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Laura Egan

University of North Dakota, [laura.egan@und.edu](mailto:laura.egan@und.edu)

David Aron

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## **H. KEITH HUNT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: UNDERSTANDING HIS CONTRIBUTION**

Laura Egan  
University of North Dakota

David Aron  
Dominican University<sup>1</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

*This study uses an ego-centric bibliometric analysis of H. Keith Hunt to elucidate his connection to researchers in the consumer behavior field and his impact on the field. We identified publications written or edited by Hunt using Web of Science, Google Scholar, and the Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior; analyzed Hunt's co-authors and citations in those works; and tabulated Hunt's co-cited authors from top consumer behavior journals in Web of Science. Based on the analysis and quotes from his works and others about Hunt, we also identify and discuss dimensions related to Hunt's impact on the consumer behavior field: his scholarly influence; his vision; his leadership; his mentorship; and his role as a head of a community of scholars, teachers, and marketers. Hunt not only developed the field of scholarship around consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and complaining behavior, he fostered a community of scholars known for their collaboration and creativity in expanding the bounds of the consumer behavior field. His mentorship continues to impact the field as others take up his mantle to expand its conceptual development and invite new scholars to the fold.*

*Festschrift*: "A volume of writings by different authors presented as a tribute or memorial especially to a scholar" (Merriam-Webster 2022).

*Festschrift* is a portmanteau, a word made up of two words: *Fest*, celebration, and *Schrift*, writing. A celebration in writing. And in this case, a celebration of writing. And recognition of so much more that H. Keith Hunt has brought to his many areas of influence.

This bibliometric celebration of the career of H. Keith Hunt was inspired by the approaches taken by Bar-Ilan (2006) and Uslay, Morgan, and Sheth (2009) in their tributes to legends Michael O. Rabin (mathematics and computer science) and Peter Drucker (business and management), respectively. This project is an attempt to understand the scope of H. Keith Hunt's contribution to consumer behavior scholarship. To truly understand his contribution, however, we must look well beyond the articles that he wrote and focus on the people he has worked with.

The true celebration of Hunt's work, of his contribution, cannot possibly be limited to his writing. Every story shared with us has touched on Hunt's scholarship and then quickly moved to (or started with) discussion of how he had motivated one scholar, how he had shared his resources with another, how he had sponsored another, how he had consoled and encouraged yet another.

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<sup>1</sup> The authors are grateful to Newell Wright and Jonathan Huefner for their personal correspondence regarding this project, to Steve Goodwin and Gillian Naylor for continuing to lead this journal and conference, and to our colleagues and collaborators.

Therefore, the true and only appropriate purpose of this project is a celebration of H. Keith Hunt the scholar, as well as Hunt the leader, the mentor, the visionary, and head of a family of scholars.

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

H. Keith Hunt is a lifelong student of marketing. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing and Management from the University of Utah, followed by his MBA from the same school. Hunt then taught for several years in El Centro California, Evanston, Illinois, and at the University of Iowa, earning his PhD in Marketing from Northwestern University.

Hunt completed his doctoral work at Northwestern under the supervision of Sidney Levy in 1972 after representing Northwestern at the very first AMA Doctoral Consortium in 1966. He then took a position with the University of Iowa. His early career focus on corrective advertising and counteradvertising led to a year-long sabbatical where he worked for the Federal Trade Commission (Hunt 1973a). While at the FTC, Hunt noticed that there was little existing work on measuring a particular, unexplored area of consumer behavior: consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This led him to apply for a grant with the National Science Foundation to fund a conference on the topic (Hunt 1990). This initial conference came to define much of the focus and impact of his career.

Hunt eventually settled in at the Marriott School of Management at Brigham Young University. He did not settle down, though, in terms of his research and service. Instead, Hunt took many roles, any role where he thought he could be of service, including his local City Council, his religious congregation, and so much more than that.

The work that H. Keith Hunt pursued on corrective advertising, counter advertising, and public policy was influential in spearheading public policy research in the decade of the seventies. His work on labeling, hoarding, and entrepreneurship is also well known. And his work on consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction is the very model of seminal work, referenced in almost every paper written in that area.

Hunt's influence on research goes well beyond his own authorship and publications. He was affectionately known as "Mister ACR" for his work with the Association for Consumer Research, serving as the program chairman of the 8th annual conference of ACR and as the president of ACR in 1979. He was the organization's executive secretary from 1983 through 2000, winning their first Distinguished Service award in 1989. While he was working with ACR, Hunt also served as the American Academy Advertising president from 1982-1983 and as executive secretary from 1983-1986. He was elected AAA fellow in 1987.

As if this staggering level of commitment to his field was not enough, Hunt co-founded, with Ralph Day, the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior* (JCS/D&CB) in 1988. Hunt was the journal's editor-in-chief from day one until 2005 (Hunt 1979; Hunt 2005). He is currently honored as editor emeritus of JCS/D&CB.

This article is a tribute to H. Keith Hunt. His contribution, summarized above, is only part of the impact that Hunt has made to his field. In fact, a review of Hunt's extensive bibliography would only hint at the true measure of the gifts he has bestowed upon those whose lives he has touched. Inspired by the tributes to Peter Drucker (Uslay et al. 2009), another business author that redefined the standards to which others are measured, as well as Michael O. Rabin (Bar-Ilan 2006), the following sections will provide further evidence of Hunt's impact. The work of H. Keith Hunt can be categorized in terms of several dimensions:

- Scholarly Influence
- Leader
- Mentor
- Visionary
- Head of a family of scholars, teachers, and marketers.

The following sections will address each of the above categories, based on quotes shared by those who know him, as well as on his own impressive scholarly achievements.

## **HIS SCHOLARLY INFLUENCE**

Several items that are part of our discussion of H. Keith Hunt may be easy to understand but hard to quantify, such as his leadership and his vision. Other elements are quite easy to put into measurable terms, such as his record of service and his scholarly contribution. The next section will present a bibliometric analysis of Hunt's work, demonstrating the far-reaching influence of Hunt's work, and importantly, his collaborations and the work of those influenced by him.

### *Methodology*

We followed a similar methodology used by Bar-Ilan (2006) and Usley, et al. (2009) to analyze their respective subjects' impact on their fields. We used Web of Science (which has since replaced the ISI Web of Knowledge) and included not only the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) used by Usley et al. (2009), but the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), which was added in 2015 and includes more international and specialty journals.

Ego-centered analysis was introduced by Howard White as a bibliometrics method based on social network analysis that examines an "author's relationship with other authors who are socially and/or intellectually connected" (White 2001, p.609). The different aspects studied in ego-centric analysis are comparable to social network nodes and the strength of ties represented by the number of times an author is listed for each of those aspects.

According to White (2001), there are four aspects important to ego-centered analysis:

1. *Citation Identity* – authors cited by the AUTHOR studied
2. *Citation Image* – authors co-cited with the AUTHOR studied
3. *Citation Image-Makers* – authors citing the AUTHOR studied
4. *Co-Authors* of the AUTHOR studied

For the citation image portion of the analysis, like the methodology used by Usley et al. (2009), we narrowed the focus to articles related to our topic area and to the top journals for that area. Since a list of top consumer behavior journals was not readily available, we employed a similar approach to Arora and Chakraborty (2021) for their bibliometric analysis of consumer complaining behavior, and Muñoz-Leiva, Viedma-del-Jesús, Sánchez-Fernández and López-Herrera (2012) in their bibliometric analysis of consumer behavior research themes. Specifically, we searched Web of Science for the topic "consumer behavior" OR "consumer behaviour" and identified which journals had the most cited works on the topic. While not indexed in Web of Science as of this writing, we also chose to include the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior* due to Hunt's role in the journal's establishment. Excluding titles that did not cite Hunt articles, the journals we included in our citation image analysis were:

1. Journal of Consumer Research
2. Journal of Business Research
3. Journal of Marketing
4. International Journal of Research in Marketing
5. Internet Research
6. Journal of Business Ethics
7. European Journal of Marketing
8. Journal of Marketing Research
9. British Food Journal
10. Journal of Economic Psychology
11. Annals of Tourism Research
12. Food Quality
13. Psychology of Marketing
14. Tourism Management
15. International Journal of Service Industry Management
16. Journal of Interactive Marketing
17. Journal of Retailing
18. Journal of Retail and Consumer Services
19. International Journal of Bank Marketing
20. Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior

### *Results*

Our initial citation search in Web of Science identified 996 articles that cited H. Keith Hunt. Of the non-entrepreneurship related articles, the most cited publications were:

1. Conceptualization and Measurement of Consumer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction (1977) – 334 citations, with Hunt’s introduction to the conference proceedings “CS/D-Overview and Future Research Directions” receiving 171 of those citations
2. Consumer Retaliation as a Response to Dissatisfaction (2000) – 98 citations
3. Consumer Punishment as a Response to Dissatisfaction (2000) - 95 citations
4. Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, and Complaining Behavior (1991) – 39 citations
5. Consumer Retaliation: Confirmation and Extension (2002) - 38 citations
6. Improving Retail Performance by Contrasting Management- and Customer-Perceived Store Images: A Diagnostic Tool for Corrective Action (1998) - 22 citations
7. Effects of Corrective Advertising (1973a) - 17 citations
8. Hoarding Behavior Among Consumers: Conceptualization and Marketing Implications (1985) - 17 citations
9. International Fare in Consumer Satisfaction and Complaining Behavior (1983) - 17 citations
10. Source Effects, Message Effects, and General Effects in Counteradvertising (1972) - 10 citations
11. CS/D: Bits and Pieces (1977) - 10 citations

### *Citation Co-Authors*

Hunt co-authored or co-edited with 24 different scholars across the 73 articles included in this study, demonstrating the collaborative nature of his scholarship. He was the sole author for

about thirty percent of his publications. All of his work on counteradvertising and corrective advertising were single author publications, as were most of his initial consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (CS/D) articles and CS/D bibliography and future research articles.

**Figure 1. Co-Authors and Co-Editors of H. Keith Hunt**

<b>Hunt's Co-Authors or Co-Editors</b>	<b>Number of Co-Authored or Co-Edited Publications</b>
Ralph L. Day	16
Jonathan C. Huefner	13
J. Patrick Kelly	6
Peter B. Robinson	6
Sean D. Otto	4
Brian L. Parry	4
Collin R. Payne	4
Hugh M. Cannon	2
Steven C. Huff	2
H. David Hunt	2
Marsha L. Richins	2
A. Coskun Samli	2

For eighteen of his publications, he had two or more co-authors, including one publication with six co-authors. All of but one of his entrepreneurship publications were co-authored, most frequently with Robinson and Huefner. Huefner was also a common collaborator on his CS/D extension articles. Other common article collaborators included Sean D. Otto, Brian L. Parry, Collin R. Payne, Hugh M. Cannon, and J. Patrick Kelly. He most frequently co-edited with Ralph L. Day.

Of his common collaborators, Day probably had the biggest impact on Hunt's career, initially encouraging him to apply for the visiting professor program with the Federal Trade Commission and later becoming a co-editor and co-chair with Hunt and helping him establish the JCS/D&CB (Hunt 2005).

*Citation Image Makers*

Citation image makers are defined as authors who cite the focal author, in this case, H. Keith Hunt.

More than 2,300 authors cited Hunt in more than 400 journals in the combined Web of Science and JCS/D&CB dataset. The sheer quantity of researchers citing Hunt demonstrates the breadth of his impact on the field. Over 2,000 of these were single citations. Of those who cited Hunt multiple times, Richard L. Oliver and Heesup Han cited Hunt the most frequently. It's worth noting here that Oliver is known for his book *Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer* (Oliver 1996). Notable researchers citing Hunt multiple times include Claes Fornell, who created the American Customer Satisfaction Index and similar tools used worldwide in measuring consumer satisfaction across industries.

**Figure 2. Citation Image-Makers –  
Authors Most Frequently Citing H. Keith Hunt**

Author Citing H. Keith Hunt	Times Citing H. Keith Hunt
Richard L. Oliver	15
Heesup Han	14
Irene Gil-Saura	10
Francisco Linan	9
Lloyd C. Harris	8
Mario Raposo	8
Gloria Berenguer Contri	7
David Aron	6
Joao J. Ferreira	6
Newell D. Wright	6
María Fuentes Blasco	6
Alan R. Andreasen	5
Rosemary Athayde	5
Aron O’Cass	5
Kate L. Daunt	5
Ricardo Gouveia Rodrigues	5
John E. Swan	5
Robert A. Westbrook	5
Robert B. Woodruff	5
Tatiana Anisimova	4
Robin Bell	4
Michael K. Brady	4
Sara Campo	4
Anabela Dinis	4
Arminda Do Paco	4
Claes Fornell	4
Sally K. Francis	4
Val Larsen	4
Beatriz Moliner Velázquez	4
Marc Mussons-Torras	4
P.G. Patterson	4
Kisang Ryu	4
Imran Saleem	4
Elisenda Tarrats-Pons	4

Among other researchers citing Hunt multiple times are scholars who worked with him on the editorial board of the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior* or assumed leadership of the journal from Hunt. These authors include David Aron, Kevin G. Celuch, John E. Swan, Robert A. Westbrook, Robert B. Woodruff, and Newell D. Wright (Larsen and Wright 2017), further showing the mentorship impact of Hunt’s scholarly work. As Harold H. Kassarian noted upon presenting the Association for Consumer Research Distinguished Service Award to H. Keith Hunt, “[Hunt’s] early research on corrective advertising, counter advertising, and public policy is today a classic that was influential in spearheading public policy research in the decade of the seventies. His work on labeling, hoarding, and entrepreneurship is

**Figure 3. Citation Image – Authors Co-cited with H. Keith Hunt in Top 25 Consumer Behavior Journals**

Co-cited Author	No. of times co-cited	h-index	Results (Publications)	Sum of times cited	Average citations per item
Richard L. Oliver	492	37	66	20,877	316.3
Robert A. Westbrook	179	20	31	3,489	112.5
Valarie A. Zeithaml	152	36	50	26,861	537
Claes Fornell	141	33	53	56,431	1,064.7
Ralph L. Day	141	32	107	3,402	31.8
John E. Swan	137	16	36	2,819	78.3
Leonard L. Berry	126	30	82	5,318	64.9
Robert B. Woodruff	123	12	25	3,848	153.9
A. Parasuraman	113	47	103	39,903	387.4
William O. Bearden	102	41	126	10,350	82.1
Jagdip Singh	101	28	44	7,581	172.3
Marsha L. Richins	95	26	42	7,674	182.7
Mary Jo Bitner	88	31	48	16,689	347.7
Eugene W. Anderson	86	17	21	8,776	417.9
Alan R. Andreasen	77	19	65	1,997	30.7
Ernest R. Cadotte	77	7	15	1,097	73.1
Morris B. Holbrook	72	44	149	16,203	108.7
Gilbert A. Churchill	70	26	46	14,326	311.4
Richard P. Bagozzi	67	82	263	45,167	171.7
Roger L. Jenkins	65	3	6	816	136
Ruth N. Bolton	62	32	59	9,072	153
Joseph J. Cronin	59	24	51	10,934	214.4
Lloyd C. Harris	58	38	95	5,371	56.5
Steven A. Taylor	57	11	21	5,492	261.5
Jeffrey G. Blodgett	56	11	15	1,702	113.5
Roland T. Rust	52	51	126	12,623	100.2
Valerie S. Folkes	51	22	43	3,335	77.6
Michael K. Brady	48	26	46	8,013	174.2
Dhruv Grewal	47	64	191	22,392	117.2
Richard W. Olshavsky	47	23	54	3,269	60.5
David K. Tse	47	24	32	5,504	172
Jacob Jacoby	46	32	57	4,589	80.5
Jagdish N. Sheth	46	36	150	6,701	44.7
Rolph E. Anderson	44	9	31	1,739	56
Carol F. Surprenant	42	5	8	2,690	336
James C. Anderson	42	32	86	14,597	169.7
Jared A. Miller	41	9	29	589	20.3
Peter C. Wilton	41	6	9	1,027	114.1
Icek Ajzen	40	57	112	66,217	591.2
Stephen W. Brown	40	28	45	7,240	160.9
Richard A. Spreng	40	11	26	2,677	103
I. Fredrick Trawick	40	4	6	381	63.5



well known and his work on satisfaction/ dissatisfaction continues to be referenced in most every paper written in that field” (Kassarjian 1991).

### *Citation Image*

Citation image (see figure 3) is defined by the authors co-cited with the author studied. To keep this portion manageable and focused on our topic of interest, we focused on authors co-cited with Hunt in top consumer behavior journals, as described in the methodology section.

Richard L. Oliver tops the list with 423 co-citations, again showing the ties between Hunt’s work and other notable scholars in the consumer behavior field. In the Web of Science citation index, Oliver has been cited 20,877 times with an average of 316 citations for each of his 66 publications in Web of Science, resulting in an h-index of 37. The h-index measures the productivity and citation impact of an individual author. Claes Fornell similarly appears as a top co-cited author with 135 co-citations. His 53 publications indexed in Web of Science have had 1,065 citations on average, with a total of 56,431 citations and an h-index of 33. Parasuraman has the highest h-index of the authors co-cited with Hunt more than 100 times at 47 with 103 publications indexed in Web of Science with an average of 387 citations per article and 39,903 citations total. Parasuraman co-authored “SERVQUAL - A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality,” with Berry (119 co-cites) and Zeithaml (143 co-cites), which is frequently used by consumer behavior researchers in evaluating service quality, and thus not surprising to see co-cited with Hunt’s work. Robert A. Westbrook was co-cited 142 times with Hunt. Westbrook also co-authored with Hunt and wrote many articles on motivation and emotions related to consumer satisfaction. Other authors with more than 100 co-cites include Ralph L. Day, who had a big impact on Hunt’s career and collaborated with Hunt on the CS/D&CB conference and journal, John E. Swan, who co-authored articles with Oliver and others particularly in relation to consumer equity perception as well as consumer expectations and trust, William O. Bearden, who also has a very high h-index of 41 with over 10,350 citations for his 126 publications in Web of Science, and Jagdip Singh, whose research covers a broad range of topics related to customer engagement and satisfaction.

### *Citation Identify Profile*

Citation identity profile is defined as the list of authors cited by the focal author, focusing on those cited the most frequently (see figure 4). The cited authors are seen as having a greater influence on the primary author’s scholarly work. For this portion, we excluded Hunt’s entrepreneurship-focused articles to focus on scholars influencing his consumer behavior work.

In his research H. Keith Hunt cited more than 350 authors, but the authors he cited the most frequently were generally himself or his co-authors. Frequently his introduction of concepts to the field have few citations drawing from a wide range of sources. For example, his introduction of grudgeholding cited one American Marketing Association conference paper and his early work on consumer satisfaction with rainchecks cited one *Marketing News* article. His inventory of findings on complaining behavior of the elderly drew from working papers, research notes, conference proceedings, and two more traditional scholarly sources, exemplifying the broad range of information sources he was knowledgeable about and able to draw from in order to pioneer new areas in the field. His knowledge of the field was also compiled into two bibliographies on consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and complaining behavior, which likewise included conference papers, government publications, papers from organizations such as AARP and the Direct Selling Education Foundation, among more traditional scholarly publications (Hunt 1982;

Hunt 1984). In his later work where he collaborates more with co-authors, he cites more traditional sources. However, that change likely also corresponds to the growth of the field following his development of it.

**Figure 4. Citation Identity – Authors Cited by H. Keith Hunt in Consumer Behavior Journals**

Authors H. Keith Hunt Cited	Times H. Keith Hunt Cited
H. Keith Hunt	28
H.D. Hunt	9
A.O. Hirschman	7
J.C. Huefner	6
T.C. Hunt	6
A. Samli	6
Leonard L. Berry	5
J.B. Mason	5
A. Parasuraman	5
J.B. Wilkinson	5
R.L. Day	4
C.E. Rusbult	4
Robert A. Westbrook	4
Valarie A. Zeithaml	4

Part of citing co-authors may also reflect Hunt's collaborative nature, perhaps because he invited others to join him in writing future scholarship. Of authors cited four or more times who were not also co-authors with Hunt, Albert O. Hirschman with seven citations had the greatest influence on Hunt's work. Hunt most frequently cited Hirschman's seminal *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* particularly for its definitions of those terms in relation to consumer dissatisfaction. Hunt furthers Hirschman's work in "Extending the Hirschman Model: When Voice and Exit Don't Tell the Whole Story," where he offers clarifications for those terms and concludes that "we are not very far along in understanding consumer loyalty" (Huefner and Hunt 1994).

Other authors cited four or more times who were not Hunt's co-authors include: Leonard L. Berry, J. Barry Mason, A. Parasuraman, J.B. Wilkinson, Caryl E. Rusbult, and Valarie A. Zeithaml. J.B. Mason's most cited article in Web of Science was co-authored with J.B. Wilkinson and focuses on measuring the impact of short-term super market strategies, price, display, and advertising. Mason also co-authored a number of more frequently cited articles with William O. Bearden on consumer complaint, consumer satisfaction, and consumer dissatisfaction topics. Rusbult's most cited articles relate to investment satisfaction, but his articles on satisfaction and commitment have the most relevance to Hunt's work. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry were also co-cited with Hunt's work above, most often in relation to their work on service quality measurement. Thus, it's not surprising to see Hunt frequently citing these commonly cited authors on Hunt's focus areas.

## DISCUSSION: THE DIMENSIONS OF HUNT

### *The Scholarly Influence*

As Hunt notes in the introduction to his 1982 bibliography, "The last ten years have seen the development of a new area of scholarly research – consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction and

complaining behavior. [...] At least 500 of [the papers in this bibliography] have been written/published since the CS/D&CB conference series began” (Hunt 1983, p.132). Since he initiated the conference series following his query of how to measure consumer satisfaction, the growth he notes in the field’s scholarship is directly due to his influence (Larsen & Wright 2017).

The initial conference and his later work also led to an expansion of conceptualization and measurement in the field of consumer behavior. As shown by his most cited articles, the initial collection of conference proceedings is still cited as foundational in the field, with the book itself accumulating 104 citations in Web of Science and over 500 in Google Scholar, and Hunt’s introduction “CS/D-Overview and Future Research Directions” receiving 182 citations in Web of Science and nearly 1,400 in Google Scholar as of this writing. A book review of Hunt’s collection of papers from this conference identifies consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction at the time as an “emerging field” and Hunt’s review of the Proceedings as “concisely summariz[ing] the problems inherent in defining, measuring, and applying CS/D” (Lundstrom 1978, p. 167). Lundstrom (1978) concludes “Keith Hunt should be given special recognition for putting together this conference and editing the Proceedings for this first-of-a-kind effort” (p. 167). Similarly, his frequently cited 1991 article in the *Journal of Social Issues* helped define the primary concepts in the field at the time, addressing why the research can benefit public policy and businesses and identifying “alternative definitions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, special groups of vulnerable consumers, situations where satisfaction is legally constrained, and how dissatisfaction can lead to social change. [...] Three dissatisfaction outcomes (voice, exit, and retaliation) are described, along with a discussion of longer run consumer grudge holding” (Hunt 1991).

In addition to helping identify foundational concepts related to consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction research, Hunt’s dissatisfaction with what existed in the field led him to draw attention to the emotional aspects of CS/D and ask how they could be measured, fueling additional fodder for conference proposals and his work on new concepts. He helped expand conceptualization of consumer satisfaction to include delight and the impact of consumer complimenting behavior and consumer dissatisfaction to retaliation and grudgeholding. Hunt’s research on consumer retaliation for example, received over 230 citations in Web of Science. Hunt also cared about how the research could be applied by business and government agencies. As previously mentioned, his time with the FTC and the Better Business Bureau complaint data led to the initial CS/D conference. He also identified decision points for the FTC in relation to deceptive advertising and the impact of corrective advertising (Hunt 1972; Hunt 1973a; Hunt 1973b; Hunt 1977), examined whether the FTC’s solution of offering rainchecks for advertised items that were out of stock satisfied customers (Kelly, Cannon, Hunt 1989), and provided advice for potential expert witnesses (Hunt 1980). In collaboration with other researchers, he helped model impact of dissatisfaction on brand and store avoidance (Huefner & Hunt 1992), the cost of store avoidance (Otto, Payne, Parry, Hunt 2004), marketing implications of consumer hoarding behavior (McKinnon, Smith, Hunt 1985), and co-developed a diagnostic tool for stores to improve their customer-perceived store image (Samli, Kelly, Hunt 1998). Thus the impact of his scholarship extended to policy decision-making and business performance.

Hunt drew from a broad range of sources to ask new questions about what the field of consumer behavior could be, how to measure it, and the implications for policymakers and businesses. When Hunt discovered gaps in the field, he not only wrote new scholarship on those topics, but invited others to develop the field with him. He nurtured and developed a community of scholars and friends, content to inspire growth in the field and share the credit.

The following sections provide additional insights from scholars who have worked closely with H. Keith Hunt over the decades of this work and illustrate further the impact of Hunt's career in these roles:

- Leader
- Mentor
- Visionary
- Head of a family of scholars, teachers, and marketers

### *The Leader*

Early in his academic career, in 1977, Keith became editor of the highly respected *Journal of Advertising*, despite this responsibility being “a more difficult and time-consuming process that I ever imagined it could be,” (Hunt 1991b). Even before ascending to that role, in 1975, Keith obtained a grant from the Federal Trade Commission and initiated the *Conceptualization and Measurement of Consumer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction* conference (Lundstrom 1977; Hunt 1990), bringing together scholars in this niche area. It was this event, later renamed the Conference on Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior (or CS/D, for short) that led to the establishment of the journal of the same name, co-edited by Hunt and Ralph L. Day. The *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior* was created 1988 and Hunt led that journal and its conferences until he retired in 2005.

The CS/D conferences were seen by those involved as nurturing, safe, educational, and fun for participants no matter their level of experience (Drew 2002; Naylor 2022). Hunt's leadership inspired others. As one frequent conference attendee put it, “his willingness to publish (my) research inspired me to continue academic explorations through my cultural lens, raising the bar for me individually and the marketing field collectively” (Williams 2022).

His leadership in this realm extended to the well-known Association for Consumer Research, or ACR. His service to ACR and his importance to that organization, which promotes scholarly exchange among academics, industry, and government, earned him the title “Mister ACR” (Kassarjian 1991). More specifically:

*Without Keith Hunt, the Newsletter would not be mailed, the Directory would not exist, ACR programs would not be prepared, conferences would not be organized, and scholarly work would not be published and sometimes not even conceived. Keith Hunt's basement, to the everlasting distress of his family and to the gratitude of librarians and scholars, is the ACR publications warehouse. Mountains of publications - proceedings, monographs, cumulative indexes, directories, and records - extend from floor to ceiling.... Keith Hunt, his warmth and caring, is the primary cause of the wonderful esprit de corps that permeates this association, the envy of all our sister societies. (Kassarjian 1991, pg. 5)*

### *The Mentor*

Mentoring can be defined as a learning relationship characterized by trust, respect, and commitment, a counseling relationship between the more experienced mentor and a less experienced protégé (Tähtinen, Mainela, Nätti, & Saraniemi 2012). This is another term that defines H. Keith Hunt and his relationships with those who sought him out, those who needed him.

One of Hunt's earliest and most prominent mentoring relationships was with Jonathan Huefner, a collaboration that led to the groundbreaking exploration of consumer retaliation, and a take on the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction construct that pulled the exploration of consumer behavior out of its usual, easily quantified constraints. According to Huefner:

*Our research provided me opportunities and experience that I would not have otherwise known. Keith was always asking for and open to my perspective, and we had many long and deep discussions on the topics we were researching. In this he was also an excellent exemplar of the academic researcher who involves students in research and integrates that into what it means to be a professor. In all these ways Keith was ever the superlative mentor to those of us who were blessed to work with him. (Huefner 2022)*

Hunt's influence also reached beyond what was familiar to him, and he challenged those around him to better understand their own stories and their own visions:

*(Keith challenges) doctoral students to think outside of their existing paradigms and to broaden their views on what constitutes good research.... With his support, I found courage to look for applications of marketing thought that were aligned with my cultural background and interest. (Williams 2022)*

This influence transcended research, beyond providing opportunities, and toward the shaping of the careers of young researchers.

According to another protégé:

*I learned a lot about managing my career based on my conversations with Keith. (He) was right there with some well-timed advice, about embracing change. I can still hear his words of wisdom encouraging me to stay creative and to have fun while managing my career (Davidow 2022).*

Another researcher reflects on Hunt's mentorship:

*Keith's input and his belief in me meant the world to me. He helped me through this stressful period of being lost in the academic wilderness.... Keith Hunt showed me what professional, personal, and passionate guidance looked like. He was the first real mentor to me, when I needed one most. Keith's influence... saved my academic career. (Aron 2022)*

### *The Visionary*

H. Keith Hunt saw consumer behavior in a way that others did not, in a way that enhanced the study of consumer satisfaction (Larsen & Wright 2017). He realized the importance of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction as keys to having a better grasp of what consumers wanted... and didn't want... as outcomes of their behaviors. According to Huefner, "Keith was always thinking outside the box, seeing new connections between different areas of research, and extrapolating new constructs" (Huefner 2022).

One example of this is his response to FTC memos mentioning they would increase consumer satisfaction. He wondered how this could be measured. Finding nothing in the marketing research literature:

*Undaunted and always looking for an excuse to go to the Library of Congress and bliss out in library heaven, I trundled up the hill. Nothing. After substantial searching I finally uncovered three articles that mentioned the topic. After leaving the FTC I obtained a grant from the National Science Foundation through the Marketing Science Institute to host a conference on the conceptualization and measurement of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. That was in 1975. Today there are upwards of eight hundred articles on the topic. (Hunt 1990, p.90)*

Hunt's view of the possible, of what could and should be explored in pursuit of a greater understanding of consumer behavior, allowed his fellow researchers to expand Hunt's vision. "Soldiers eating MREs, birding, skateboarding, fit of women's jeans and prison incarceration" (Drew 2022) and African drumming (Williams 2002) were among the unique and previously unexplored kinds of consumer behaviors that Keith encouraged as approaches to understanding consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Allowing new and diverse ideas into the discussion and encouraging these pursuits reflected the leadership and the vision of H. Keith Hunt. He "(sparked) creativity and challenged (others) to think outside of their existing paradigms and to broaden their views on what constitutes good research" (Williams 2002).

Do consumers hold grudges? Of course they do. Do they retaliate? To Hunt and Huefner, consumers admitted such dysfunctional behaviors (Huefner & Hunt, 1994). Do consumers share stories of their outcomes on social media? This might seem obvious, but this possibility, of "word of mouse" communication (M. Davidow, personal communication, June 2001) was explored in the pages of the JCS/D&CB and in the rooms of its conferences well before the rest of the world understood what the future had in store.

### *The Head of the Family*

H. Keith Hunt is a leader, a mentor, and a visionary. But, can one lead without followers? Can one be a mentor without protégés? And of what use is a vision if you cannot help others to see what you saw first?

It must be noted that Hunt could not have done this alone. As any member of this profession will attest, one's research supervisor plays an enormous role in the creation of an academic identity, and Hunt's dissertation chair, Sidney Levy (1921-2018) of Northwestern University, is also recognized among the giants in his field. Levy was the first person to receive Living Legend Marketing Award, among many other accolades, and even has an award named after him. With this influence, H. Keith Hunt blazed a new trail.

In addition, as noted above, it was Hunt's frequent collaborator Ralph L. Day who brought him to the FTC and later co-founded JCS/D&CB with him. As Hunt wrote:

*Ralph and I became good friends and colleagues. Our mutual interest in topics related to consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction and complaining behaviors led us to collaborate on numerous projects. We co-chaired conferences, co-edited conference proceedings, and eventually started and co-edited the Journal of*

*Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior in 1988. [...] The vision we shared was to encourage and facilitate research and publication in the specific topic areas of consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction and complaining... Literally hundreds of scholars, from all corners of the globe, have developed research programs related to these topical areas. And there is so much more to be discovered!” (Hunt 2005)*

H. Keith Hunt has been instrumental in building and inspiring this community of like-minded academics. As one researcher says, “I am paying it forward in every course I teach, and every paper I write” (Davidow, 2022). Moreover, his “personal style influenced the entire culture of the conference... Creating almost a sense of family” (Grisaffe 2022). The conferences are cited as “a safe place to present developing and new research from interesting venues” (Drew 2022). Furthermore, Hunt is credited in that he “consciously established inclusive programs and fostered belongingness” (Williams 2022). As he notes in his preface to the *International Fare in Consumer Satisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, “[Thank you] for putting up with each other’s oddities for another year and staying close friends through it all, a smile of friendship across the miles” (Hunt 1982, p.iii).

## CONCLUSION

The ego-centric analysis of H. Keith Hunt’s work in the field of consumer behavior reveals that he was a pioneer in many aspects of the field, a widespread collaborator, and co-cited alongside seminal authors in the consumer behavior field. His contribution to the field of consumer behavior goes beyond his scholarly works. He not only established a foundation for a wealth of research on consumer behavior and pushed the boundaries of how that could be conceptualized and measured, he created opportunities for collaboration and publication and mentored scholars to continue his work.

### *Tribute*

Morris Holbrook (2001) wrote in his wonderful “The Ballad of H. Keith Hunt”:  
“And with expertise based on long reflection, I’ll achieve full customer satisfaction.”

Newell D. Wright, current editor of the JCS/D&CB, another protégé of Hunt’s, has dedicated a special of the journal that H. Keith Hunt started as a tribute to Hunt’s impact. Co-authors, pupils, and friends of H. Keith Hunt have answered the call. The worlds of marketing scholarship and practice have grown thanks to H. Keith Hunt’s work, as the many, many people influenced by him have grown and thrived as well.

As Hunt himself wrote, “my life is more fun living because of my regular contact with all of you” (Hunt 1991).

### **CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:**

David Aron

Professor of Marketing, Dominican University

E-mail: daron@dom.edu

Phone : +1-708-524-6681

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