What happens when a product offers much and delivers little? Do people become more angry, or can the appeal of the characteristics that delighted early in consumption be maintained so that later problems are downplayed?

Business researchers should endeavour to establish a link between the emotional intelligence of organisations and their success in terms of delighting their customers and business performance.

8.4 Recommendations for practitioners

One contribution of the emergent theory is its broadening of the definition of customer delight in a way that is industrially relevant and appropriate. That is, a contribution to the existing prescriptive and empirical literatures that allows individuals, organisations and societies to take informed action. So how can manufacturing organisations design and supply offerings that touch customers enough to make them want them, covet them, tell everyone about them and perhaps even hand over money for them? The findings of this research suggest that striving to exceed expectation levels is only one of many routes to customer delight. Surprising customers with unexpected new features is just another.

It seems that companies that want to make money, by delighting customers need to recognise what these customers are thinking and feeling. The fluid nature of market economies suggests that the companies that best manage the balance between their technological capabilities and ever shifting market needs, will be those that manage to deliver the right technology at the right time, most often. The problem is that customer needs and expectations are often not apparent to customers, let alone technologists. New Product Development is always going to be a risky exercise. Business organisations cannot be criticised for being risk-averse when its their own, or worse, other people's money that is at risk. The reduction of this innovation risk can be seen as one of the core goals of both industrial research and business practice. This risk can be viewed in terms of a needs paradox - innovators endeavour to reduce risk by understanding what is needed (and as such what new technology is required to deliver this), but at the same time needs are difficult to identify even for those that have them. New needs are perpetually being created in people, and

current needs can quickly become obsolescent. Needs can be categorised in many different ways, but it is now obvious that attempts to rigorously and objectively identify, measure, categorise and rate needs are logically flawed. Continued adherence to the futile goal of striving to always exceed ever changing expectations by risk-averse organisations has resulted in the development of, and widespread trust in methods of understanding customers that perform badly in terms of addressing this needs paradox. The result is benchmarking against the competition, infrequent radical innovations and the overpowering of market pull by technology push.

Traditional approaches to investigating needs and capturing the 'voice-of-the-customer' aim to collect customers' answers to the questions of technologists. These are starting to be supplemented with approaches that aim to identify what questions customers are, or should be, asking. This thesis has demonstrated that customers like it when technologists provide the answers to these questions, to the extent that they describe themselves as delighted. Technological innovations do arouse people's interest to the extent that they are surprised by the answering of a previously unidentified question. But this thesis has also identified that answering questions is not the only way to delight customers. If delight is an appropriate goal, then developers need to give things to people in novel, interesting, and emotionally appropriate ways that demonstrate understanding. Developers need to concentrate less on what features the product must contain and more upon the emotional relevance of their product, how it appeals as a whole, and how it empowers its potential owners.

Delight is both observable and relevant in many consumption situations and tends to have both affective and cognitive components. Practitioners should be identifying what people are doing, thinking, dreaming, feeling and asking. Meanwhile, as consumers we need to recognise what questions we should be asking, become more aware of our behaviour, and when making judgements and choices, should be doing so on the basis of how well practitioners understand and communicate with us. The traditional and most prevalent means of communication along and within supply and demand chains would seem to require improvement if more customers are to be delighted, if offerings that meet broad definitions of quality are to be designed and produced, and if consumption is to remain out of the asylum. The involvement of several researchers (including the author) in a commercial organisation's attempts to delight its customers resulted in the design of tools for developing and incorporating in-depth customer understanding into the design of products intended to delight. This experience provided specific benefits and lessons for the organisation concerned (see, Garside, 2002) and continues to influence their approach to product development. The use of this Empathic Design approach in this, and several other design situations, is described elsewhere, (Evans et al, 2002).

8.5 Parting comment

"It is impossible to separate the activity of design from society. Proliferation of designed goods, manufactured globally cannot be said to be good for the customer because they do nothing for human existence." (Papenek, 1985)

"Design has repudiated its rigorous planning methods for stylistic involutions on products suitable for consumer manipulation but not always consistent with the real needs and problems of society. Design must appear today in a different situation, conscious of its extended social role." (Mario Maioli, head of design Fiat 1992, quoted in Ludvigsen 1996)

The author is conscious of the potential to misuse the insights presented in this thesis. This research was supported by a multinational manufacturing organisation keen to do something about 'the bottom line', 'profit' or 'the shifting of more metal'. Having heard the word, this organisation recognised that one way to do this might be to provide their customers with offerings that delight them. Organisations with similar motivations should be aware of the danger of offering products that promise much but deliver little. Durable products that delight in the sales environment are likely to be purchased in greater numbers than those that do not. However, having delighted their purchasers, these products most likely need to deliver emotional continuity throughout their ownership to reap the full marketing benefits of delighted, proud, and advocating customers. Failure to do so may result in these customers' experience of less favourable emotions such as confusion, disappointment, annoyance and even rage. The author sees ample opportunity for organisations to apply emotional thinking to the design of more socially and environmentally appropriate offerings making them desirable, coveted and even delightful. To balance this message to practitioners the author hopes as customers our expectations continue to change in unpredictable ways and that delight becomes a more common experience as more organisations succeed in fully understanding our emotion-laden lives.

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Appendix 1.0

Interview Transcript
Car Dealer - MR
Date - 27/01/99

Who do you find buys M in your dealership? N find that Europe wide they are aiming the car at younger people but selling it to older people. Is that something you see?

I'd say that in the main they know that anyway, but they are older people. All I'd say is that the situation is improving. I've been with N since '85 basically, and they are more appealing to younger people than they were, and they've got access to that information. I'd say the age is shifting to younger people. Obviously not to the extent that they'd like it to, but then I suppose there's been a period that its gone from most definitely being an old person's car, and the name and the brand and the identity, and I think it has moved further towards younger people, and I think its very important they get the next product right to keep it going. If they make a mistake then they've blown it ... they really have blown it.

Europe wide the car is seen differently in different countries, for instance in Italy I understand the car is seen as somewhat of a fashion statement.

That's the really difficult thing for designers and manufacturers as far as I'm concerned. Different products appeal... think of V for instance. Think of a V and its not a radical design that looks fantastic or stunning. It's the overall product. They get the design right. Its not too far one way or too far the other. A lot of Japanese manufacturers, M and T, have tried to over come this style problem, and it might be that they've gone too far. It's too rounded and its got spoilers and people don't want that either. It's very very difficult.

How would you personally tailor the car if you were trying to sell it to younger people? What features would you have in the car to make it easier to sell to them?

I personally don't think that features are what sells the car to younger people. I think features are more important...well put it this way, the older the person is, (or) the more expensive the car is, in my view, the more important the features and how they function becomes. So I'd say, to young people style and design has got to be everything. Then even if its slow, slightly unreliable, slightly uncomfortable, they'd still buy it. Within reason of course.

Most young people aren't coming out of cars with luxury features. It's a first or second car you know. I do honestly think...well I don't just think it, I'm very confident that for young people style is very very important.

We've found that the car stereo equipment is important to young women. Is there anything else you see as being important?

Yeah I'd agree with that. I think there's certain things like power steering. Ladies, even young ladies, they like power steering. CD players.... anything that appeals to younger people is good.

Ignoring the younger customer for the moment, when someone is buying a M, what are they focussing on in the car? What are their purchase criteria?

I think if you're going to generalise...I'd say its got to be a good value car, because generally value is important in all cars and especially when you get to the lower end of the market. The deal and the consumer offers are very very important. I think the reasons people buy the car are the value for money they feel it offers and the consumer offers. These are ever so important. In addition to that ...obviously the appearance the colours, the spec I think.

Do you know what other vehicles the customers are comparing with?

I think it is fare to say most of our customers are repeat really. Between 60 and 70% are repeat. Whether they go out in the market place or not I don't know. Then the others are people that genuinely go out and look at all the models, P, the K and so on. And that's where it's crucial, because the fact that they've come in means that they'd be happy, more or less, to have the M, providing it's got all the things, you know.

Are you able to tell what they are comparing the cars on?

Well everyone is different but generally those that shop from one make to another are looking at... number one, they've got to like the car and the way it drives etc etc etc...they are very concerned about the consumer offers, the finance packages and things like that. These could swing them to be honest.

Do you feel that these consumer offers are people's primary choice criteria then?

I don't think it's as plain as that. What people do generally is create a short list in their own mind. I personally wouldn't put a car on the list that I didn't like. And if you are going to say that people buy based on price, then L would have sold millions of cars and so on, and this is obviously not the case. I think first of all they'll look at the reputation of the car. They pick this up and they've already got this in their mind, they've seen the product so they obviously don't mind the look of it. Then I think it comes down to the dealership the salesman and the consumer offers. Personally that's the process I think people go through.

Do you see your customers focusing on any specific type of features?

I think generally people do expect a certain standard of safety and a certain standard of comfort.

So as long as it meets their expectations then they're not looking for anything extra?

Yeah I think so. I think they expect certain standards...you know side impact bars and an air bag. For example if you were to take them off you wouldn't sell the cars. But I don't think they want a second airbag and side air bags. I don't think they need all that. I think there is a certain level of safety that's expected.

What sort of questions do you get asked when you're trying to sell someone a car?

Generally speaking I don't think people are interested in technical specifications. They're interested in what the cars going to do for them, price, features etc.

On M, what options do people go for and how much are they prepared to pay for them?

Number one is power steering...very very important. They want a sunroof and the rear wash wipe. I think it comes down to an individual's expectations based on the class of car they're buying, basically. If they're buying a P and it didn't have ABS that'd be a problem. With an A its border line. People are like "Has it got ABS?", "No.", "Oh I wanted that," but it can be overcome. I think with a M I don't think people expect it. Sure if I said to you its got ABS, electric windows, electric sunroof, air conditioning, central locking - they'd say "bloody hell" but wouldn't want to pay for it. You'd never sell the things. You've got to look at the big picture really, if you're trying to press all the right buttons, you don't want to be giving stuff away if its not expected. You'd be better off spending the money on other stuff on that particular car. You know power steering as standard, make sure it's got a sunroof, and a CD player cassette option.

Are there any things in particular that will put people off a purchase?

I think our interiors put people off. I don't think the interiors are ever really that attractive in our cars...I mean the A is dreadful. It looks like that compressed foam...you know that packing foam, that's what it looks like to me. It must cost just as much to make that as it does anything else...its bloody awful. People can definitely be put off by the seating...definitely.

Is there anything else like that? For instance the availability of colours.

I think that's always a tricky one because there's always going to be someone that wants a colour you don't do. It's so difficult because people are always going to want a 5-dr with air-con and in an alloy whatever and then you've got to look at the implications of making all these cars. How long you've got to wait whatever. Basically I don't think we loose out from people wanting things we can't supply.

Do you think that your customers would prefer a process where they could customise their car, with more choice in what they could opt for, even if they had to wait longer for it?

I think they possibly would prefer it. But having said that they tend to settle for what they can get.

So they'd rather have one they can have next week than wait a month for one with everything on it they wanted?

Yeah I reckon.

Thinking of the target customer again. In the showroom are they making the decision themselves or if they have people with them do they pay attention to what their spouse or their father or their children have to say? How much influence do you think this plays?

Well I think if a younger person is looking at a N I think they'd get the approval of their father or an older person anyway. Because generally older people accept that it's a sensible car to buy. We don't get that where a young girl wants the car but her dad's saying, "No, No No...it's not the right car for you."

How about someone with a family. Would they listen to the kids at all?

To a point but I don't think it has a lot of influence.

What would you consider to be the weaknesses of the M?

I think it's a good product. If you're going to be critical I'd have said it would have been nice for the new Ma to have been a new M. It's been running since '93 and if there's a weakness I'd say they perhaps should have done a bit more when they re-launched it because it's the old thing warmed up. You know people aren't daft. I don't know if the car's got many weaknesses. I mean you can't say, "Oh the boot's too small," because you stick a big boot on it and you haven't got a M any more.

When you say they could have done a lot more with the M update, what do you mean?

Yeah. I think they did the right things in terms of spec. They offered more choice. I think they did a good job on that. I just think the car should have looked a bit different. It looks like the same car.

So if you could describe the perfect B-segment car to sell, what features would it have?

Well I wouldn't be sitting here if I could do that. We've mentioned the features and the style. In my view, all products, all cars, have got to have personality. I think the personality of the car has to appeal to those most likely to buy it. It's a bit obvious really. I think the M has a personality and I think the P has a personality. If you say "I want a rugged big 4WD vehicle" you'd consider the P because that's its personality. CS has as well. If I was designing a car, which I'm not, I'd look at what sort of personality those people are looking for in their products.

Is it a matter of just making the cars look better? For instance if you could make a car as reliable and durable as a N but that looked like an A, would you have cracked it?

I think it goes beyond that really. It doesn't only have to look like an A. You can take the classic example of a L really. A L can look like a M and it can have all the features but I'd rather put a M on my drive, call me shallow if you like. We all want to get on in life, we all want to impress, we all want to be somebody, so we want to drive something that reflects that. It hasn't only got to look like the product. It's got to appeal to people and it's got to make a bit of statement as well. Which is difficult.

How many people ask you for a test drive?

Not many.

Do you find it's easier to sell the car after someone's been for a test drive?

Without question. Because what people will do if they're allowed to is rush in and get all the information they want, and rush out again. What's important is the people in the showroom. When they rush in it's up to us to slow them down and qualify them and create a desire. Our job really is to create a desire for our product. Literature is important but it can only go so far. What's important about literature is that it lives up to customers' expectations of what they would have expected to have got. As long as it lives up to what people expect, it's doing its job really.

Do you get adequate information from N?

It's always difficult. I couldn't criticise N for not giving us enough information on the cars. I could criticise us for not being aware of all the information. But you never are. I could fire this thing up (computer) and sit here all day printing off stuff. It's all in there.

So how could they make it easier for you?

Unfortunately I do everything the hard way and so does everybody else. I could tell you everything about that product (A), because we sell 'em, we deal with people and they ask us questions. I know that's not perhaps the best way to learn, but unfortunately it goes in and it stays in. I could sit in a classroom and someone could whack up boards with tables on and they could even ask me questions on it. But if I didn't use it I'd forget it anyway. I mean people often come up to me and ask me "can you tell me what the P's got or what the Q has got?" and the answer's "no", because I never sell the bloody things. So I don't know. I mean I've read the information but unless I sell them I don't know.

Is there any limitation you think your showroom has? How would you change your showroom?

Oh I'd knock it down, and make it bigger.

What would you think of using multi-media for example? For instance a console where customers could view an A in whatever colour they wanted, etc.

I think that's a good thing.

Globally the sales experience seems to be changing. Fixed pricing in America, and D's discrete salespeople etc. How would you change the way you sell cars?

Call me a traditionalist if you like. Maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong. I personally think the more expensive a product is the more personal attention you want. That's my view. If I was buying a watch for twenty quid I wouldn't mind if the bloke just plonked it down and said "here you go...that's twenty quid please...cheers...goodbye." But if I was spending eight thousand pounds then I want to talk to him. I want to know more about it. I want him to take an interest in me as a customer. That's my view. And a car is a very expensive product, and I just think there's a bit of a danger of us losing sight of that, if we just say to people "it's a fixed price...take it or leave it". I know it's not as arrogant as that but...so I'm a bit traditional in that respect.

Do you think haggling is an important part of the process then?

It's a bit of fun isn't it. Nothing wrong with it is there.

Do you think that an experienced sales person has any unique knowledge? I mean if someone walks through the door, how do you identify whether they are serious or not?

Oh definitely. Because you've seen something over and over and over again year after year. I mean some people come in and they think "bastards, they don't even want to serve us." Sometimes it's true. There are things that a customer says, the way they behave, the amount of knowledge they've already got about your product...and I know it's wrong to make a judgement based on appearance, but I think salesmen do, and I think 99% of the time they're right...good salesmen are anyway.

So you think this is from built up knowledge and experience?

Yeah, and from very early buying signals. Most professional sales people will tell you that within a couple of minutes of talking to somebody, they've made...the salesman...have made their mind up whether they're going to do business.

Do you think salespeople can have a role to play in the design process?

The answer to that I think is that the design and the desire is between the customer and the designer, really. I think if a designer can appeal to the customer then a salesman's got his job, but he's out of the relationship. I don't think its about me telling a designer what I think the customer wants, I think its about finding out from the customer.

What sort of influence do you see branding playing in your showroom? How do you think this influence works in the showroom?

Branding is very important. Brand image is very important. I think it influences the purchase process. People don't come in and say, "I don't like N." That's already happened before they come in though, so we don't experience people objecting to the N brand. I don't think N have a strong brand image though. People buy them with their head not with their heart. I think all Japanese cars are like that, with the exception of a few of the sports cars.

Appendix 2.0

Motorshow Vehicle Observation Data Collection Sheet

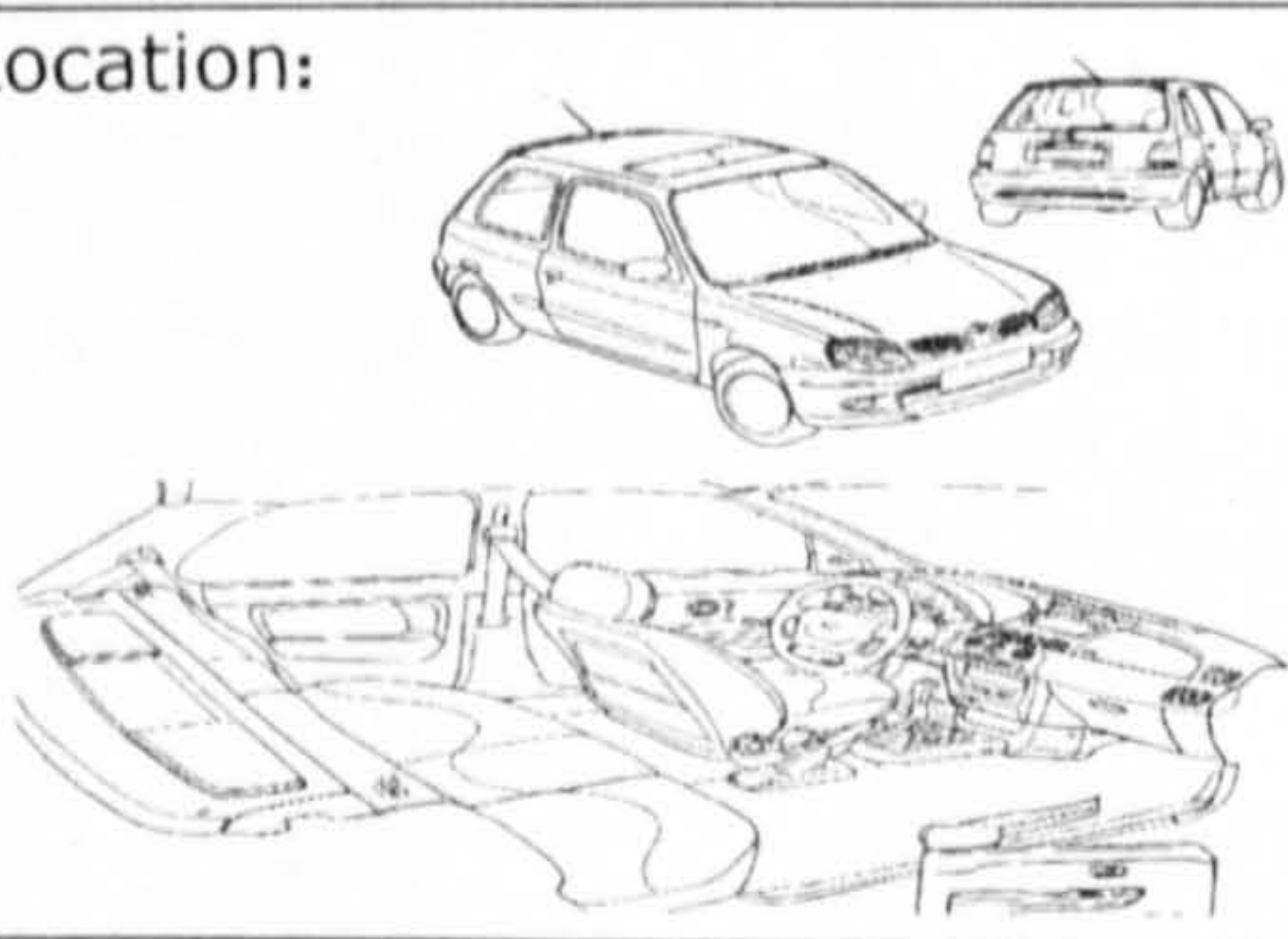
Manufacturer	Vehicle	Segment	Time	Date	Subject (sex, age, accompanied)	Observer
Description of EXTERIOR FEATURES		Length of time subject attends to this feature.			Reaction to feature in terms of questions, touching, fiddling etc. • any audible comments made.	
Exterior feature	Total time	Overall reaction on same scale				
Description of INTERIOR FEATURES		Attention time	Facial expression		Reaction to feature in terms of questions, touching, fiddling etc. • any audible comments made.	
Interior feature	Total time	Overall reaction on same scale				
Exterior feature	Total time	Overall reaction on same scale				
Notes						

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AS ORIGINAL**

Appendix 3.0

Car Clinic Interview

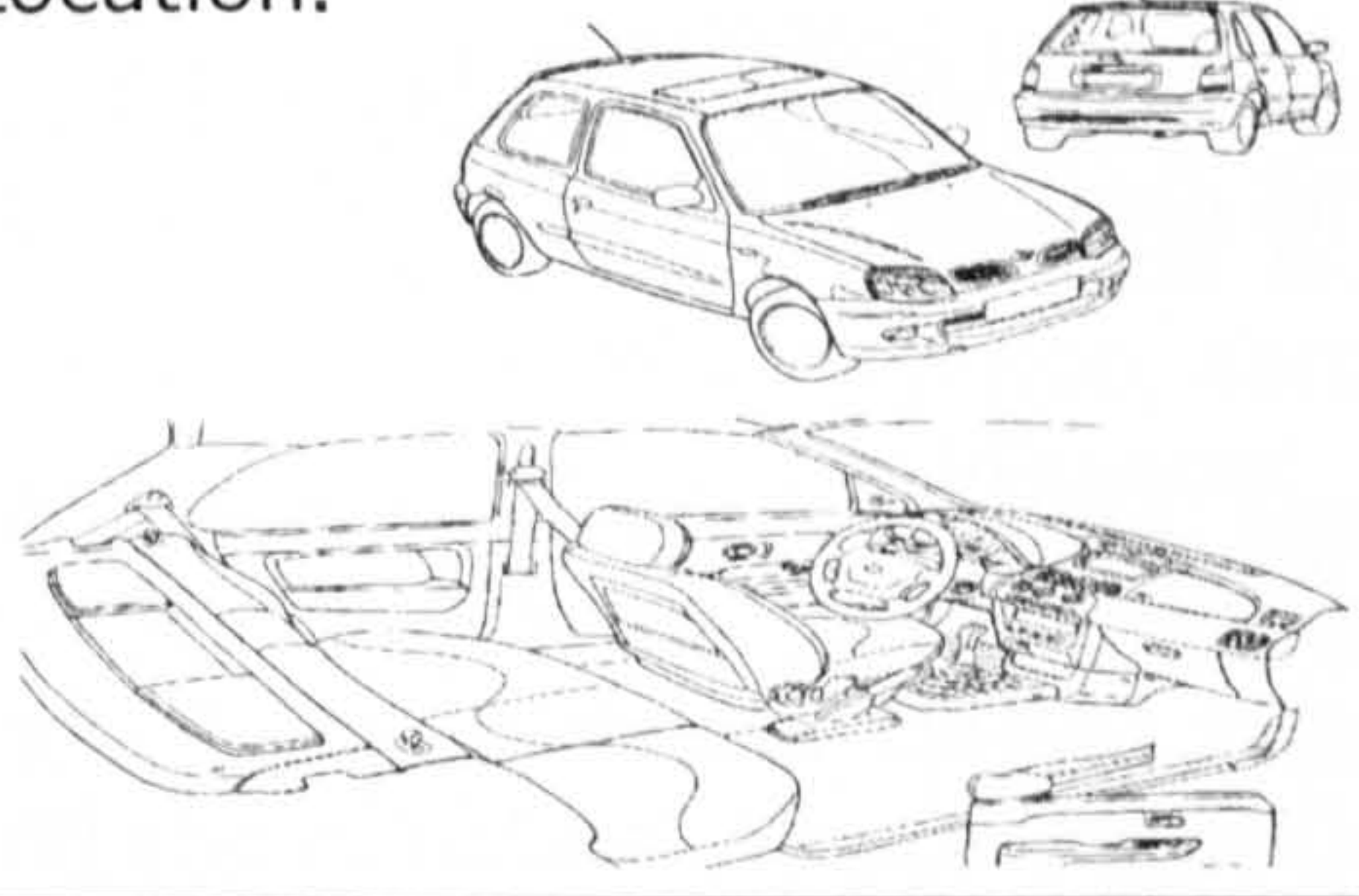
Data collection sheet (presented as size A4)

Delighter Recording Sheet					
Vehicle:			STATIC / TEST DRIVE		
Location:		Description:			
					
Your reaction:		LIKE.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....DELIGHT			
Delighter appeals because of:					
Function	YES	NO	Look	YES	NO
Novelty	YES	NO	Feel	YES	NO
Surprise	YES	NO	Sound	YES	NO
Emotion	YES	NO	Operation	YES	NO
Notes & Comments:					

Appendix 4.0

Self-Report Diary

Data collection sheet (presented size A5)

Delighter Recording Sheet					
Vehicle:					
Location:		Describe the 'delighter' in your own words:			
					
Rate your reaction: LIKE.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....DELIGHT					
Delighter appeals because:					
The Function it performs	YES	NO	It Looks good	YES	NO
You think it's Novel/Unique	YES	NO	It Feels good to the touch	YES	NO
It Surprises me	YES	NO	It sounds good	YES	NO
It appeals at an Emotional level	YES	NO	The way it works/Operates	YES	NO
Describe why the 'delighter' appeals to you including what it makes you feel and what it makes you think:					

Appendix 5.0

SRD Letter of introduction (identical for both NEC and EC motorshows)

25th October 2000

Dear

RE: NEC Motorshow2000 Research

Thanks for agreeing to help us with our research at the Birmingham Motorshow 2000. This pack should contain everything you need for this exercise but I'll also explain a little about the background to the research.

Cranfield University are working on a Government funded research project in collaboration with a major European vehicle manufacturer and MIRA (the Motor Industry Research Association). The project is called CUPID and this stands for Customer Understanding Processes In Design. Car Designers have tended to design for themselves and not for their customers and when customers are considered in the design process their requirements are often only partially captured or misinterpreted. As the name suggests, we are developing ways for product designers to better understand the customers they are designing for. The overall aim is to design desirable products that really appeal to customers and stand out from the competition. So the aim of this exercise is to gain insights into how cars appeal to you on an emotional level, what makes the cars you like the most stand out to you, and how and why these things excite, surprise or delight you.

Inside this pack you should find;

- a data recording pad to fill in as you go round the show
- a fine tipped pen
- an instruction sheet telling you exactly what to do
- a map with directions to the NEC
- a prepaid envelope for returning the completed data recording pad to us
- and of course a ticket to the show

If you are asked what you are doing by exhibitors at the show, please explain the above and direct any queries to Richard Barrett, Catarina Johansson or myself on 01234 754194. Likewise, if you have any queries yourself don't hesitate to contact us.

Thanks again for volunteering to help, and I hope you enjoy the show.

Sincerely,

Andrew Burns

Research Assistant - Cranfield University

Appendix 6.0

SRD Research Instructions

Introduction

The aim of this research is to understand what delights people about cars. We have several ideas about what sort of things these might be and this research will help us test these ideas. For the sake of this research we are calling these items "Delighters". These are the qualities, features or attributes of cars that stand out to you or surprise you. We are interested in things that would influence your decision to buy a car, things that you think are clever, novel or interesting, and things that make you go, "Wow, I like that!" You might be delighted by anything, and shouldn't feel limited by this description. For example, you could be delighted by the way a switch works, the layout of a car, the way a car looks, an amazing car gizmo, or just by the way a car makes you feel. Of course, some of these things would not become apparent until you had driven a car. However, the things that stand out at the motorshow are also likely to stand out in a showroom, hence our interest.

On the day

The first thing to do is fill in your details on the front cover of the recording book we have provided. While you are touring the Motorshow try to visit as many of the manufacturers' stands as possible. As you go round, specifically look for those things about the cars on show that you think are special. Only fill in the sheets when you see something that really delights you. If more than one of you is doing this research, try and identify your own "Delighters" and try not to be influenced by whoever is with you.

When you are viewing a car look all around the car, in the boot, under the bonnet, in the back seats etc., looking for things you like. When you are in the car, play with the switches, change gear, and move the seats as you would if you were in a showroom. Some cars may not have a single "Delighter", others may be full of them.

- Record each of your "Delighter" items on a separate sheet in the pad.
- Identify which vehicle (make and model) the "Delighter" is on.
- Describe the "Delighter" in your own words. (E.g. "This car's got a T.V.", "The way the car cossets me from the outside" or "The way the front looks").
- If applicable, indicate on the diagram where the "Delighter" is on the car.
- Rate how much you like the "Delighter" on the 1 to 5 scale. (1 = I like it, 5 = I really love it).

The next part of the sheet is designed so we can understand why you like each item, and what it is about these things that makes them delight you. Is it to do with the way they look, feel, or work, or is it more to do with how they make you feel, the function they perform, or the fact you've never seen anything like it before?

Use the 8 YES/NO questions on the sheet to explain why the "Delighter" appeals to you. Then use the space provided to elaborate your description of the feature, to summarise your feelings, and to explain why the "Delighter" appeals to you. Try to describe what you are thinking and feeling.

Once back home, please return the recording book to me in the envelope provided. Thank you and enjoy your day.