

## Salesperson stereotypes, consumer emotions, and their impact on information processing

By: Barry J. Babin, [James S. Boles](#), and William R. Darden

Barry J. Babin, James S. Boles and William Darden, "Salesperson Stereotypes, Consumer Emotions, and Their Impact on Information Processing" *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 23 (Spring, 1995), 94-105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070395232002>

**This version of the article has been accepted for publication, after peer review (when applicable) and is subject to Springer Nature's [AM terms of use](#), but is not the Version of Record and does not reflect post-acceptance improvements, or any corrections. The Version of Record is available online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0092070395232002>.**

### **Abstract:**

This study examines salesperson stereotypes and their effect on the selling environment. After reviewing relevant literature, the authors advance a hierarchical structure of salesperson stereotype categories. Experimental results suggest that stereotypes influence consumer emotions, and these emotions then mediate the relationship between stereotype activation and subsequent consumer cognitions.

**Keywords:** salespeople | selling environment | consumers

### **Article:**

The public's consistent interpretation of the term *salesman* has provided fodder for many dramatic works, anecdotes, and jokes that reflect the pervasively held negative stereotype of salespeople (Thompson 1972; Adkins and Swan 1981). As a result, consumers often avoid them deliberately. The common consumer practice of visiting car dealerships after business hours personifies common reactions to salespeople. This practice may be due to beliefs that they can evaluate alternative automobiles better in the absence of the "dreaded" car salesman.

Under some conditions, salespeople may actually inhibit, rather than facilitate, mutually satisfying exchanges. Although consistent salesperson stereotypes have been confirmed (Darden and French 1971; Thompson 1972; Adkins and Swan 1981), the effects of stereotype activation on consumer cognitions remain largely unstudied (cf. Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan 1987; Reingen and Kernan 1993). Further, conceptual evidence related to this question does not permit a confident prediction concerning the influence of a salesperson stereotype on consumer information processing.

The present research contributes to the literature on social cognitions in selling contexts by offering a more complete explanation of how salesperson stereotypes alter consumer cognitions. An experiment is described that contrasts consumer cognitions across selling situations involving two identifiable salesperson stereotypes and one involving a mismatch with a common salesperson stereotype. Emotions associated with each salesperson description are accounted for and posited as mediating the relationship between consumers' social categorization processes and

subsequent information processing. The article suggests that effects of stereotype activation on consumer cognitions are more complicated than any single explanation offered by a current theory or previously applied methodology. Rather, the key to understanding effects of a social stereotype on subsequent cognitions lies in a specific stereotype's impact on consumer emotions. In addition to contributing to the literature on consumers' social cognitions and product-related cognitions, the results have implications for sales management and salesperson training.

## **SOCIAL COGNITIONS AND THE SALESPERSON STEREOTYPE**

The social psychology literature is replete with studies describing various social schemata and their effects on person and object perceptions (see Hamilton 1981 or Holland et al. 1989 for a review). We rely on social schemata daily to organize our knowledge and thinking about members of groups (Holland et al. 1989). We desire to learn a stranger's occupation (activating a schema) almost immediately on conversing with him or her because it helps us understand this person and form a set of expectations. Schema activation subsequently alters the information environment and can affect the information conveyed as well as its coding and recall. If one discovers that a new acquaintance is, for example, an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agent, the ensuing discussion will almost assuredly take a different behavioral and perceptual path than if this information were withheld. Consumer researchers and psychologists, therefore, have an interest in understanding these schematically triggered effects because they frequently frame social exchanges.

### **Stereotype Activation**

Social stereotypes are "widely shared assumptions about certain types of people that are represented cognitively as extensive, well-organized categories or schemata" (Anderson, Klatzky, and Murray 1990, p. 192). These schemata either take the form of a "prototype" or an "exemplar." A prototype is an amalgamation of previous category-related experiences. In memory, it becomes a hypothetical person who possesses the traits and behaviors attributed to a group through experience. Although the prototype is fictional in that no real person may match it exactly, it is recalled more readily and represents the category better than does any existing person (Fiske and Kinder 1981). An exemplar can be distinguished from a prototype because it is simply the single best representation of a category based on previous experience. Thus a malicious dictator may be represented by Adolf Hitler (Smith and Zátrate 1992). Whether represented by a prototype or an exemplar, a salient stereotype causes subsequent activation of cognitions and emotions that have become associated with that category through experience.<sup>1</sup>

People commonly form stereotypes on the basis of a target person's age (Brewer, Dull, and Lui 1981), gender (Hoffman and Hurst 1990), ethnic orientation (Gilbert and Hixon 1991), social class (Fiske 1982), or occupation (Pratto and Bargh 1991). Stereotype members are expected to possess traits and exhibit behaviors consistent with the active schema. Interestingly, individual traits, individual behaviors, or both that are inherently positive (negative) can form a negative (positive) schema when meaningfully characterized into a stereotype (Smith and Zátrate 1992).

---

<sup>1</sup> A full discussion of the exemplar-prototype debate is beyond the scope of this article. In many cases, including this one, an exemplar or prototype representation would lead to similar predictions concerning subsequent effects. For a fuller discussion of this issue, the reader is referred to Smith and Zátrate (1992).

A "politician" stereotype, for instance, is negative but consists of numerous beliefs with positive valence (e.g., a pervasive smile, dressing well, an empathetic appearance, apparent intelligence, etc.).

Stereotypes, like other cognitive schemata, are hierarchical in nature (Rosch 1978; Russell 1991). People hold stereotypes at very general levels, and they also hold stereotypes at increasingly more specific levels. Elderly people, for example, are categorized into "grandmotherly," "elderly statesmen," or other more specific stereotypes (Brewer, Dull, and Lui 1981). These hierarchical schemata are important to understand because the most specific levels may be more salient and have more influence on the information environment (Rosch 1978). Marketing research examining consumers' product category structures illustrates this phenomenon (e.g., Basu 1993; Ratneshwar and Shocker 1991). For example, consumers generally have a "meat" schema, but they also have "chicken," "fried chicken," "steak" and "cold cuts" schemata that may be more meaningful, useful, and operant in a purchase situation.

Salesperson stereotypes may be accessible cognitively as categories such as "car salesman," "door-to-door salesman," "pharmaceutical salesperson," or "professional salesperson." A more specific category shares some, but not all, characteristics of the broader category from which it is derived. So, a "Fuller brush man" may be a more specific instance of door-to-door salesman, and a "pushy car salesperson" may be a more specific instance of a car salesperson. Consumers may react differently to a salesperson depending on the category, the category level, or both that are active.

### Schematic Information Bias

Social psychologists generally agree that stereotypes affect information processing significantly but express disagreement over these effects' precise nature. Generally, stereotypes are viewed as cognitive economizers (Bodenhausen 1990). Reliance on the ready-stored, accessible information saves cognitive resources compared to processing a person's characteristics individually. Therefore, more attention, in the form of analytic processing capacity, can be focused elsewhere (Forgas 1992). However, other research suggests that stereotype activation limits information processing and precipitates a reliance on less analytic and more heuristic types of mechanisms (e.g., Britton and Tesser 1982). The greater reliance on nonanalytic mechanisms is associated with more frequent and numerous stereotype-based biases (Rothbart and Frisch 1992).

### Stereotypes as Economizers

Gilbert and Hixon (1991) suggested that stereotypes are activated automatically and allow one to conserve cognitive capacity or redirect it toward some other task. That is, the stereotype allows for reliance on already stored information rather than motivating an attempt to process individual pieces of information about an encountered person (Pratto and Bargh 1991). Numerous studies support stereotypes as an energy-saving device (e.g., Fiske and Pavelchak 1986; Mackie et al. 1989; Pratto and Bargh 1991; Bodenhausen and Lichtenstein 1987). However, the primary focus in many of these studies was on the judgment of a target person or group, or on the processes involved in storing social-cultural information.

In a selling situation, the focus shifts to how applying a social-cognitive schema (e.g., a stereotype) on a social task affects performance on another task (i.e., product knowledge acquisition). One of few studies addressing how information acquisition is affected by schema activation on a separate task suggests that an active schema (e.g., "taking the subway" script) increases recall of relatively unrelated information (e.g., viewing advertisements) (Trafimow and Wyer 1993). Likewise, experimental subjects performed better on a prose-monitoring task (i.e., greater recall) when a stereotypical person is present in the information environment compared to subjects performing the task without the benefit of a social stereotype (Macrae, Milne, and Bodenhausen 1994). Extending this reasoning to a selling situation, consumers encountering a stereotypical salesperson may be better able to process product information compared to a situation in which their expectations are not matched, and they are required to construct piecemeal judgments about the salesperson. Given limited processing capacity, piecemeal judgments of the person would interfere with processing of individual product characteristics.

### *Stereotypes as Inhibitors*

In contrast, stereotype activation also has been associated with suppression of relevant cognitive activity, thus interfering with analytic processing (see Britton and Tesser 1982). One rationale for this effect suggests that schema activation provides readily available judgments and precipitates a less (more) analytic (heuristic) processing style (e.g., Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan 1987).

In one of two studies supporting this view, subjects processing information about typical cameras generated fewer product attribute-oriented thoughts than did subjects exposed to an atypical camera (Sujan 1985). Subjects exposed to the atypical (no category match) cameras recalled more piecemeal information and had fewer "categorization thoughts" (Sujan 1985, p. 41). Thus the latter subjects made evaluations that were more consistent with analytic-type reasoning rather than reliance on a category-consistent inference. However, the study examined typicality of the product itself; it did not examine salesperson typicality's influence on product information.

Another study suggests that a highly typical salesperson may lead to more heuristic as opposed to analytic information processing. Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan (1987) described an experiment in which research subjects processing product information given by a salesperson whose opening statement did not match schema-based expectations showed increased product (relative to person) recall. They argued that, when a salesperson's opening statement matches expectations, category-based effect supplies an easily accessible heuristic available for consumer decision making, and, consequently, consumers do not engage in analytic processing of product information. That is, the attitudinal valence associated with the salesperson stereotype biases the product evaluation in a directionally congruent fashion (Fiske and Neuberg 1990; Bower and Cohen 1982). This reasoning leads to the prediction that a matching salesperson (active stereotype) reduces processing of product information.

### *Summary*

The conceptual evidence regarding the effect of stereotype activation on a separate task is unclear. On the basis of evidence suggesting that stereotypes would serve as a cognitive economizer, facilitating information processing on a separate task, the following hypothesis can be offered in a selling context:

H1a: The presence of a stereotypical salesperson will result in greater analytic processing of product information (greater proportion of product thoughts) relative to the presence of an atypical salesperson.

The increased product recall, relative to salesperson recall, is indicative of a more analytic style of processing (Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan 1987). However, an analysis of evidence suggesting that stereotype activation promotes a more heuristic and less analytic processing approach would lead to a different prediction:

H1b: The presence of a stereotypical salesperson will result in less analytic recall of product information (lower proportion of product thoughts) relative to the presence of an atypical salesperson stereotype.

### Schema-Congruent Emotion

A thorough understanding of the process by which stereotypes influence information processing requires examination of the effect of emotions associated with this situation. Social stereotypes are laden inevitably with often complex and multidimensional emotional connotations extending beyond mere preference or evaluation (Fiske 1982). In an experiment examining schema-based effect associated with the "old-flame" (past romantic partners) schema (Fiske 1982), subjects were asked to report their feelings toward working with alternative opposite-sex volunteers. Subjects reported experiencing different positive and negative emotional levels when the old-flame schema was active compared to subjects for whom the old flame was inactive.

These findings suggest that active salesperson stereotypes affect specific emotions and alter the overall emotional environment significantly. For example, a used-car salesman is likely to be associated with a different emotional profile than would be a life insurance salesman. Hence the following hypothesis can be made:

H2: Consumer emotions in the selling dyad vary systematically with the type and level of salesperson encountered.

A consumer encountering a "typical" car salesperson will report different emotions than would a consumer encountering a "pushy" car salesperson, and both stereotypes are likely to lead to different reported emotions compared with consumers encountering an atypical salesperson (no active salesperson stereotype).

### Emotional Mediation

A closer examination of consumer emotions in the selling dyad may help resolve the conflicting predictions of schematic effects on information processing. Emotions generally intervene

between an environment and subsequent cognitive and behavioral responses (see Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1992 or Cohen and Areni 1991 for reviews) and can create processing demands precipitating simplified decision mechanisms (Clark 1982; Isen and Daubman 1984). A moderately positive mood, for example, reduces consumer elaboration of arguments presented in an advertisement (Batra and Stayman 1990). Other emotions, related more to surgency or attentional activity (e.g., interest, pride, challenge, etc.), may enhance consumer information processing (Ray and Batra 1983; Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Anderson 1990).

Stroessner, Hamilton, and Mackie (1992) have investigated the effect of mood on information processing. Their experiment suggests that subjects in a neutral mood condition process information more analytically and report fewer stereotype-consistent illusory correlations compared with subjects whose mood has been altered by either a depressing or entertaining film. The emotional environment's effect has also been demonstrated in an advertising context. Ad-evoked, emotionally charged autobiographical memories, induced experimentally, reduced product recall compared with subjects who did not have these thoughts activated (Baumgartner, Sujana, and Bettman 1992). A plausible explanation for these findings is that the heightened emotions, evoked by the autobiographical memory, decreased attentional capacity or subject interest with the product.

Thus, even if a stereotype acts as a cognitive economizer organizing information about an individual, decreased processing capacity could result as the schema-based emotions override emotive phenomena (interest/arousal) that might be present otherwise. Conceptually, various stereotypes become activated under certain circumstances common to the selling dyad. These stereotypes alter the information environment emotionally.

H3: Emotions associated with specific stereotypes mediate the relationship between stereotype activation and consumer cognitions.

Even more specifically, in a context evoking a negative salesperson stereotype, negative feelings such as apprehension or distrust may reduce recall of product information relative to person information. At the same time, feelings of interest or involvement that would normally encourage information processing may be suppressed.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

An automobile sales encounter was selected as a context for the study. This provides a category for which common consumer stereotypes (car "salespeople") are highly likely, well developed, and consistent (Sujana, Bettman, and Sujana 1987). In addition, several subtypes are likely to exist within the overall category.

### **Stereotype Manipulation**

A manipulation of stereotype activation was built into the research design. Rather than using only verbal cues or simple opening statements to activate a particular salesperson schema, salesperson characteristics were varied to evoke different schemata. This methodology is

accepted widely in the social cognition literature (Gilbert and Hixon 1991; Zárate and Smith 1990).

Initial research was conducted to investigate the pervasiveness and potential contents of car salesperson stereotypes among 47 undergraduate students at a large midwestern university. Responses were classified as either general characteristics (e.g., traits) or physical-appearance descriptors. Responses were quite consistent across respondents, although some respondents placed more emphasis on the aggressive or pushy nature of salespeople. These comments were used to form an inventory of potential *most associated characteristics* (MACs).

In addition, respondents were asked to describe the first three emotions that come to mind when they think of a car salesperson. Terms occurring with high frequency included *suspicion/distrust*, *apprehension*, and *helplessness*. Relevant emotions were obtained by comparing responses with a compilation of consumer emotions (Holbrook and Batra 1988).

Anderson and Klatzky's (1987) procedure for devising stereotypes was then followed to determine the MACs most useful in forming car salesperson stereotypes. A new sample of 53 students rated each characteristic for its applicability in describing a car salesperson. Characteristics exceeding the scale's mean value by at least one standard deviation were used to construct potential salesperson descriptions (Anderson and Klatzky 1987).

We were concerned with constructing salesperson descriptions using individual characteristics that were not overwhelmingly negative. A sample of 133 undergraduate students were asked to rate each surviving MAC based on whether that trait, taken alone, was an indicator of a bad person. Responses to the MACs are relatively positive or neutral (see Table 1) with mean scores ranging from 1.60 (*walking quickly*) to 3.02 (*speaking loudly*).<sup>2</sup> The MACs were then used to construct potential "matches" to consumers' car salesperson stereotypes.

**Table 1.** Evaluation of Most Associated Characteristics (MACs)

Characteristic	Mean Negativity Score <sup>a</sup>	SD
Smiling constantly	2.08	0.92
Walking quickly	1.60	0.58
Smoking	2.30	0.87
Being overweight	1.90	0.85
Have thinning hair	2.05	0.68
Dressing unstylishly	2.15	0.90
Singing loudly	3.02	0.94
Shaking hands	1.78	0.63
Lying	4.44	0.82

a. Items on 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

<sup>2</sup> Higgins and Rholes (1976) discussed the changing valence of traits when construed in terms of a specific role. This change is most likely to occur when an unexpected trait is associated with some role. For example, assigning the trait of "stupid" to a teacher, resulting in a "stupid teacher," leads to a more negative evaluation than the evaluation of stupidity would produce alone. When a trait is expected or consistent with a category, its valence is affected less as in a "polite stewardess."

Eight different car selling scenarios were created. Each scenario described a consumer's visit to a car dealership (fictitious) to "find out about" a specific car (fictitious). During the visit, the consumer is approached by a salesperson, directed toward the car, and exposed to information about the car. The scenario also included a picture of the car. A panel of five judges sorted eight scenarios on the basis of salesperson typicality. From these results, two scenarios were devised containing salesperson descriptions expected to be quite typical of the overall category "salesperson" (see appendix).

One was similar to the type most closely described as the obnoxious, overbearing, or pushy salesperson (based on open-ended responses); the other was more general and labeled appropriately with the title "typical car salesperson." These two levels corresponded closely to descriptions of car salespeople obtained in earlier qualitative research. In addition, a third scenario was retained containing an atypical salesperson.<sup>3</sup>

All manipulations were conducted by varying the presence, the absence, or the degree of MACs listed above. Table 2 gives a description of how MACs were varied across the three scenarios. In addition, different closing statements were given based on pretest responses. These responses suggested that a car salesperson would use a very direct, obvious, and product-related closing statement. Conversely, we used a consumer-oriented and rather nonobvious closing statement in the atypical condition. All information not related to the salesperson (i.e., product information) was held constant across all three scenarios. The scenarios contained approximately the same number of car (11) and person (8) attributes (see appendix).

**Table 2.** Salesperson Description Contents

Characteristic	Category		
	Pushy	Typical	Atypical
Smiling	Constantly	Often	Not mentioned
Approach	Walks quickly	Promptly	Shyly
Smoking	Yes (flicks cigarette away)	Yes (steps on cigarette at a distance)	Not mentioned
Stature	Medium height and overweight	Medium height and slightly overweight	Medium height and weight
Hair	Thinning but combed to hide it	Thinning	Well-groomed
Clothing	Unstylish	Unstylish	Stylish
Voice	"Usual loud voice"	"Loud voice"	"Rather quiet voice"
Handshake	Initiated by salesperson	Initiated by salesperson	Initiated by consumer
Close <sup>a</sup>	Very direct and product oriented	Direct and product oriented	Unclear and consumer oriented

a. Not rated as a most associated characteristic.

### Experiment Description

An experiment was conducted using the three levels of salesperson (see appendix). Subjects were 163 undergraduate marketing students. They were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions. Instructions preceding the scenario asked subjects to imagine, as much as possible, that they are truly in this situation. The procedure was timed, allowing subjects only enough time to ensure that the scenario had been read completely (Rime, Philippot, and Cisamolo 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Given the atypical description, this level could be considered a control. That is, it is not expected to match a well-defined car salesperson stereotype. Thus one could surmise that the results related to this level are unaffected by any salesperson stereotype.



After reading the scenario and following a brief distractor task, subjects listed their recall of both the car and the salesperson. Following this, a questionnaire was administered containing various measures needed in testing the hypotheses. Finally, subjects rated their assessment of the scenario's realism and were debriefed fully.

## Measures

The main dependent measure in the study is subjects' cognitive response to the selling situation, or recall. A composite indicator of analytic processing was formed by taking the ratio of nonredundant items recalled about the car to the total of all nonredundant items recalled about the person and the car (Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan 1987). Increases in the ratio score indicate increased analytic processing (0.50 indicates equal ratio).

Both the free-association study and additional qualitative analyses allowed us to narrow down the range of emotions most relevant to this particular selling context. Multi-item indexes were taken from a composite emotion measurement inventory, based on how well they matched responses from the pretests (Holbrook and Batra 1988). Specifically, skepticism, helplessness, and interest/arousal were included. Coefficient alphas are .93 for skepticism (three items), .73 for helplessness (three items), and .77 for interest/arousal (four items).<sup>4</sup>

Four Likert-type items assessing perceived car salesperson typicalness were summed, forming a typicality index that was used as a manipulation check ( $\alpha = .96$ ).<sup>5</sup> Single-item measures of how obnoxious and pushy subjects felt the salesperson was and how well they could "picture" the salesperson were included. These were helpful in validating the more specific salesperson stereotype (pushy).

## Manipulation Check

Manipulation checks were conducted. Two levels should fit subjects' stereotypes of a car salesperson (pushy or obnoxious and typical), whereas the third should not (atypical). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) (see Table 3) suggests that subjects' typicalness perceptions varied across the three treatment levels ( $F[2, 160] = 134.1, p < .0001$ ). The pushy-salesperson and typical-salesperson levels, hypothesized as matching a specific and more general salesperson stereotype category, respectively, are associated with relatively high typicalness scores (13.4 and 15.1, respectively) compared to the atypical salesperson (6.8), and each pairwise comparison is

---

<sup>4</sup> The scales were composed of the following 7-point items: skepticism: skeptical, suspicious, and distrustful; helplessness: helpless, powerless, and dominated; interest: interested, active, excited, and aroused. The Interest scale is intended to reflect the extent to which one's system is energized with respect to allocating attentional capacity to this situation. Feelings of interest have obvious implications for the amount of attention paid to the automobile in a car-buying context. Thus *interest*, rather than *arousal*, seems a more descriptive emotive term and avoids confusion with arousal's use as a discriminatory dimension (see Smith and Ellsworth 1984). Also, the Holbrook and Batra (1988) scales are based on a conglomeration of well-known efforts in the area of emotions and emotional measurement (e.g., Mehrabian and Russell 1974; Plutchik 1980; Izard 1977; etc.).

<sup>5</sup> The four items comprising the scale are the following: "The salesperson described is typical of most car salespeople"; "If asked to describe a typical car salesperson, I would describe him/her a lot like the one in the story"; "The salesperson described fit my stereotype of a car salesman"; and "Salespersons like the one described are very common."

significant ( $p < .05$ ). The ordering also is consistent with a hierarchical salesperson cognitive structure. That is, the typical category is most representative of the general salesperson category. The more specific pushy-salesperson category is rated as typical, but not as typical as its more general counterpart.

**Table 3.** Analyses of Manipulations: Means by Treatment Levels

Treatment Level	Dependent Variables							
	Typicalness <sup>a</sup>		Obnoxiousness		Pushy		Vividness	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pushy	13.4	3.20	4.4	0.98	4.5	0.93	4.2	0.89
Typical	15.1	2.74	3.9	1.08	3.8	0.98	4.0	0.75
Atypical (no match)	6.8	2.80	1.1	0.37	1.1	0.44	3.8	0.82

a. The scale range is from a low of 4 to a high of 20 for typicalness and a low of 1 and a high of 5 for the other dependent variables.

Whereas the pushy-salesperson and typical-salesperson levels should evoke very similar schemata, the pushy car salesperson should evoke relatively higher scores on obnoxiousness and pushiness (range = 1 to 5). Further, attributions of these traits to the atypical salesperson should be lower than each of the other levels. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) model predicted obnoxiousness and pushiness across the treatment levels ( $F[4, 118] = 109.7, p < .0001$ ). The ANOVA models suggest that obnoxiousness ( $F[2, 160] = 217.8, p < .0001$ ) and pushiness ( $F[2, 160] = 340.6, p < .0001$ ), varied across each level as expected. Subjects attributed significantly more obnoxiousness to the pushy-salesperson category ( $M = 4.4$ ) than they did to the typical ( $M = 3.9$ ) or atypical levels ( $M = 1.1$ ). The results were similar for pushiness ( $M = 4.5, 3.8,$  and  $1.1$ , respectively). Again, multiple range tests show that, for both dependent variables, each pairwise comparison is significant ( $p < .05$ ).

An active stereotype generates a highly vivid image of a category member (Anderson and Klatzky 1987; Anderson, Klatzky, and Murray 1990). Thus a person description that evokes a stereotype should result in an increased ability to "picture" that individual. A one-way ANOVA model was fit predicting ability to picture across levels (range = 1 to 5). Once again, the results support the manipulations ( $F = 3.0, p < .05$ ), with the means ranging from 3.8 for the atypical salesperson to 4.2 for the pushy one.

## RESULTS

First, the effect of salesperson stereotypes on consumer information processing is examined through effects on recall. Next, an analysis is described investigating variation in emotions across stereotype levels. These two analyses set up a third set investigating stereotype-based emotional mediation of consumer information processing (Baron and Kenny 1986). These last analyses are potential mechanisms of the processing effects and thus discrepancies between Hypotheses 1a and 1b.

### Processing Effects

Hypothesis 1a predicts enhanced analytic processing (i.e., greater product recall relative to person recall) in the presence of any "matching" salesperson (active stereotype) because stereotype

availability conserves cognitive resources. Hypothesis 1b predicts the opposite; stereotypes promote a more heuristic processing style, so consumers for whom a stereotype is made available will recall a lower ratio of product to salesperson information than will others.

An ANOVA model tested the ratio of product to person thoughts as a function of the experimental treatment. A high score on this measure is consistent with a relatively analytic information processing model. Results indicate significant variation across treatment levels ( $F[2, 159] = 3.31, p < .05$ ). Greater proportions of product information were recalled in the typical-salesperson and atypical-salesperson levels compared to the pushy-salesperson level. Multiple range tests confirm that the pushy-salesperson level differs significantly ( $p < .05$ ) from both the typical-salesperson and atypical-salesperson level (see Table 4).<sup>6</sup> Statistical results using number of car attributes recalled as a dependent variable ( $F[2, 159] = 3.59, p < .05$ ), including the multiple range tests and regression estimators, are quite consistent with findings using the ratio measure. Thus only the ratio measure will be reported in statistical analyses of subject recall.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 4.** Cell Means by Treatment Level

Treatment Level	Recall Measure			
	Ratio		Car Attributes	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pushy salesman	0.43	.16	4.69	2.2
Typical salesman	0.52	.14	5.86	2.4
Atypical salesman	0.53	.15	5.33	2.1

The results support a relationship between stereotype activation and consumer information processing but do not definitively address whether stereotypes serve as a cognitive economizer (H1a) or suppressor (H1b). Inconsistent with Hypothesis 1a, activation of a general car salesperson stereotype (typical salesperson) is associated with recall similar to that of the atypical salesperson. Whereas the mean car attributes are consistent with Hypothesis 1a directionally, the ratio measures are virtually identical. Consistent with Hypothesis 1b, subjects in the atypical condition displayed recall consistent with analytic processing (greater ratio of piecemeal car to person thoughts) compared to subjects in the pushy-salesperson level. These findings are consistent with a previous experiment investigating consumers' salesperson knowledge structures and their effects on information processing (Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan 1987).<sup>8</sup> However, ratio measures of .52 and .53 for the typical and atypical levels, respectively,

<sup>6</sup> Recall overall (both car and person attributes) was directionally higher in both stereotype match conditions (11.3, typical and 10.9, pushy) than in the atypical condition (10.1). Person recall only was greatest in the pushy-salesperson condition (6.2), second greatest in the typical-salesperson condition (5.4), and lowest in the atypical-salesperson condition (4.7). These results are consistent with the idea that a more specific stereotype (pushy) is more vivid and thus would be recalled better than a general stereotype, both of which would be more easily recalled than a nondescript person (Brewer, Dull, and Lui 1981). We thank a reviewer for this insightful comment.

<sup>7</sup> Additional models were run to investigate the potential confounding effects of overall salesperson favorability. Thus a three-item measure of attitude toward the salesperson was introduced to each model as a covariate ( $\alpha = .86$ ). This measure failed to relate significantly to either the ratio measure ( $F = .49, p = .49$ ) or items recalled about the car ( $F = .19, p = .66$ ). Further, including this measure did not affect the significance of the experimental variable.

<sup>8</sup> The Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan (1987) study relied on a match/no match (two experimental level) design and did not draw distinctions between schema hierarchies. However, the categories contrasted there are representative of relatively specific categories (e.g., retail clothing salesperson).

are inconsistent with Hypothesis 1b. Neither Hypothesis 1a nor Hypothesis 1b is supported conclusively.

### Schema-Based Emotions

Hypothesis 2 proposes that different levels of the experimental variable are associated with different emotional profiles. Thus a MANOVA was tested predicting subjects' skepticism, helplessness, and interest/arousal over the different stereotype activation levels. Differences across treatment levels are supported ( $F[6, 318] = 29.7, p < .0001$ ). The stereotype treatment ANOVAs predict each emotion is significant, supporting Hypothesis 2. Model  $F$  ratios are 15.3 for interest/arousal ( $p < .05$ ), 77.2 for skeptical, and 52.5 for helplessness ( $p < .001$  for both).

The cell means depict the emotional profile associated with each salesperson description. The pushy-salesperson stereotype is characterized by relatively high skepticism ( $\bar{X} = 17.56$ ) and helplessness ( $\bar{X} = 11.40$ ) but relatively low interest/arousal ( $\bar{X} = 10.80$ ). The typical-salesperson stereotype evokes levels of skepticism ( $\bar{X} = 16.87$ ) and helplessness ( $\bar{X} = 10.75$ ) lower than those above, whereas interest/arousal levels are relatively higher ( $\bar{X} = 12.53$ ). The atypical salesperson is associated with a markedly different emotional profile. Subjects receiving this treatment level reported far lower levels of skepticism ( $\bar{X} = 8.43$ ) and helplessness ( $\bar{X} = 4.48$ ) than in either alternative condition.

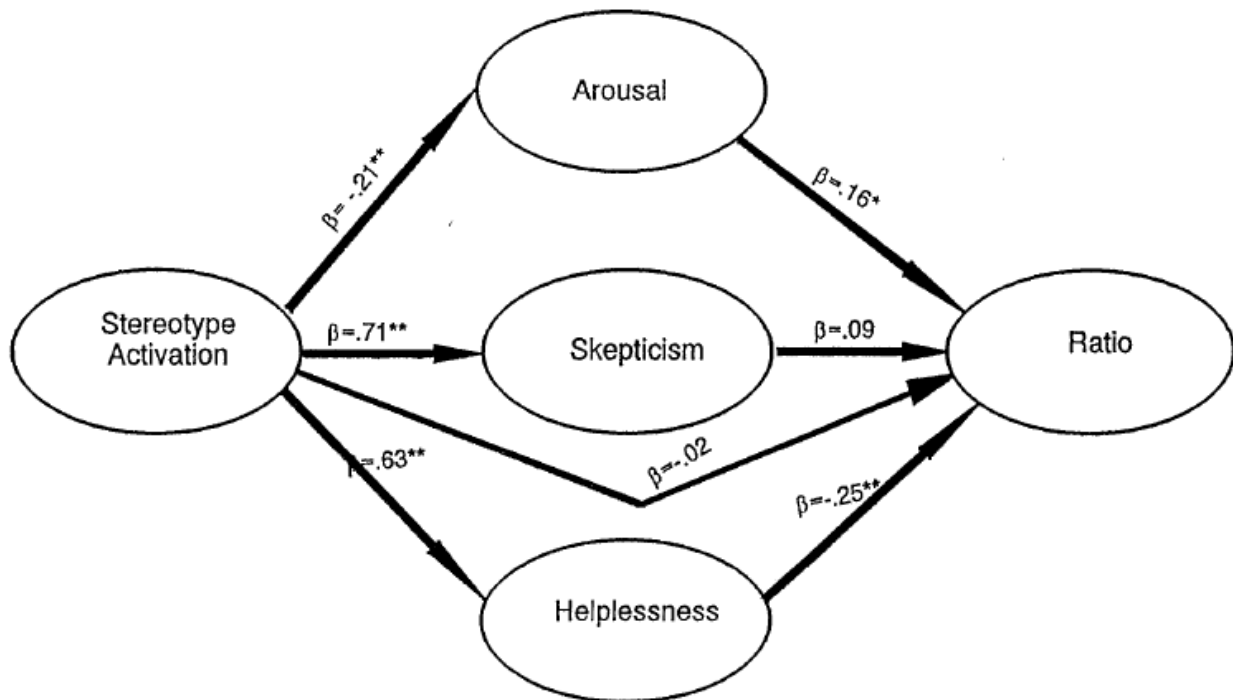
Multiple range tests indicate that both the pushy and typical salesperson result in significantly higher skepticism and helplessness than does the nonmatching atypical salesperson ( $p < .05$ ). Subjects receiving an atypical-salesperson description report higher interest/arousal levels ( $\bar{X} = 15.93$ ) than do subjects in either matching condition, although only the comparison with the pushy-salesperson level is significant ( $p < .05$ ). In sum, each salesperson tends to create a different emotional environment within which information processing occurs, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Although the two stereotypical salespeople were associated with similar emotions, the pushy-salesperson stereotype activated more intense levels of the negative emotions. In contrast, the atypical salesperson evoked low levels of negative emotions considered here and heightened feelings of interest/arousal. Our final analyses investigate the potential for emotions associated with each salesperson to mediate the information environment.

### Emotional Mediation

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) model predicting ratio using the experimental variable and subject interest/arousal, skepticism, and helplessness as predictors was estimated to test Hypothesis 3. The overall model predicted ratio significantly ( $F[5, 156] = 3.4, p < .01$ ). Partial sums of squares indicate that subject interest/arousal ( $F = 5.0, p < .05$ ); and helplessness ( $F = 6.1, p < .01$ ), predict ratio significantly, whereas skepticism does not ( $F = .6, p > .1$ ). Consistent with the role of a mediating variable, controlling for emotions attenuates the relationship between the experimental variable (stereotype level) and ratio ( $F = 2.13, p > .1$ ).

A path analysis was performed to reproduce these results and better illustrate the mediational effects (Baron and Kenny 1986). Because the experimental variable is categorical, dummy variable coding was used to create independent variables used in the regression models. Given three categories, two dummy variables are required. One dummy variable was formed by coding the pushy-salesperson level "1" and the typical-salesperson and atypical-salesperson levels "0." Given the earlier findings showing that the typical-salesperson and atypical-salesperson levels affect ratio similarly, this forms the dummy variable of primary interest.<sup>9</sup> A preliminary regression model, using only these dummy variables as predictors of ratio, yielded the expected results that only the dummy variable representing the pushy stereotype level predicted ratio significantly ( $\beta = -.21, p < .05$ ).



**Figure 1.** Path Analysis Testing Emotional Mediation of Information Processing  
\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

Figure 1 depicts results of the regression models comprising the depicted model. The series of regressions comprising the path analysis satisfy conditions supporting emotional mediation in this particular environment. First, a significant relationship was shown between the independent

<sup>9</sup> The coding of the second dummy variable is arbitrary with the effect of the "uncoded" level partitioned from the intercept. In this case, the second dummy variable was coded 1 for typical, 0 otherwise. Thus an initial regression, predicting ratio with only the two dummy variables, replicated results of the corresponding analysis of variance. The dummy variable representing the contrast between the pushy-salesperson level (1 = pushy, 0 = otherwise) and other levels was significant as mentioned above, whereas the other dummy variable was not ( $\beta = -.01, n.s.$ ). Therefore, for clarity in illustration, the path model (Figure 1) reflects only results for the dummy variable representing the significant contrast. However, both dummy variables were used in regressions predicting the three emotions and in the full model. As a point of information, both dummy variables predict each emotion quite well (five of six significant parameter estimates). In terms of overall F ratio and individual parameter tests, the full regression model replicated the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) model described above, but depiction of the additional dummy variable would add nothing to the test of mediation.

variable and ratio. Second, a regression model demonstrated that two potential mediators (interest/arousal and helplessness) predict ratio significantly after the independent variable (stereotype activation) was controlled for. Finally, the independent variable's effect on ratio ( $\beta = -.21$ ) is attenuated when the mediators are included in the model ( $\beta = -.02$ ). Consistent with Hypothesis 3, the emotions associated with each salesperson description appear to mediate the relationship between salesperson stereotypes and consumer cognitions.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our first results showed that a salesperson evoking a general "typical car salesperson" stereotype resulted in information processing similar to that of an atypical salesperson. However, by altering the salesperson characteristic slightly, evoking a "pushy salesperson" stereotype, product recall was diminished significantly. Thus this experiment yielded results that a dichotomized experimental variable would be unable to recover; different stereotypes can have quite different effects on cognitions. The contrast of the atypical and pushy salesperson tended to support the analytic processing suppressor hypothesis (H1b) predicting decreased product recall because of social schema activation, but the similar recall produced by the atypical and typical salesperson was inconsistent with this hypothesis. Only very limited support was found for the opposing hypothesis (H1a) suggesting greater recall of product information in the presence of a stereotypical salesperson.

Consideration of consumer emotions clears up the findings considerably. Consistent with prior evidence suggesting that schema-evoked emotions create significant processing demands (Stroessner, Hamilton, and Mackie 1992), schema activation was associated with changes in emotions that decreased analytic processing as indicated by the ratio of product to person recall.

Specifically, higher helplessness contributed most to this effect. The emotions cause processing demands, making reliance on a simpler evaluative process (reliance on some heuristic) more likely. Further, subjects exposed to a stereotypical salesperson expressed lower interest/arousal, precipitating decreased analytic processing. This finding adds to the supposition of Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan (1987), suggesting that emotions resulting from schema activation suppress the meaningful encoding of product information, which makes analytic processing less likely. Thus the hypothesis positing less analytic processing (H1b) is supported under conditions similar to the pushy-salesperson scenario used here.

However, stereotypes may interfere with analytic processing only when emotions of the appropriate type, intensity, or both are evoked. If a stereotype is associated with relatively subtle emotions, insignificant emotional intensities (cf. furniture sales representative, waiter, desk clerk, etc.), or both, as is often the case in social psychological studies, it may act as a cognitive economizer. Empirical results consistent with the cognitive-economizer hypothesis have often used relatively neutral stereotypes (i.e., doctor, artist, real estate agent, etc.) as experimental stimuli (Mackie et al. 1989). Our research suggests that this discrepancy can be resolved only by considering specific emotions and emotional intensities associated with different stereotypes. Future efforts at examining processing effects that are due to schema activation should account for the associated emotions precisely. Just as emotions mediate relationships between the

environment and subsequent reactions in other environments, emotions serve as mediators here as well.

Practically, these results support further the notion that salesperson characteristics and mannerisms affect the selling dyad. An atypical salesperson may lead to more satisfying exchange relationships in situations where increased analytic processing improves decision making. However, our results also suggest that conclusions concerning typicality, in and of itself, are difficult to draw unless a clear understanding of the associated emotional profile is understood.

Therefore, sales managers may benefit from a detailed understanding of how salespeople in their company or industry are viewed. Techniques useful in this regard are described, including determining and assessing the MACs associated with a specific group of salespeople. Further, manipulations of these characteristics could be conducted to examine ways of overcoming a negative stereotype. In many categories, truly successful salespeople may override a negative stereotype and perhaps evoke neutral or positive emotions where negative feelings would be present otherwise. This could be the result of getting a consumer to process individual information about a salesperson, but given a brief encounter typical in some selling situations, schema switching (activating a different stereotype) may occur. Similar processes have been studied in a product categorization context (Stayman, Alden, and Smith 1992).

The research also has implications beyond those for salespeople. For example, some service provider stereotypes may actually enhance a consumption environment. This may occur when a stereotype overrides anxiety that might accompany the buying situation ordinarily. A typical pharmacist helping a customer with an important health-related purchase may provide such an example. Alternatively, a physician who evokes a doctor stereotype may evoke comfort compared to an atypical physician. Conversely, attorneys and politicians may benefit from atypical appearances and mannerisms that fail to evoke intense negative emotions activated by their respective stereotypes. Further research is needed directed at understanding how and when consumers' information processing is altered in the presence of a stereotypical salesperson or service provider that evokes emotions not accompanying the exchange dyad in their absence.

Attempts should be made to replicate our findings in a field setting to extend their generalizability. Further, the differences in emotional intensity, particularly for skepticism, may have been subject to a ceiling effect. The pushy-salesperson level achieved mean skepticism scores near the maximum value of the scale (17.6/21). This may have attenuated the relationship between skepticism and information processing. A ceiling effect also may have prevented pairwise comparisons between emotions associated with the typical and pushy stereotype levels from attaining significance. As is, only directional support is found for the notion that relatively specific stereotypes produce more heightened emotions: In addition, a more complete emotional inventory might indicate which emotions increase or decrease analytic processing. This would increase our understanding of the impact of specific consumer emotions. For example, do salesperson stereotypes exist that evoke levels of positive emotions, and do these influence information processing in a manner similar to the effects found here?

In conclusion, we cannot expect that common stereotypical views of salespeople are likely to change in the near future. Thus they are likely to continue to influence consumer behavior. Our study was aimed at understanding these effects better. The results suggest that schema-based emotions are an important variable that need be considered in potential explanations of behavioral and cognitive changes associated with different stereotypes. It is hoped that they will be useful in future studies of schematic effects and will eventually contribute to practice as well.

## REFERENCES

- Adkins, Robert T. and John E. Swan. 1981. "Improving the Public Acceptance of Sales People Through Professionalization." *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management* (Fall/Winter): 32-51.
- Anderson, Kristen Joan. 1990. "Arousal and the Inverted-U Hypothesis: A Critique of Neiss's 'Reconceptualizing Arousal,'" *Psychological Bulletin* 107 (January): 96-100.
- Anderson, Susan M. and Roberta L. Klatzky. 1987. "Traits and Social Stereotypes: Levels of Categorization and Person Perceptions." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53 (August): 235-246.
- Anderson, Susan M., Roberta L. Klatzky, and John Murray. 1990. "Traits and Social Stereotypes: Efficiency Differences in Social Information Processing." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53 (August): 192-201.
- Babin, Barry J., William R. Darden, and Mitch Griffin. 1992. "Some Comments on the Role of Emotions in Consumer Behavior." In *Enhancing Knowledge Development in Marketing*. Eds. R. P. Leone and V. Kumar. Chicago: American Marketing Association, 130-139.
- Baron, Reuben M. and David A. Keany. 1986. "The Moderator-Mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51 (December): 1173-1182.
- Basu, Kunal. 1993. "Consumers' Categorization Processes: An Examination with Two Alternative Methodological Paradigms." *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 2 (2): 97-122.
- Batra, Rajeev and Douglass M. Stayman. 1990. "The Role of Mood in Advertising Effectiveness." *Journal of Consumer Research* 17 (September): 203-214.
- Baumgartner, Hans, Mita Sujana, and James R. Bettman. 1992. "Autobiographical Memories, Affect, and Consumer Information Processing." *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 1 (1): 53-82.
- Bodenhausen, Galen V. 1990. "Stereotypes as Judgmental Heuristics: Evidence of Circadian Variations in Discrimination." *Psychological Science* 1: 319-322.
- Bodenhausen, Galen V. and M. Lichtenstein. 1987. "Social Stereotypes and Information-Processing Strategies: The Impact of Task Complexity." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52 (June): 871-880.



- Bower, Gordon H. and Paul R. Cohen. 1982. "Emotional Influences in Memory and Thinking: Data and Theory." In *Affect and Cognition*. Eds. Margaret S. Clark and Susan T. Fiske. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 291-331.
- Brewer, Marilyn B., Valerie Dull, and Layton Lui. 1981. "Perceptions of the Elderly: Stereotypes as Prototypes." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 41 (October): 656-670.
- Britton, Bruce K. and Abraham Tesser. 1982. "Effects of Prior Knowledge on Use of Cognitive Capacity in Three Complex Cognitive Tasks." *Journal of Verbal Learning and Behavior* 21 (Fall): 421-436.
- Clark, Margaret S. 1982. "A Role for Arousal in the Link between Feeling States, Judgments, and Behavior." In *Affect and Cognition*. Eds. Margaret S. Clark and Susan T. Fiske. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1-31.
- Cohen, Joel B. and Charles S. Areni. 1991. "Affect and Consumer Behavior." In *Handbook of Consumer Research*. Eds. Thomas S. Robertson and Harold Kassarijn. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 188-240.
- Darden, William R. and Warren A. French. 1971. "Dimensions of Salesman Stereotypes and Their Relation to Executive Characteristics." *Social Science Quarterly* (March): 959-967.
- Fiske, Susan T. 1982. "Schema-Triggered Affect: Applications to Social Perception." In *Affect and Cognition*. Eds. Margaret S. Clark and Susan T. Fiske. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 55-78.
- Fiske, Susan T. and Donald R. Kinder. 1981. "Involvement, Expertise, and Schema Use: Evidence from Political Cognition." In *Personality, Cognition, and Social Interaction*. Eds. Nancy Cantor and John F. Kihlstrom. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 171-190.
- Fiske, Susan T. and S. L. Neuberg. 1990. "A Continuum Model of Impression Formation, from Category-Based to Individuating Processes: Influences of Information and Motivation on Attention and Interpretation." In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. Vol. 23. Ed. M. P. Zanna. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1-74.
- Fiske, Susan T. and M. Pavelchak. 1986. "Category-Based versus Piecemeal-Based Affective Responses: Developments in Schema-Triggered Affect." *Handbook of Motivation and Cognition*. Eds. R. M. Sorrentio and E. T. Higgins. New York: Guilford, 167-202.
- Forgas, Joseph P. 1992. "On Mood and Peculiar People: Affect and Person Typicality in Impression Formation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62 (May): 863-875.
- Gilbert, Daniel T. and J. Gregory Hixon. 1991. "The Trouble of Thinking: Activation and Application of Stereotypical Beliefs." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 60 (May): 509-517.
- Hamilton, D. L. 1981. "Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior: Some Thoughts on the Cognitive Approach." In *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior*. Ed. D. L. Hamilton. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 333-353.

- Higgins, Tory E. and William S. Rholes. 1976. "Impression Formation and Role Fulfillment: A 'Holistic' Approach." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 12 (September): 422-435.
- Hoffman, Curt and Nancy Hurst. 1990. "Gender Stereotypes: Perception or Rationalization." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58 (February): 197-208.
- Holbrook, Morris B. and Rajeev Batra. 1988. "Toward a Standardized Profile (SEP) Useful in Measuring Responses to Nonverbal Components of Advertising." In *Nonverbal Communication in Advertising*. Eds. S. Hacker and D. W. Stewart. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 95-110.
- Holland, John, Keith J. Holyoak, Richard Nisbett, and Paul R. Thagard. 1989. *Induction*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Iseu, Alice and Kimberly A. Daubman. 1984. "The Influence of Affect on Categorization." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 47 (December): 1206-1217.
- Izard, Carroll. 1977. *Human Emotions*. New York: Plenum.
- Mackie, Diane M., David L. Hamilton, Holly A. Schroth, Clark J. Carlisle, Brian E Gersho, Linda M. Meneses, Beth F. Nedler, and Lisa D. Reichel. 1989. "The Effects of Induced Mood on Expectancy-Based Illusory Correlations." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 25: 524-544
- Macrae, C. Neil, Alan B. Milne, and Galen V. Bodenhausen. 1994. "Stereotypes as Energy-Saving Devices: A Peek inside the Cognitive Toolbox." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 66 (January): 37-47.
- Mehrabian, Albert and James R. Russell. 1974. *An Approach to Environmental Psychology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Plutchik, Robert. 1980. *Emotion: Psychoevolutionary Synthesis*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Pratto, Felecia and John A. Bargh. 1991. "Stereotyping Based on Apparently Individuating Information: Trait and Global Components of Sex Stereotypes under Attention Overload." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 27 (1): 26-47.
- Ratneshwar, S. and Allan D. Shocker. 1991. "Substitution in Use and the Role of Usage Context in Product Category Structures." *Journal of Marketing Research* 28 (August): 281-295.
- Ray, Michael L. and Rajeev Batra. 1983. "Emotion and Persuasion in Advertising: What We Do and Don't Know about Affect." In *Advances in Consumer Research*. Vol. 11. Eds. Robert P. Bagozzi and Alice M. Tybout. Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research, 37-42.
- Reingen, Peter H. and Jerome B. Kernan. 1993. "Social Perception and Interpersonal Influence: Some Consequences of the Physical Attractiveness Stereotype in a Personal Selling Setting." *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 2 (1): 25-38.
- Rime, Bernard, Pierre Philippot, and Daniela Cisamolo. 1990. "Social Schemata of Peripheral Changes in Emotion." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 59 (July): 38-49.

- Rosch, Eleanor. 1978. "Principles of Categorization." In *Cognition and Categorization*. Eds. Eleanor Rosch and Barbara Lloyd. Hillsdale, N J: Lawrence Erlbaum, 27-48.
- Rothbart, Myron and Deborah Frisch. 1992. "Unfinished Mind or Unfinished Manuscript?" *Psychological Inquiry* 3 (2): 187-189.
- Russell, James A. 1991. "In Defense of a Prototype Approach to Emotion Concepts." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 60 (January): 37-47.
- Smith, Craig A. and Phoebe C. Ellsworth. 1985. "Patterns of Cognitive Appraisal in Emotion." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 48 (October): 813-838.
- Smith, Eliot R. and Michael A. Zárate. 1992. "Exemplar-Based Model of Social Judgment." *Psychology Review* 99 (January): 3-21.
- Stayman, Douglas M., Dana L. Alden, and Karen H. Smith. 1992. "Some Effects of Schematic Processing on Consumer Expectations and Disconfirmation Judgments." *Journal of Consumer Research* 19 (September): 240-255.
- Stroessner, Steven J., David L. Hamilton, and Diane M. Mackie. 1992. "Affect and Stereotyping: The Effect of Induced Mood on Distinctiveness-Based Illusory Correlations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62 (April): 564-576.
- Sujan, Mita. 1985. "Consumer Knowledge: Effects on Evaluation Strategies Mediating Consumer Judgments." *Journal of Consumer Research* 12 (June): 31-46.
- Sujan, Mita, James R. Bettman, and Harish Sujan. 1987. "Effects of Consumer Expectations on Information Processing in Selling Encounters." *Journal of Marketing Research* 23 (November): 346-353.
- Thompson, Donald L. 1972. "Stereotype of the Salesman." *Harvard Business Review* 50 (January/February): 20-29.
- Trafimow, David and Robert S. Wyer, Jr. 1993. "Cognitive Representations of Mundane Social Events." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64 (September): 365-376.
- Zárate, Michael A. and Elliot R. Smith. 1990. "Person Categorization and Stereotyping." *Social Cognition* 8: 161-185.

## APPENDIX

### Typical-Salesperson Description

You have decided to begin shopping for a new car. The model you are most interested in is the 1993 Concept. Because you have the afternoon free, you decide to go to a dealer and take a close look at the Concept.

On arriving at the dealer, you are approached by an employee. He stomps out his cigarette at some distance, walks promptly over to you, smiles, introduces himself as Bobby, and hands you a business card. He is of medium height, slightly overweight, and his hair is thinning. He is wearing polyester slacks and a short-sleeve sports shirt with an unstylish tie that reaches his belt buckle.

He shakes your hand and comments, "What car can I help you with today?"

You reply, "Mostly, I'm just looking."

"Well, I've got some good deals on Concourses and Arrows today, and you know those are both nice cars!" Bobby adds in a loud voice.

You say, "Would you please tell me where I can find the new Concepts?"

Bobby walks across the lot with you pointing out various other makes of cars.

You reach a four-door Concept and start looking at it. Some of the options on this car include air conditioning, automatic transmission, antilock brakes, a stereo cassette player, and power locks. The price indicated on the sticker is \$11,999. Bobby points out that the car has a driver's side air bag, a three-year limited warranty, a rustproof coating, and has been "prepped."

You begin to leave by saying you need to look around. Bobby smiles again and says, "Remember, if you come back tomorrow, I might not be able to give you as good of a deal as I could today. Anyway, don't wait too long, this car could be gone tomorrow!"

### Pushy-Salesperson Type

You have decided to begin shopping for a new car. The model you are most interested in is the 1993 Concept. Because you have the afternoon free, you decide to go to a dealer and take a close look at the Concept.

On arriving at the dealer, you are approached by an employee. He walks quickly over to you, flicks his cigarette away, introduces himself as Bobby, and hands you a business card. He is of medium height, overweight, smiles constantly, and his hair is thinning but combed to try and hid it. He is wearing polyester slacks and a short-sleeve sports shirt with an unstylish tie that reaches about two thirds the way to his belt buckle.

He shakes your hand and comments, "What car can I help you with today?"

You reply, "Mostly, I'm just looking."

"Well, I've got some good deals on Concourses and Arrows today, and you know those are both nice cars!" Bobby adds in his usual loud voice.

You say, "Would you please tell me where I can find the new Concepts?"

Bobby walks across the lot with you pointing out various other makes of cars.

You reach a four-door Concept and start looking at it. Some of the options on this car include air conditioning, automatic transmission, antilock brakes, a stereo cassette player, and power locks. The price indicated on the sticker is \$11,999. Bobby points out that the car has a driver's side air bag, a three-year limited warranty, a rust-proof coating, and has been "prepped."

You begin to leave by saying you need to look around. Bobby, still smiling, says, "If you leave, I won't be able to get you as good of a deal as I can right now. Anyway, you won't find a better car or a better price anywhere or anytime!"

### Atypical Description

You have decided to begin shopping for a new car. The model you are most interested in is the 1993 Concept. Because you have the afternoon free, you decide to go to a dealer and take a close look at the Concept.

On arriving at the dealer, you are approached by an employee. After giving you a minute, the employee walks over to you rather shyly, introduces himself as Bobby, and offers you a business card. He is of medium height and weight and appears fairly well fit. He is wearing a

neat gray suit, a white long-sleeve dress shirt and a matching tie that appears stylish and up-to-date. His hair is well-groomed and appears freshly styled.

You greet him and offer a handshake.

He comments in a rather quiet voice, "Look around and see if there is anything that interests you. I'll be right inside if you need anything."

Before he can get away, you ask, "Would you please tell me where I can find the new Concepts?"

"They're right over there on the other side of the lot. They are between the Concourses and the Arrows. Can I walk you over to them?"

You walk quietly across the lot together.

You reach a four-door Concept and start looking at it. Some of the options on this car include air conditioning, automatic transmission, antilock brakes, a stereo cassette player, and power locks. The price indicated on the sticker is \$11,999. You ask Bobby a few questions and learn that the car has a driver's side air bag, a three-year limited warranty, a rustproof coating, and has been "prepped."

As you begin to leave you thank Bobby and tell him you need to look around. Bobby says, "I know that buying a car is an important decision, so make sure you make the choice that's right for you. Feel free to come back if there is anything I can help you with."