An Interpersonal Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior.

William Morgan Pride
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This dissertation was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again – beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

University Microfilms
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
A Xerox Education Company
PRIDE, William Morgan, 1942-
AN INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1972
Business Administration

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan
AN INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Marketing

by

William Morgan Pride
B.S., Northwestern State College, 1965
M.B.A., Oklahoma State University, 1967
August, 1972
PLEASE NOTE:

Some pages may have
indistinct print.

Filmed as received.

University Microfilms, A Xerox Education Company
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I deeply appreciate the time and effort expended by Dr. Parks Dimsdale and Dr. S. Lee Richardson in stimulating my thoughts and guiding my efforts during the writing of this dissertation. Their advice, constructive criticism, and suggestions assisted me in both recognizing and solving numerous problems which surrounded the research set forth in this document. In addition, I wish to thank Dr. Fred Endsley, Dr. Jeff Harris, Dr. Steve Brown, and Dr. Quentin Jenkins for their recommendations regarding both structural conceptualizations of the research as well as methods of presentation.

For the typing of this dissertation, I extend a great deal of thanks to Mrs. Katherine Crochet, Mrs. Mary Lou Turner, and Mrs. Diane Reed.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife, Nancy, for her understanding patience and her ability to show me numerous diversions which made the research and writing of a dissertation a less tedious task.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Purpose and Scope</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification of the Research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Research</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Behavior and Buyer Behavior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Interaction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Payoff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preview of Presentation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. SELECTED MODELS OF BUYER BEHAVIOR AND EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF BUYER-SELLER INTERACTION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microscopic Models of Buyer Behavior</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kornhauser and Lazarsfeld Analysis of Consumer Actions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotler's Buyer Behavior Models</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer Behavior Model by Howard and Sheth</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Berry and Kunkel Behavioral Model of Man</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andreasen's Decision Model of Attitudes and Customer Behavior</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microscopic Buyer Behavior Models in Perspective</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Models of Buyer Behavior</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicosia's Model of Consumer Decision Processes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model of Consumer Motivation and Behavior</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Buyer Behavior Models in Perspective</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies of Buyer-Seller Interaction</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Willett-Pennington Study of On-Going Interaction</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Focused Upon the After-Effects of Interaction</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical Studies of Buyer-Seller Interaction in Perspective</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. INTERPERSONAL ECONOMIC TRANSACTIONS AND THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

| Human Interaction and Interpersonal Evaluation of Behavior | 52 |
| Payoffs of Interpersonal Economic Transactions | 55 |
| The Interaction Model | 59 |
| Boundaries of the Model | 60 |
| The Variables | 60 |
| Endogenous Variables | 62 |
| Exogenous Variables | 64 |
| Summary | 65 |

### IV. THE INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTUAL VARIABLES OF THE INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

| The Perceptual Process | 69 |
| Perceptual Selection | 71 |
| Perceptual Organization | 73 |
| Perceptual Interpretation | 77 |
| Flows of Social Information Inputs | 79 |
| Cognitive Factors of Impression Formation | 82 |
| Cognitive Organization | 83 |
| Cognitive Complexity | 88 |
| Cognitive Rigidity | 92 |
| Cognitive Factors of Impression Formation: A Summary | 95 |
| Order of Information Inputs in Relation to Impression Formation | 97 |
| Perception of Physical Attributes of People | 102 |
| Attribution: The Perception of Behavior | 109 |
| Models of Attribution | 110 |
| Types of Attribution | 116 |
| Attribution of Attitudes | 117 |
| Attribution of Intention | 119 |
| Attribution of Capability | 122 |
| Summary | 124 |

### V. THE INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION VARIABLES OF THE INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

| Perceived Similarity of the Interactants | 131 |
| Congruency | 141 |
| Attribution of Intentionality | 146 |
| Summary | 149 |

### VI. POTENTIAL ATTRACTION EFFECTS ON THE BUYER AND INTERPERSONAL TECHNIQUES

<p>| Potential Behavioral Effects of Attraction Toward the Seller | 153 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive and Cooperative Behavior</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipatory Responses Regarding Subsequent Interaction</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive Behavior</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliant Behavior</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Cognitive Effects of Attraction Toward the Seller</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Communication Content</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude and Opinion Change</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-Involvement</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Influence</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Effects Upon Attitude and Opinion Change</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inference of Attitude Similarity</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Potential Cognitive Effects of Attraction</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Techniques</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proxemic Communication</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesic Communication</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile Communication</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralinguistic Communication</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Techniques in Perspective</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. SUMMARY OF THE INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR, SUGGESTED HYPOTHESES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, PROPOSED METHODOLOGIES FOR SELECTED HYPOTHESES, AND CONCLUSIONS.</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Boundaries of the Model</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Exogenous Variables</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Endogenous Variables</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Perception</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Attraction</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Potential Effects of Attraction</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Hypotheses for Further Research</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Perception</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flows of Social Information Inputs</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Factors of Impression Formation</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order Effects of Information Inputs</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Physical Characteristics</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution: Perception of Behavior</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Attraction</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Similarity of the Interactants</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congruency of Feelings</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution of Intentionality</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction Effects on the Buyer</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Effects of Attraction</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Effects of Attraction</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Methodologies for Selected Hypotheses</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Buyer's Expectations of Future Interaction and the Flow of Information Inputs</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Buyer's Impression Formation Process and the Primacy Effect</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Inferences as a Function of the Seller's Facial Features</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution of Attitudes and the Seller's Expression of Personal Involvement with the Product</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Similarity and Seller Attractiveness</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effects of an Ingratiation Tactic on Attraction</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction Toward the Seller and the Buyer's Compliance</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction Toward the Seller and the Buyer's Attribution of Attitudes</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-1.</td>
<td>The Action Scheme in the Kornhauser-Lazarfeld Model</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-2.</td>
<td>The Purchasing Process in the Kornhauser-Lazarfeld Model</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3.</td>
<td>The Buying Process Conceived as a System of Inputs and Outputs in the Kotler Model</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4.</td>
<td>The Comprehensive Flow Chart of the Howard-Sheth Model</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5.</td>
<td>The Framework of the Berry and Kunkel Behavioral Model of Man</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-6.</td>
<td>Comprehensive Framework of the Andreasen Model</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7.</td>
<td>Definition of Predispositions, Attitudes, and Motivations in the Nicosia Model</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8.</td>
<td>The Comprehensive Framework of the Nicosia Model</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-9.</td>
<td>The Comprehensive Scheme of the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell Model</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-10.</td>
<td>Summary Matrix of the Buyer Behavior Models</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-1.</td>
<td>Potential Outcomes for the Buyer's Total Transactional Payoff</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2.</td>
<td>The Structural Framework of the Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1.</td>
<td>The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon the Variables of Interpersonal Perception</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2.</td>
<td>Grouping According to Rows or Columns</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-3.</td>
<td>Grouping by Rows or Columns</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-1.</td>
<td>The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon the Variables of Interpersonal Attraction</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-1.</td>
<td>The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon Potential Effects of Attraction</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure Page

6-2. The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon Interpersonal Techniques .................. 175

7-1. The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior ............. 190
ABSTRACT

The consumer behavior models which have been developed do not adequately consider the case of face-to-face buyer-seller interaction in which variables and relationships unique to on-going interaction affect the buyer's behavior. The purpose of this research was to develop an interaction model of buyer behavior which focuses upon the variables and relationships that influence a buyer's determination of a behavioral payoff acquired through interaction with the seller. The methodology for the development of the interaction model was exploratory with the focus upon the analysis of existing empirical research findings.

The interaction model of buyer behavior was based upon the proposition that the buyer, as he interacts with the seller, acquires a behavioral payoff. Depending upon the direction of the valence, the behavioral payoff may increase or decrease the total transactional payoff.

For purposes of clarification several exogenous variables were set forth. The variables which were treated as exogenous are (1) culturally induced norms and roles, (2) environmental forces such as economic factors, technological forces, and government and legal variables, and (3) needs, motives, and goals of the interactants. These variables were considered to be exogenous because their effects may be manifested before, during, and after interaction. The endogenous variables were considered to be ones which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction.

The major sets of variables included in the model are (1) inter-
personal perception, (2) interpersonal attraction, (3) potential effects of the buyer's attraction toward the seller, and (4) interpersonal techniques. Due to the exploratory nature of this study the variables were selected on the basis of the availability of existing empirical research.

The main areas of interpersonal perception which were analyzed include (1) the basic process of perception, (2) selected cognitive factors which are determinants of impression formation, (3) the order effects of information inputs, (4) the perception of human physical characteristics, and (5) the attribution process.

Although the analysis of the interpersonal perceptual variables, to some degree, explained the manner by which the buyer places a valence upon the presence and behavior of the seller, interpersonal attraction variables were also considered. The interpersonal attraction variables which were analyzed in the interaction model of buyer behavior were, for purposes of analysis, divided into three categories including (1) perceived similarity of the interactants, (2) congruency of feelings, and (3) attribution of intentionality.

After focusing upon the variables of interpersonal perception and interpersonal attraction, the potential effects on the buyer due to his attraction toward the seller were analyzed. Two major categories of potential attraction effects on the buyer were considered including (1) effects on the buyer's overt behavior, and (2) effects on the buyer's cognitive activities.

Five interpersonal techniques were described as a part of the interaction model. The five interpersonal techniques included as ancillary variables are (1) proxemic communication, (2) kinesic communication,
(3) tactile communication, (4) language, and (5) paralinguistic communication.

Based upon the relationships set forth in the interaction model, forty-one hypotheses were presented as suggestions for further research. In addition, methodologies for selected hypotheses were proposed.

The results of this study demonstrated that (1) the existing models of buyer behavior do not adequately focus upon the variables which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction; (2) the empirical findings in the areas of psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology are significant enough, in terms of quantity and quality, to provide tentative support for the interaction model; (3) the interaction model of buyer behavior, by isolating and interrelating the variables which are determinants of the buyer's behavioral payoff, provides a theoretical base from which a number of hypotheses may be derived for further research.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

For more than a century the economists have dealt with the consumer as being the "economic rational man." However, the multitude of forces that cause consumers to be not totally rational have become of special interest to marketers in the last fifteen years. In order to gain a better understanding of consumer behavior, marketers have had to draw heavily upon research in other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, social psychology, political science, and anthropology.

In an attempt to gain insight into consumer behavior several models have been developed. The variables that are emphasized in these models differ from one model to another. Some of the models emphasize only one or two major variables such as perception, learning, or social class. Other consumer behavior models take a more microscopic approach and focus upon multiple social influence variables and numerous psychological processes which are a part of the consumer's decision process.

A major shortcoming of all consumer behavior models is that little attention has been focused upon the behavior of the buyer that results specifically from the behavior of a personal salesman. The consumer behavior models that have been developed thus far deal with the variables or inputs that the buyer carries with him into the interaction arena, but they do not deal with selected forces present during interaction. Buyer behavior models that currently exist do not concentrate
on buyer behavior at the time of buyer-seller interaction.

Statement of Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this research study is to develop a buyer behavior model that focuses upon the selected variables which influence a buyer's determination of a behavioral payoff acquired through interaction with the seller. Specifically, this model deals with face-to-face buyer-seller interaction and not with the interaction of a buyer and a vending machine or self-service retail establishment.

The basic underlying assumption of the research is that the buyer, interacting with a personal salesman, receives a transactional payoff, a portion of which being derived from the behavior of the seller. Based upon this assumption the model describes and explains the major variables and relationships which affect the buyer's evaluation of the seller's behavior. Even though buyer-seller interaction does not occur in isolation, the model emphasizes the forces at work during on-going interaction and deals with exogenous variables only in terms of their contribution to the interaction.

The model is not intended to replace or discredit currently existing buyer behavior models. It is, instead, a model that complements or extends other buyer behavior models. Rather than attempting to explain all of the forces that influence consumer behavior, the model concentrates specifically upon buyer-seller interaction. Thus, the model is a microscopic model rather than a comprehensive model of buyer behavior.

Methodology

The development of the interaction model of buyer behavior is based upon exploratory research. Exploratory research, rather than
attempting to establish predictive relations, is utilized in trying to explain "what is."\(^1\) The purposes of exploratory research are (1) to discover significant variables, (2) to discover relationships among variables and (3) to build a framework or structure for more systematic and rigorous testing of hypotheses in the future.\(^2\) In describing exploratory research Green and Tull state:\(^3\)

Exploratory studies have as their major purposes the identification of problems, the more precise formulation of problems, including the identification of relevant variables and the formulation of new alternative courses of action (formulation of new hypotheses). An exploratory study is often the first in a series of projects which culminate in one concerned with the drawing of inferences which are used as the basis of management action.

In developing the interaction model of buyer behavior, the initial phase of the research sets forth the boundaries and assumptions. The second phase identifies the major variables which are at work during ongoing interaction between the buyer and the seller. The third phase focuses upon establishing the interrelationships among the major variables. Empirical findings in experimental psychology and social psychology are used to identify and support the relationships in the model. From the interrelationships derived in the model, several hypotheses are presented for testing in subsequent research.

---


Justification of the Research

Currently existing models do not adequately explain buyer behavior. This inadequacy arises not because the relationships defined in these models are inaccurate, but because these models do not explain certain aspects of buyer behavior that arise from the actual interaction of buyer and seller on a person-to-person basis. Consumer behavior models that have been set forth thus far have not included an analysis of how the personal salesman's behavior influences the buyer's evaluation of the seller which in turn affects the buyer's behavioral output.

The major justification for the development of a face-to-face interaction model of buyer behavior is that currently existing buyer behavior models do not adequately deal with interaction relationships, and yet such a model could provide marketers with a better understanding of buyer behavior in a personal selling situation. In discussing the current state of development as well as the future value of buyer-seller interaction models, Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell state:

The customer-salesman interaction model has emerged only recently and has not as yet been extensively researched. Consequently, at this juncture, generalizations about marketing strategy are premature. However, there is reason to believe that interaction models will, in the future, generate useful insights for marketing management purposes. Indeed, interaction models may become the most exciting and useful approach to consumer behavior during the next decade.

This research may be justified on the basis that a large amount of dyadic interaction data resulting from research in psychology and social psychology is available but has not been placed in a systematic framework for use by marketers. If persons in the field of marketing

---

become aware of the basic variables and interrelationships affecting dyadic interaction as applied to consumer behavior, they may then find other applications of such concepts in other areas of marketing.

Another justification for the development of an interaction buyer behavior model is that such a model may provide a framework and a stimulus for more extensive empirical research in an area that has been long neglected by marketing researchers.

Limitations of the Research

As indicated earlier, the focus of this study is to present a model that pertains to buyer behavior that occurs during the interaction of buyer and seller in a personal selling situation. To the extent possible, the research is limited to major variables that influence the buyer's determination of a behavioral payoff acquired through interaction with the seller. A number of variables that are major components of currently existing models are considered to be exogenous variables in the interaction model of buyer behavior. Thus, the scope of the model is, to some extent, a limitation of the research.

The relationships presented in the model are analyzed by examining the results of experiments in psychology and social psychology. Many of these experiments have been conducted in laboratory environments rather than in real life situations such as sales transactions. In order to utilize the results of laboratory experiments, one must accept the assumption that, even though there may be behavioral variations between a laboratory situation and a real life situation, the experimental results tend to support certain behavioral relationships.

Since the evidence pertaining to the relationships in the model
derives generally from experimental research in psychology and social
psychology, the degree to which the relationships are supported varies
among the relationships for two reasons. First, there is a variation in
the amount of experimental work aimed at proving or disproving certain
relationships. Second, the amount of conflicting experimental results
varies among relationships.

In developing and constructing a model such factors as the selection
of major variables, the development of interrelationships among
these variables, and the interpretation of available empirical findings
are, to a large degree, a function of the availability of empirical
research.

Definition of Terms

To make the analysis more precise, it is necessary to clarify
the manner in which several words and phrases are used. Thus, a brief
explanation of several terms is set forth.

Consumer Behavior and Buyer Behavior

In our society the buyer and the consumer may or may not be the
same person. Individuals act as purchasing agents for both themselves
and for other consumers in the agent's social system such as family,
club, or organization. Even though buyer behavior may be viewed as
being a subset of consumer behavior, the terms consumer behavior, buyer
behavior, and purchaser behavior are used synonymously and broadly defined
as an individual's overt behavior and/or decision making activity ex-
pended in acquiring and using goods and services.
Transaction

A transaction is the negotiation and/or the exchange of goods, services, and/or money. For purposes of this research, the transaction occurs between two persons rather than between a person and a non-person such as a vending machine.

Human Interaction

Human interaction arises when at least two persons are in each other's presence either spatially or socially and at least one of the interactants is aware of the other's presence. When the term interaction appears in the analysis, unless otherwise stated, this definition of human interaction is intended.

Behavioral Payoff

In a buyer-seller transaction behavior is exchanged regardless of whether or not goods, services, and/or money are exchanged. The value which an individual places upon the behavior of the other (relative to the value he places on the behavior he sends to the other) is one's behavioral payoff. A behavioral payoff may be either positive or negative for an individual.

Preview of the Presentation

Chapter II consists of an analysis of the literature that pertains to consumer behavior models and buyer-seller interaction studies. Specifically, the survey of the literature outlines and summarizes several of the major consumer behavior models that are structured upon behavioral concepts. Set forth in the review of each model are the major variables and the principal relationships among these variables. In addition,
several research efforts which deal with customer-salesman interaction are discussed.

Contained in Chapter III is a discussion of the basic assumption that a buyer's evaluation of a personal salesman's behavior becomes a component of the buyer's total transactional payoff. In addition, the major components of the interaction model of buyer behavior are presented.

The variables and their relationships are analyzed in Chapters IV, V, and VI. In Chapter IV the determinants of interpersonal perception are analyzed in terms of the empirical findings of researchers in experimental psychology and social psychology. The analysis of Chapter V focuses on the forces which influence the buyer's assignment of a valence to his impression of the seller. Chapter VI deals with the potential effects of the buyer's attraction toward the seller and brief descriptions of the interpersonal techniques which the buyer and seller use to send information inputs to each other.

Chapter VII, the final chapter, consists of a summary of the interaction model, a set of potential hypotheses for further research, several proposed methodologies for selected hypotheses, and conclusions.
CHAPTER II

SELECTED MODELS OF BUYER BEHAVIOR AND EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF
BUYER-SELLER INTERACTION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A wealth of literature exists in the field of consumer behavior and, as a result of increased interest in the last few years, this literature base is expanding rapidly. The purpose of this literature review is four-fold including (1) to illustrate the current state of development of consumer behavior models, (2) to show that existing models of buyer behavior do not focus upon the forces unique to on-going, face-to-face buyer-seller interaction, (3) to demonstrate in what way a microscopic interaction model of buyer behavior may be interfaced with each of several existing models, and (4) to summarize several research studies that deal specifically with buyer-seller interaction. In order to place boundaries upon the literature to be reviewed, the researcher has selected literature in terms of the four components of the purpose set forth above. Thus, the literature reviewed in this chapter deals

---

specifically with buyer behavior models and empirical research pertaining to on-going buyer-seller interactions. The models reviewed in this chapter are not intended to represent an exhaustive enumeration of buyer behavior models. The models outlined in this chapter have been selected based upon the objective of illustrating the types of variables and relationships currently included in behavioral models of consumer action.

The models of consumer behavior which are summarized in this chapter are classified into two major categories—microscopic models and comprehensive models. Microscopic models are those that have been developed to explain (1) only a limited number of variables which exert forces upon buyer decision making and/or (2) the process of buyer behavior for a rather specific transactional situation. Comprehensive models of buyer behavior are not limited to a small number of variables but instead are models that include a large number of both intraindividual factors and social influence variables.

Microscopic Models of Buyer Behavior

Five microscopic buyer behavior models are summarized including (1) the Kornhauser and Lazarsfeld model, (2) Kotler's buyer behavior models, (3) the buyer behavior model by Howard and Sheth, (4) the Berry and Kunkel behavioral model of man, and (5) the Andreasen model of attitudes and customer behavior. These models are presented to illustrate the types of variables and relationships included in currently existing microscopic models and to indicate that these models do not deal with the specific variables at work during on-going buyer-seller interaction.
The Kornhauser and Lazarsfeld Analysis of Consumer Actions

One of the earliest consumer behavior models to appear is the Kornhauser-Lazarsfeld model which was set forth in 1935. These authors presented this model with the intention of bringing to market research a more systematic view of the manner in which an individual's market behavior is motivated and how the consumer decision process operates.

The Kornhauser-Lazarsfeld model is based on a structure consisting of two major elements. First, human action is a function of the total make-up of an individual at a particular point in time. Second, one's behavior is a derivative of situational factors. Depicted in Figures 2-1 and 2-2 are the two principal components from which human action arises.

In discussing Figure 2-1, the authors define motives as conscious or unconscious processes that move people toward goals. Also they point out that specific attitudes are determinants of a buyer's behavior. The "mechanisms" mentioned by the authors are sensory and memory capabilities which affect one's action.

The Kornhauser-Lazarsfeld model places as much importance on the situational or external factors as it does on the internal elements. The situational factors are perceived to be centered in the attributes of the product with other internal forces arising from selling methods, advertising, and personal acquaintances.

Kornhauser and Lazarsfeld deal not only with intraindividual and

---

The Individual:
Motives
Mechanisms

The Situation:
The Product
Sales
Influences
Other
Influences

The Action

Figure 2-1 The Action Scheme in the Kornhauser-Lazarsfeld Model

Figure 2-2 The Purchasing Process in the Kornhauser-Lazarsfeld Model

situational factors, but they also analyze the effects of time upon consumer action. The authors believe that one's present action can be better understood if previous behavior is known. Buyer action is a function of a series of events along a "time-line" as shown in Figure 2-2. Notice that individual I₁ in situation S₁ is a different person in situations S₂ and S₃. Each situation causes the consumer to make a response such as A₁, A₂, A₃ to the given situation. The response, such as A₁ is perceived to be determined by both I₁ and S₁. The individual I₂ is a changed person from I₁. Over a period of time if the situational and intraindividual factors are in the right combination, a purchase will occur.

The Kornhauser-Lazarsfeld model, developed over thirty-five years ago, is a forerunner of several models which have been presented in the last ten years. Many of the components such as motives, sensory mechanisms, the situation, social influence, and the effects of time that are found in the Kornhauser-Lazarsfeld model, are also major variables in present-day models.

Kornhauser and Lazarsfeld present a very general analysis of their model and do not go into detail. In discussing the situation they suggest that sales influences interact with the intraindividual factors, but they do not consider in any detail the variables that are active during on-going buyer-seller interaction.
Kotler's Buyer Behavior Models

Philip Kotler, rather than trying to build a single comprehensive model of buyer behavior, has suggested that buyer behavior, due to the current state of the art, may be better understood through a series of several partial models. Kotler believes that a consumer's behavior is largely determined by the state of the "psyche." Because the state of the psyche varies, Kotler indicates that one of five partial models pertaining to the "psyche" may be beneficial in describing buyer behavior.

A general framework into which Kotler fits five partial models is shown in Figure 2-3. On the left is a set of input factors and channels of influence. The outputs are in terms of purchasing responses. In the middle is the buyer's psyche or "black box." The "black box" is the area in which the consumer's problem solving processes occur and is the component into which Kotler believes can be placed five partial models for explaining buyer behavior. These partial models are (1) the Marshallian model, (2) the Pavlovian model, (3) the Freudian model, (4) the Veblenian model, and (5) the Hobbesian model.

The Marshallian economic model is based upon the premise that buying decisions are the result of rational and conscious economic calculations. Marshall used the "measuring rod of money" to determine the magnitude of psychological desires. Under the Marshallian economic model the buyer through a rather deliberative process attempts to maximize satisfaction per dollars worth of expenditures.

Kotler points out that this partial model can be criticized

---

Figure 2-3 The Buying Process Conceived as a System of Inputs and Outputs in the Kotler Model.

because it is normative rather than descriptive. In addition the model does not deal with the factors that explain the formation of products and brand preferences. On the other hand, Kotler indicates that economic behavior cannot be overlooked in building a comprehensive model of consumer behavior.

The Pavlovian learning model is founded upon four principal concepts including drive, cue, response, and reinforcement. The drive, which is an internal force that impels action, is stimulated into action by a cue. A buyer's response is a function of the set of cues in the buyer's environment. If the buyer's response is rewarding, reinforcement occurs and thus strengthens the tendency for the buyer to respond in a similar manner when confronted with a similar set of cues. When the response is no longer reinforced, the buyer may change responses.

The Freudian psychoanalytic model is built on the premise that the human being tries to satisfy his needs through rather blatant means and, due to frustration, becomes more dependent upon more moderate methods for need satisfaction. An individual's psyche, according to Freud, is divided into three components. The id is the reservoir of strong drives, and the ego is a mechanism that seeks outlets for these drives. A third part of the psyche is the super-ego which transforms instinctive urges into socially approved behavior. Thus, Freud's model describes behavior as being partially determined by forces operating at a very deep level of one's psyche.

According to the Veblenian sociol-psychological model the consumer is perceived to be a social animal. One's buying behavior is not so much a function of internal psycho-dynamic processes but is instead a derivative of social factors such as social class, subculture, face-to-face
groups, and reference groups. In using this partial model in a marketing context the marketing manager needs to determine which level of social influence has greatest affect upon his potential customer's behavior toward the product.

The Hobbesian model pertains to the buying behavior of organizational buyers rather than that of individual buyers. Thomas Hobbes believed that a person is highly oriented toward self-interest. But in order to preserve one's well-being, Hobbes indicated that man has to join forces with other people so that he has the power to achieve his own personal goals. In applying Hobbes' ideas to organizational purchasing behavior, Kotler points out that the buyer's behavior is a function of both his personal goals and the goals of the organization.

Although Kotler does not present any new or unique concepts of a consumer's psychological processes that have not been used in other models, his method of using partial models to explain differing processes of the consumer psyche is a contribution to the analysis of consumer behavior.

Kotler's major objective in presenting this type of scheme is to demonstrate how the use of one out of five possible partial models, which (depending upon the specific situation) pertain to the buyer's psyche, may be more accurate than the use of a single model of man. As shown in Figure 2-3, the inputs, channels with one channel being salesmen, and the outputs are viewed as given. The researcher does not attempt to explain buyer-salesman interaction. The process and effects of dyadic buyer-seller interaction could best be interfaced into an expanded explanation of the Veblenian social-psychological model.
Buyer Behavior Model by Howard and Sheth

The Howard-Sheth theory of buyer behavior focuses upon brand choice, but because related activities are included, the term buyer behavior is used. The authors believe that at a very general level their research deals with both industrial buying and consumer buying. At the outset the authors attempt to explain the process by which a buyer creates habitual preferences for brands. In addition, the theory focuses upon how psychological disequilibrium causes the buyer to search for new alternatives. Two general areas with which the theory deals are (1) the factors that make up the buyer's given psychological state and (2) the processes which alter the psychological state and thus change the buyer's behavior.

In Figure 2-4 is shown a comprehensive flow chart which contains the major sets of variables and the general relationships among these variables. The internal-state variables and processes that indicate the psychological state of the consumer decision maker are set forth in the central rectangle. Howard and Sheth call these variables hypothetical constructs.

The hypothetical constructs are divided into two classes. One class of these constructs is the perceptual constructs. Perceptual variables act to process information. The perceptual process may result in ignoring certain components of an event, seeing the event attentively, or creating what is not a part of reality. The perceptual constructs include:

---


Solid lines indicate flow of information; dashed lines, feedback effects.

Figure 2-4  The Comprehensive Flow Chart of the Howard-Sheth Model

Source:  John A. Howard and Jagdish Sheth, The Theory of Buyer Behavior
1. **Attention** refers to the opening and closing of sensory receptors that control the intake of information. It suggests the extent to which the buyer is sensitive to information.

2. **Stimulus Ambiguity** refers to the perceived uncertainty and lack of meaningful information received from the environment. It affects attention and Overt Search constructs.

3. **Perceptual Bias** is the degree to which the buyer consciously or unconsciously distorts the meaning of the information received.

4. **Overt Search** refers to action of the buyer when he actively seeks information rather than passively receives information.

The second class of hypothetical constructs is the learning constructs. These factors play an important role in concept formation. Learning constructs included in the Howard Sheth model are:

1. **Motives** are the goals of the buyer impinging upon a buying situation. The sources of motives are biogenic or psychogenic needs, wants, or desires of the buyer that are related to buying and consuming a product class.

2. **Brand Comprehension** refers to knowledge about the existence and characteristics of those brands that form the buyer's evoked set of alternatives.

3. **Choice Criteria** function to organize and structure the buyer's motives so that motives which are relevant to this product class are ordered in terms of relative importance to him.

4. **Attitude** refers to the buyer's relative preferences of brands in his evoked set based on his evaluation beliefs about those brands as goal objects.

5. **Intention** is the buyer's forecast as to when, where, and how he is likely to buy a brand.

6. **Confidence** refers to the degree of certainty the buyer perceives toward a brand.

7. **Satisfaction** is the congruence between the actual consequence from purchase and consumption of a brand and what was expected from it by the buyer at the time of purchase.

---

Another major category of variables is defined by Howard and Sheth as being intervening constructs. This category of variables includes both input and output variables. The input variables are specific environmental stimuli from the buyer's environment. More precisely these variables are information inputs that derive from commercial sources such as the brand itself or a symbolic representation of the brand. Another source of information arises from the buyer's social environment.

Behavior exhibited by the buyer is the outcome of the decision process and is referred to as an output variable. Howard and Sheth deal with five output variables including (1) attention, (2) brand comprehension, (3) attitude, (4) intention, and (5) purchase. Most of these variables are the same as the hypothetical constructs with the exception that the hypothetical constructs are more inclusive in meaning and play a more important role in the total model.

A third major category of variables which are dealt with in this model is exogenous variables. Although most of these variables are not shown in Figure 2-4, the authors set forth several exogenous variables in order to delimit the area of discourse. Variables perceived to be exogenous by Howard and Sheth are (1) importance of purchase, (2) personality traits, (3) time pressure, (4) financial status, (5) social and organizational setting, (6) social class, and (7) culture. Even though the authors deal with these variables with great expediency, they do attempt to define each one, indicate the effect of each on the endogenous variables, and set forth a small amount of available empirical evidence.

The central construct of the Howard-Sheth theory of buyer behavior
is attitude. Buyer problem solving is divided into three separate categories depending upon the intensity of the buyer's attitude toward brands. When one's attitude toward brands of a product class are low or almost negligible, "extensive problem solving" on the part of the buyer is necessary. If a buyer's attitude toward brands is moderate, with some brand ambiguity still existing, then the authors classify the buyer's decision process as "limited problem solving." A buyer who has no brand ambiguity (i.e. he has a high level of attitude toward brands in his evoked set) will exhibit "routinized response behavior" as a method of decision making.

In reviewing the Howard-Sheth theory of buyer behavior one may realize that even though the authors imply that the model has implications for buyer behavior beyond brand choice, the analysis of the decision is limited to brand choice and only brand choice of products for which brand loyalty tends to exist.

The Howard-Sheth model incorporates the major thrust of the buyer behavior model developed earlier by John Howard. However, in the earlier model Howard generally focused only upon differentiating between three categories of consumer decision making including (1) extensive problem solving, (2) limited problem solving, and (3) automatic response behavior.

In comparing the earlier model with the Howard-Sheth model one finds that the earlier model is very much dependent upon learning theory while the more recent model focuses upon a larger number of intraindividual processes. A more detailed analysis of both inputs and outputs is

---

7 Ibid., pp. 46-48.
set forth in the Howard-Sheth model than in the earlier Howard model. Most of the exogenous variables such as importance of purchase, ease of post-decision evaluation, amount of time pressure, financial status, social class, and culture that were set forth in the Howard model are also exogenous variables in the later model.

An outline of both the Howard and Howard-Sheth models reveals that a significant number of variables are classified as being exogenous. Even though the researchers do not even mention the case in which the seller is a person, (and yet they believe that their model is applicable to industrial buying) such behavioral influence of the personal salesman on the buyer would fall into a class of variables called social and organizational setting. Howard and Sheth view this category as being exogenous.

Although the "stimulus display" (see Figure 2-4) of the current Howard-Sheth model is extremely limited to generally attributes of the product, the model could be expanded, beginning with the stimulus display, to include the effects of the salesman's behavior upon the buyer.

The Berry and Kunkel Behavioral Model of Man

Berry and Kunkel criticize consumer theory along three different dimensions. First, the models of man employed by most consumer analysts are psycho-dynamic in structure, causing the theorists to have to make predictions, regarding the internal state of the consumer, with techniques which are currently inadequate to perform such tasks. Second, because the development of consumer theory has been based upon several

---

behavioral disciplines, interdisciplinary barriers, which arise from differences in vocabulary and experimental methods, have caused a great deal of confusion as to the explanation and prediction of behavior. Third, cultural effects on behavior have been considered in terms of general influence but the more specific subcultural effects have been neglected in the development of consumer theory.

In order to overcome these problems which surround consumer theory, Berry and Kunkel have proposed a behavioral model of man. The structural framework of their model is depicted in Figure 2-5.

The Berry and Kunkel model, based upon their belief that learning theory has a strong empirical foundation, views man's behavior as generally being a function of learning. As is shown in Figure 2-5 behavior is followed by contingent stimuli which are either punishing or rewarding. The extent to which the contingent stimuli are perceived by the actor to be rewarding or punishing is partially determined by an individual's state variables as well as by societal and subcultural norms.

An individual's state variables refer to the consumer's present state of satiation or deprivation relative to a particular behavior. Berry and Kunkel point out that, even though the consumer experiences primary or physiological deprivations, most deprivations are determined by societal and subcultural norms. They indicate that the level of one's satiation or deprivation is determined by the relative difference between one's own conditions and the conditions which are appropriate in terms of cultural and subcultural norms and values.

The set of societal and subcultural norms in Figure 2-5 determine the boundaries for the acceptability of behavior. While the societal norms tend to set broad behavioral limits for all societal members, the
Relevant Terms

\( R \) = any behavior pattern
\( C \) = consequences, \( S', S^*, S^o \)
\( S' \) = rewarding stimuli (eventually leading to "habit")
\( S^* \) = aversive stimuli (eventually leading to "extinction")
\( S^o \) = absence of any consequence
\( S^d \) = stimuli in whose presence \( R \) has not been reinforced
\( S^p \) = stimuli in whose presence \( R \) has been reinforced
\( SV \) = state variables (i.e. conditions of deprivation and satiation)

Figure 2-5 The Framework of the Berry and Kunkel Behavioral Model of Man

subcultural norms delineate more precisely the acceptability of behavior for persons within subsets of a society. Berry and Kunkel believe that the subcultures most influential in determining the boundaries of acceptable behavior are reference groups, social classes, and geographic subcultures.

The Berry and Kunkel model views the individual consumer as the locus of behavior. According to their model, the major determinants of buyer behavior are the learning process and the norms of the one's society and subculture. As indicated in the review of the model, the Berry and Kunkel behavioral model of man does not specifically focus upon variables which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction. However, this set of variables could be integrated into the behavioral model of man in terms of both the state variables and contingent stimuli.

Andreasen's Decision Model of Attitudes and Customer Behavior

The Andreasen model of consumer choice is a buyer decision process which is perceived to be an outgrowth of information processing with the central and primary variable being attitude.

Andreasen points out that attitudes exist in clusters and consist of a cognitive component, a feeling component, and an action-tendency component. In addition, he believes that attitudes have valences which he places on a favorable-unfavorable scale from +1 to -1. The major formative elements of attitude subsystems include (1) information and

---

feeling gathered from past want-satisfaction experiences, (2) information gathered in the past but unrelated to immediate want satisfying effort, (3) group affiliations and especially the values of significant others, (4) attitudes toward related objects in the relevant attitude cluster, and (5) the individual's personality. Thus, a change in attitudes may occur if one or more of the formative elements are changed.

The variables, and relationships of the Andreasen model are set forth in Figure 2-6. From a micro viewpoint the overall consumer choice process is essentially an information processing cycle.

Input information reaches the customer through five different channels, four of which are shown at the left extreme of Figure 2-6 and the other channel being direct experience with the focal object. Information received from the environment is filtered which reduces and distorts the received information.

The buyer's cluster of attitudes is shown in the center of the diagram. Andreasen postulates that the filtered information has some incremental effect upon one's attitudes either in a positive or negative direction. If the consequences of the attitude change causes one to make a selection, immediate purchase may or may not occur depending upon the constraints on the buyer. When a decision is made to seek more information, the intensity of the search will be dependent upon the strength of the want, the perceived quantity and quality of information initially received, and the aspects of personality pertaining to intelligence and need for clarity.

A decision not to purchase may result from information processing. Such an outcome may arise due to a decrease in want strength or lack of information.
Figure 2-6 Comprehensive Framework of the Andreasen Model

Andreasen points out that the problem solving process for a product in a given product class may require a lesser quantity of decision making activity because the purchase and ownership generates new information that affects attitudes. As subsequent purchases occur, the purchase decision might evolve into a habitual response. Even though a buying cycle may become habitual, a given purchase may require considerable deliberation due to changes in want-strength, changes in attitudes of complementary products, or changes in the structural elements of attitudes.

In describing the various sources of information Andreasen indicates that salesmen and retail clerks, classified as "advocate personal sources" in Figure 2-6, have an influence upon consumer decision processes. However, he does not in any way analyze in detail the process and effects of salesman-buyer interaction in terms of how the seller's behavior contributes to the total transactional payoff of the buyer.

Microscopic Buyer Behavior Models in Perspective

In summary, these microscopic models have been presented to illustrate the types of variables and relationships that are analyzed in currently existing buyer behavior models. The variables with which these models deal are factors which may have a pre-shaping effect that exerts a force upon the buyer's behavior during buyer-seller interaction. Yet, these models do not explain the forces present only during interaction between the buyer and the seller. The variables included in the microscopic buyer behavior models are factors that influence behavior in general, that is, they influence behavior whether or not the individual is in the interaction arena. Microscopic models of buyer behavior have
not yet considered in detail the variables and their interrelationships which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction.

Comprehensive Models of Buyer Behavior

Unlike the microscopic models, the comprehensive models of buyer behavior consist of a larger number of variables and include both intra-individual factors and forces of social influence. The comprehensive models outlined in this section include (1) Nicosia's model of consumer decision processes and (2) the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model of consumer motivation and behavior.

Nicosia's Model of Consumer Decision Processes

The Nicosia model of consumer behavior is a model of consumer decision processes. In this model consumer behavior is dealt with as a decision process rather than as the result of a decision process. Nicosia criticizes other consumer behavior models by pointing out that many decision models view the act of purchase as the final outcome of the decision process. In the Nicosia model the act of purchase is only one variable in the structure of consumer decision making.

Nicosia views the direction of the consumer's decision process as moving through a funnel from a passive to an active state and from a general to a more precise condition. The matrix in Figure 2-7 depicts the dimensions of the concepts of predisposition, attitude, and motivation. From this matrix one can see, in moving from left to right, that predispositions are passive structures, that attitudes are general and

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>CATEGORIES OF EACH DIMENSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Dynamics</td>
<td>PASSIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Time</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Scope</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-7 Definition of Predispositions, Attitudes, and Motivations in the Nicosia Model

weak driving structures, and that motivations are specific, strong driving structures.

An overview of Nicosia's model is presented in Figure 2-8. Notice that the model consists of four major fields. The decision process of the consumer is perceived to exist in a time dimension called a behavioral space. Each field represents a cross-section of behavioral space. The functional relations between these fields can be derived by comparing one field with another.

Field one, consisting of two subfields, pertains to the variables and devices that may or may not create an attitude based upon a message put forth by the firm. The selection of a message to be sent to the consumer is determined by the variable in subfield one. These variables and mechanisms are (1) the firm's organizational attributes, (2) the characteristics of the brand and product to be advertised, (3) environmental factors surrounding the firm, (4) attributes of available mass media, (5) characteristics of the consumer to be reached, and (6) encoding and transmission of the message. The encoding and transmission mechanism determines both exposure and the effectiveness of message content.

Subfield two within field one focuses upon the interaction of both the characteristics of the message and consumer and the outcome of this interaction—namely whether or not the individual forms an attitude about the brand. Attitude formation is dependent upon exposure. Exposure is a function of (1) environmental factors operating at the time, (2) characteristics of the receiver that affect his processes of selective exposure and selective perception, (3) capabilities of physical sensory devices, and (4) a reservoir of existing cognitive structures. The
Field One: From the Source of a Message to the Consumer's Attitude

Subfield One
Firm's Attributes

Message Exposure

Subfield Two
Consumer's Attributes (especially predispositions)

Attitude

Field Two:
Search for, and Evaluation of, Means-End(s) Relation(s) (Pre-action Field)

Field Three:
The Act of Purchase

Consumption Storage

Decision (action)

Field Four:
The Feedback

Experience

Motivation

Search Evaluation

Purchasing Behavior

Figure 2-8 The Comprehensive Framework of the Nicosia Model

potential consequences of subfield two are that the message may be lost, the message may be stored without causing a change, or the message may be relevant enough to produce a reorganization that causes a cognitive structure to change from passive to active.

If an attitude does result from subfield two as is shown in Figure 2-8, a large number of intervening variables may arise between attitude formation and purchase of the brand. A few intervening mechanisms make up fields two and three.

The attitude that enters field two is a weak driving force that has created a general interest in the product category but has also created a brand choice problem for the consumer. To solve this problem the decision maker will search for more information. The consumer may search internally (within his memory) and also engage in actual overt search. As a result of search and evaluation of his perceived alternatives, the decision process may be discontinued if no satisfactory solutions are found. The criteria for evaluating alternatives may be altered if no satisfactory alternatives are found with search and evaluation continuing. If, as a result of search and evaluation, the decision maker finds an acceptable alternative (such as the originally advertised brand), then the attitude created in subfield two has been transformed into a motivation. From Nicosia's definition of motivation (see Figure 2-7) the decision maker's relationship to the selected alternative is specific and active.

The motivation which is the output of field two is the input of field three, the act of purchase. An individual's act of purchase is affected by several intervening variables. Although the decision maker has decided to purchase, his action in securing the specific product may
be influenced by the discrepancy in the consumer's psychological reality and objective reality, the choice of store and in-store factors, and the disparity between the level of motivation and the level of past purchases. As these factors interact with the motivation of the consumer, at least three possible outcomes may arise including (1) the decision not to purchase, (2) a revision in the cognitive structure that leads to further search, or (3) purchase of the advertised product.

The purchase, which is one of the consequences of field three, acts as an input for field four, the feedback component of the model. Information resulting from the purchase becomes both a part of the consumer's information system and a part of the firm's information system. Characteristics of the firm's information system as well as other attributes of the firm determine the manner in which the seller gathers, internalizes, and evaluates sales information. This information is an input for subfield one in field one. Through the mechanisms of storage and consumption, the consumer gains information that becomes an input into his social psychological field in subfield two, field one. The feedback of information into subfield two in the form of some degree of satisfaction may influence the decision maker's original predisposition, his attitude, or his motivation. Subsequent cycles of the decision process are in turn affected by such changes in these cognitive structures.

In describing his model Nicosia indicates that the model is operational when using other types of initial inputs besides an advertising message. Nicosia, in presenting various components of his comprehensive scheme, is careful to point out the relationships for which very little empirical evidence exists. The model developed by Nicosia
seems to be a framework or structure on which to base further research which pertains to specific components of the consumer decision making process.

Although Nicosia's framework is very comprehensive, the researcher does not analyze, in any detail, the effects of the personal salesman's behavior upon the buyer's behavior. However, this model is general enough that an extension of the Nicosia model could include such effects. The extension could be developed in field three. In fact, Nicosia includes in-store factors as one of the intervening variables in field three but does not focus upon the contribution that the salesman makes to the behavioral payoff received by the buyer. Behavioral consideration of this type could strengthen the Nicosia model and would not in any way contradict or detract from the author's decision process framework.

The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model of Consumer Motivation and Behavior

The Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model of consumer motivation and behavior is a very comprehensive model of the forces that affect consumer action. Even though the model is set in a decision making framework, the analysis is not limited to only the consumer problem solving mechanism. A great deal of emphasis is placed upon both the inputs and outputs of the decision process. Like the Nicosia model, the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model of consumer motivation and behavior views the act of purchase as only one component of consumer behavior rather than as the final, ultimate action of the consumer.

---

Shown in Figure 2-9 is the flow chart which represents the comprehensive scheme of the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model. In the upper right-hand corner is the control center which consists of personality characteristics, stored information, values and attitudes, and a central control unit that acts as a psychological command center.

To the left of the control center are depicted the inputs from the consumer's environment. These inputs derive from both physical and social sources and are received by an individual's sensory receptors or sense organs. Some of the inputs reach awareness and create arousal. Through a process of comparison the consumer evaluates the inputs which have caused arousal to determine if a significant disparity exists between his current psychological state and the new information. If the consumer believes the disparity to be significant, then he has reached the problem recognition stage. Notice in Figure 2-9, that if the problem is recognized, he may or may not take action. The manner in which the consumer deals with problem recognition (such as "go" or "halt") is stored in the memory.

If the consumer chooses the "go" course of action, he will attempt to solve his problem. Like the Howard-Sheth model, the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model differentiates between various degrees of complexity in consumer decision making. Extended problem solving on the part of the consumer will require that he search for alternatives and evaluate potential, feasible solutions before a purchase is made. The search and evaluation stages would not be necessary for virtually routine decisions.

From Figure 2-9 note that both the search and evaluation stages of the extended decision process may result in (1) a halting of the decision process with information being stored, (2) a "delay" in the
Figure 2-9 The Comprehensive Scheme of the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell Model

process for purposes of searching out more information, or (3) a direct move to the next stage of the decision process.

The purchase stage may result in no purchase with either a halting of the process and storage of information, or a search for more information. If the purchase stage does result in a purchase, two major outcomes may occur. First, postpurchase evaluation may occur causing the buyer to search for more information to support the purchase decision which he had made. Second, the outcome may alter circumstances in such a manner that these changes act as new stimuli for further behavior.

Even though the outline set forth above describes the framework shown in Figure 2-9, Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell use this decision framework to present a detailed analysis of the major components (and interrelationships among these components) which influence a consumer's behavior. The authors' focus is not so much upon defense of the structure but rather is upon the variables, relationships, and empirical findings pertaining to consumer action.

The authors' discussion of buyer-seller interaction is extremely limited. In their analysis of buying processes (see Figure 2-9) they recognize that the salesman's behavior exerts a force upon the buyer, but they point out that research on customer-salesman interaction is rather sparse. In regard to such models they conclude:13

The customer-salesman interaction model has emerged only recently and has not as yet been extensively researched. Consequently, at this juncture, generalizations about marketing strategy are premature. However, there is reason to believe that interaction models will, in the future, generate useful insights for marketing management purposes. Indeed, interaction models may become the most exciting and useful approach to consumer behavior during the next decade.

---

13 Ibid., p. 468.
From this quotation it is apparent that Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell, due to the general lack of research in the area, have not focused upon the effects or processes of buyer-seller interaction but do recognize the need to include these influences as a part of consumer behavior analysis.

Comprehensive Buyer Behavior Models in Perspective

Like the microscopic models, the current, more comprehensive models of buyer behavior whether decision-oriented, psychologically based, or sociologically based do not adequately consider the variables and relationships which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction. Many of the variables and relationships included in the macroscopic models pertain to human behavior whether or not the person is interacting with another individual. For example, the Nicosia buyer behavior model is basically a general model of decision making. The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model contains a large number of general human behavior variables which could be active either within or outside of the interaction arena.

Even though current comprehensive buyer behavior models lack interaction variables, the discussion of these models indicates that the variables and their interrelationships which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction could be integrated into several existing models of buyer behavior to create an improved explanation of the forces which influence consumer behavior.

Studies of Buyer-Seller Interaction

The personal selling research which pertains to the relationships of the customer and salesman has generally focused upon attributes of the
salesman and salesman effectiveness. Research which deals with ongoing interaction of the customer and a salesman has been neglected. A major reason for this neglect is a lack of a theoretical framework and valid methodology for the analysis of on-going customer-salesman interaction. In this section is set forth the outlines of three different empirical studies which deal with the buyer-seller dyad as the research unit. The first concentrates on the analysis of on-going interaction, and the second and third pertain to the effects of customer-salesman interaction.

The Willett-Pennington Study of On-Going Interaction

As indicated earlier the amount of empirical research, pertaining to buyer and seller behavior during on-going interaction, is very limited. Yet, a major empirical contribution in this area arises from research performed by Ronald P. Willett and Allan L. Pennington.

---


Willett and Pennington hypothesized that customer-salesman interaction in home appliance retail transactions takes the form of problem-solving and that the content of customer-salesman interaction can be used to predict successful transactions. The researchers' methodology included both an observation technique (using a tape recorder and a human observer) and a survey of the 210 appliance customers.

The customer-salesman interactions, which were recorded by tape recorder and by visual observation, were analyzed using Bales' "social interaction categories." Each component of interaction observed was viewed as an "interaction act" and classified into one of the following categories: (1) shows solidarity, (2) shows tension release, (3) agrees, (4) gives suggestion, (5) gives opinion, (6) gives orientation, (7) asks for orientation, (8) asks for opinion, (9) asks for suggestion, (10) disagrees, (11) shows tension, and (12) shows antagonisms.

In measuring and analyzing the content of customer-salesman interaction Willett and Pennington found:

1. The average appliance transaction lasted approximately twenty-three minutes with a range of from one to 120 minutes. Approximately seventy-five per cent of the transactions terminated in less than thirty minutes.

2. Each customer-salesman encounter on the appliance sales floor on the average consisted of 198 interaction acts with a range from as low as seven acts to as high as 920 acts per transaction.

3. Over seventy-five per cent of the total interaction between customer and salesman was found to be expended on defining and evaluating problems and issues.

4. Customers performed approximately half as many interaction acts as did salesmen.

---

5. Salesmen tended to be responsible for tension, disagreement, and antagonism while customers were generally more responsible for positive reactions.

6. In terms of control over the interaction, the researchers found that salesmen overwhelmingly had the control.

7. In comparing transactions in which purchase occurred while under observation and those transactions in which purchase was delayed, the researchers found that spontaneous purchases were made when the salesman more intensively asked for information, opinions, and suggestions.

8. As the transactions, which resulted in a close during observation, progressed, the number of positive social-emotional interaction acts increased with a parallel decline in negative social-emotional interaction.

9. Transactions which were not closed during the observation seemed to acquire larger amounts of disagreement, tension, and antagonism, as these transactions progressed.

10. Transactions that were not closed contained interaction acts which indicated regression in problem-solving attempts.

Although one might question Willett and Pennington's methodology on the basis that the classification of interaction acts into social interaction categories was subjective, this research makes a contribution to the study of consumer behavior by quantitatively analyzing on-going customer-salesman interaction.

The fact that the Willett and Pennington study appears to be the only empirical research effort which deals with on-going buyer-seller interaction suggests that a theoretical base regarding on-going buyer-seller interaction is currently inadequate. The interaction model of buyer behavior, which consists of the variables and their interrelationships that affect the buyer's formation of an impression of the seller, should add to the theoretical base underlying interpersonal buyer-seller interaction.
Research Focused Upon the After-Effects of Interaction

The Evans study focuses upon the buyer-seller relationship within the life insurance industry. The life insurance industry has performed several studies dealing with customer-salesmen interaction and has shown greater interest in this area than has any other industry.

Franklin B. Evans, in reporting research results pertaining to the selling of life insurance, hypothesized that the sale is the result of dyadic interaction of prospect and salesman rather than a function of individual qualities of either individual alone.

Unlike the research by Willett and Pennington, Evans did not focus upon on-going customer-salesman interaction but instead was more concerned with the state of the dyadic relationship after interaction occurred. A portion of Evans' research dealt with the differences in attitudes regarding sales agents of prospects who purchased insurance compared to those attitudes of prospects who did not make a purchase. The researcher measured the intensity of several "interaction indicators" that generally pertain to the degree to which the customer liked the salesman. For various types of "interaction indicators" Evans found a greater intensity for customers who purchased versus those who did not.


purchase.\(^19\)

Evans' research also focused upon the existence of similarities between the parties in the dyad. In comparing "sold dyads" with "unsold dyads," he found that the likelihood of a sale is greater if physical characteristics (such as age and height) and socioeconomic factors (such as income, religion, education, and politics) are similar.

Even though he recognized that the behavior of the customer and the salesman is not solely a function of each individual's characteristics but is rather determined by interaction, Evans' research did not actually focus upon on-going interaction. However, his research efforts, although they concentrated upon the after-effects of interaction, emphasized the point that buyer and salesman behavior should be viewed in the context of a dyadic relationship.

One of the earliest research efforts to deal with the images that buyers and sellers have toward each other was reported by James M. Blake.\(^20\) This research focused upon industrial salesmen and purchasing agents. Salesmen were asked about their perceptions of the purchasing agents' authority to purchase, job understanding, and general treatment of salesmen. Purchasing agents were questioned about the salesmen's product knowledge, technical training, frequency of sales calls, and grooming. Blake's research showed that the perceptions of the purchasing agent and those of the salesman were incongruous in several areas.

The study reported by Blake is similar to Evans' research in

\(^{19}\) Evans, \textit{loc. cit.}, 79.

that both concentrate upon the effects of interaction but not on the on-going process of customer-salesman interaction. Although other studies have been performed which deal with the after-effects of customer-salesman interaction, Blake's study and Evans' research are representative of the type of work that has been done in this area.

Empirical Studies of Buyer-Seller Interaction in Perspective

Empirical research in the area of on-going buyer-seller interaction is extremely limited. The Willett-Pennington study, the major empirical research pertaining to on-going buyer-seller interaction, attempted to define quantitatively, through the use of Bales' "interaction acts," several major characteristics of buyer-seller interaction in appliance transactions. Other empirical research dealing with buyer-seller interaction pertains generally to the after-effects of interaction. Research of this type is characterized by the Evans study and the Blake study.

Summary

As indicated in the discussion of the models, the currently existing models of buyer behavior include variables and relationships which help to explain human behavior in general. In the matrix in Figure 2-10 the models discussed in this chapter are outlined and compared along

---

21 For results of other studies which focus upon the after-effects of customer-salesman interaction see William F. Whyte, Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1948); George F. F. Lombard, Behavior in a Selling Group (Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1955); Stuart V. Rich, Shopping Behavior of Department Store Customers, (Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1963); M. S. Gadel, "Concentration by Salesmen on Congenial Prospects," Journal of Marketing, XXVIII (April, 1964), 64-6.
several dimensions. These models appear to be oriented at either providing a structural framework or providing an explanation of consumer decision-making and information processing. In addition, the central theme or variable, the outputs, and the general variables of each model are compared.

The variables and relationships analyzed in these models are forces which may act on human behavior regardless of whether or not the person is in the interaction area. Most of the currently existing consumer behavior models deal with buyer behavior in the general case without regard as to whether the seller is a person, a self-service establishment, or a vending machine. The consumer behavior models which have been developed do not adequately consider the special case of face-to-face buyer-seller interaction in which variables unique to on-going interaction influence the buyer's behavior. A model which analyzes the variables which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction is needed to improve one's understanding of the numerous forces which influences a buyer's behavior. Thus in Chapter III face-to-face buyer-seller interaction is discussed and the basic components of the interaction model of buyer behavior are set forth.
Figure 2-10 Summary Matrix of Buyer Behavior Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Kornhauser Lazarsfeld</th>
<th>Kotler</th>
<th>Howard Sheth</th>
<th>Berry Kunkel</th>
<th>Andreasen</th>
<th>Nicosia</th>
<th>Engel Kollat</th>
<th>Blackwell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Decision Process</td>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>Information Processing</td>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>Information Processing</td>
<td>Information Processing</td>
<td>Decision and Purchase Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Variable or Theme</td>
<td>Current Psychological State</td>
<td>&quot;Psyche&quot;</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output:</td>
<td>Purchase</td>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>Purchase Reinforcement</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Purchase and Feedback</td>
<td>Purchase Postpurchase Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intraindividual Variables</td>
<td>Motives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 2-10 Summary Matrix of Buyer Behavior Models (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Kornhauser Lazarsfeld</th>
<th>Kotler</th>
<th>Howard Sheth</th>
<th>Berry Kunkel</th>
<th>Andreasen</th>
<th>Engel Kollat</th>
<th>Nicosia</th>
<th>Blackwell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Groups</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Class</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subculture</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Factors</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Elements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm Attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Stimuli</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III

INTERPERSONAL ECONOMIC TRANSACTIONS AND THE
BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE INTERACTION MODEL
OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

The buyer behavior models outlined and discussed in the previous chapter represent a wide variation in the level of analysis. Some of the models are rather microscopic and thus focus upon specific components of buyer behavior such as the cognitive processes of buyer decision-making. Other more comprehensive models have been constructed to explain the relationships among a larger number of forces that affect buyer behavior. None of these models, regardless of the orientation, explain the effects of the seller's behavior upon the buyer's behavior during on-going interaction.

With exception of the Willett-Pennington research, the studies which pertain to face-to-face buyer-seller interaction focus upon measuring one or more after-effects of such interaction. Research dealing with buyer-seller interaction has neglected the variables which are unique to on-going interaction.

The purposes of this chapter are (1) to briefly describe human interaction and its relationships to interpersonal evaluation of behavior, (2) to set forth and discuss the two major components of the buyer's total payoff in an interpersonal economic transaction, and (3) to present the basic components of the interaction model of buyer behavior.
Human Interaction and Interpersonal Evaluation of Behavior

Although not specifically defined in the first chapter, social interaction was described in terms of its boundaries as arising when at least two persons are in each other's presence either spatially or socially and at least one individual is aware of the other. For the purpose of this research social interaction will be viewed in terms of two-person, face-to-face interaction.

According to George Herbert Mead, interaction may be viewed as being either "non-symbolic" or "symbolic."¹ Non-symbolic interaction occurs when an individual reacts to the behavior of another without attempting to define or interpret the actions of that person. For example, an involuntary reflex action in response to the behavior of another is a component act of non-symbolic interaction.

Symbolic interaction is a process in which both individuals interpret the activities of the other and convey to the other the manner in which he is expected to behave. Through this process each participant intermeshes his acts with those of the other person and in turn guides the other in so doing. Herbert Blumer in describing social interaction states:²

Social interaction is a process that forms human conduct instead of being merely a means or a setting for the expression or release of human conduct. Put simply, human beings in interacting with one another have to take account of what each other is doing or is about to do; they are forced to direct their own conduct or handle their situations in terms of what they take into account.

¹George Herbert Mead, The Philosophy of the Act (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 149-150.

Thus, the activities of others enter as positive factors in the formation of their own conduct. In face of the actions of others one may abandon an intention or purpose, revise it, check or suspend it, intensify it, or replace it. The actions of others enter to set what one plans to do, may oppose or prevent such plans, may require a revision of such plans, and may demand a very different set of such plans. One has to fit one's own line of activity in some manner to the actions of others.

Human interaction is a formation process of behavior and is not just an arena for exchanging behavior which is supposedly pre-formed by factors in each individual's psychological and sociological milieu.

As shown in Chapter II, many of the currently existing consumer behavior models indicate that a buyer's behavior is a function of such psychological variables as needs, motives, drives, attitudes and personality, and such sociological variables as status, roles, norms, and reference groups. Even though these pre-existing factors influence one's behavior, it seems probable that buyers and sellers do not enter into social interaction as totally programmed units and exhibit actions that are solely consequences of these factors.\(^3\)

The existence of human interaction, as described thus far, supports the basic assumption that an individual places a value upon the behavior of another individual.\(^4\) As indicated by this definition, interacting persons each adjust their behavior as a function of the behavior of the other. In order to intermesh his behavior with that of another, an individual must evaluate the actions of the other person. Through this process of evaluation participants associate or attach a

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 15-16.

\(^4\)The term "value" in reference to behavior is used in this chapter to refer to a weighting or a valence that one places upon the behavior of another. The valence or weight may be positive, negative, or zero which would be total indifference.
value to the behavior of the other individual. If the behavior of Person B is pleasurable, favorable, and rewarding to Person A, he attaches a positive value to such behavior. Likewise, if Person B's behavior is unpleasant, Person A associates a negative value to B's behavior. These values that one attaches to the behavior of another person are behavioral payoffs.\(^5\)

The evaluations that Person A places upon the behavior of Person B are, to some extent, a function of the values that Person A attaches to his own behavior that is required to intermesh with the behavior of Person B. In intermeshing one's behavior with that of another, if an individual has to make behavioral adjustments which he perceives to be unfavorable, then the values associated with the behavior received from the other person are weighted in a negative direction. The resulting behavioral payoff for the individual may still be positive even though to a lesser degree. If a person, in interacting with another, exhibits behavior that he perceives as favorable, then the resulting behavioral payoff from the other's behavior is evaluated in a positive direction to a greater extent. Thus, in human interaction the values that one attaches to the behavior of another person are a function of both his own behavior and the behavior of the other individual.

If an individual during interaction attaches a value to the behavior of the other person, one may assume that for a special case of human interaction such as an interpersonal economic transaction, the

---

seller attaches a value to the buyer's behavior and the buyer places a
value upon the behavior of the seller.

Payoffs of Interpersonal Economic Transactions

An interpersonal economic transaction occurs between two or
more persons and is "an exchange along with the attendant bargaining or
negotiations." For purposes of analysis the goods, services, and/or
money involved in the transaction are called the objects of the trans-
action. Each interacting person at a given point in time places an
evaluation on both the objects of the transaction which he possesses
and upon those possessed by the other person.

The values which the buyer and the seller place on the objects
of the transaction may be either positive or negative at a given point
in time. If exchange actually occurs, the difference between the value
one places on the object or objects he is receiving and the value of the
object which he is giving up is a net value which becomes a major compo-
nent of the total transactional payoff for the individual.7

In face-to-face buyer-seller interaction, more is exchanged than
just the objects of the transaction. As buyers and sellers interact,
they exchange behavior. Each individual places a value upon the behav-
ior that he receives from the other. The buyer's evaluation of the
seller's behavior affects the buyer's behavior which in turn influences
the seller's evaluation of the buyer. The evaluation that the buyer
and the seller place on each other's behavior is another major component

6 Alfred Kuhn, The Study of Society: A Unified Approach (Homewood,
7 Ibid., p. 267.
of the transactional payoff and is extremely vital in its effects upon the outcomes of buyer-seller interaction. Thus, in analyzing economic transactions one may view either participant's total transactional payoff as consisting of two components including (1) a payoff from the net value of the objects of the transaction and (2) a payoff arising from the behavior of the other person.

Since the interaction model of buyer behavior, which will be introduced in this chapter, focuses upon how the seller's behavior affects the buyer's behavior, the behavioral component of the total transactional payoff is analyzed subsequently in terms of the buyer's total transactional payoff. A similar type of analysis could be performed from the seller's point of view because the seller's total transactional payoff also consists of a behavioral payoff and an object payoff.

In Figure 3-1 is depicted a diagram that shows four basic sets of potential total transactional payoffs that a buyer may acquire from the objects of the transaction and from the seller's behavior that he receives in the transaction. Contained in Quadrant 1 are transactional payoffs consisting of positive payoffs from both the object and behavior received. Since both the behavioral payoff and the object payoff are positive, the entire set of potential total transactional payoffs are positive.

The potential total transactional payoffs in Quadrant 2 are a function of negative or unfavorable behavior received from the seller and a positive payoff received from the objects of the transaction. For example, a buyer may tolerate the unpleasant actions of a snob-like seller in order to acquire a product which he (the buyer) perceives to have a large positive payoff. On the other hand, the presence and
BUYER'S PAYOFF FROM THE BEHAVIORAL COMPONENT OF THE TOTAL TRANSACTIONAL PAYOFF

Negative

Quadrant 2

Positive

Quadrant 1

Positive

Positive or Negative Total Transactional Payoffs

Quadrant 4

Negative

Negative Total Transactional Payoffs

Quadrant 3

Figure 3-1 Potential Outcomes For the Buyer's Total Transactional Payoff
behavior of such a seller may become so unpleasant, that the total transactional payoff becomes negative. Thus, the potential outcomes in Quadrant 2 could be either positive or negative total transactional payoffs depending upon the direction and strength of both payoff components.

Quadrant 3 outcomes are a combination of both negative object payoffs and negative behavior payoffs. An example of this type of interaction might arise when the buyer, after examining a particular product, finds the product inferior and the seller's behavior unpleasant. Such interaction results in a negative total transactional payoff for the buyer and thus does not lead to completed economic transactions.

The total transactional payoffs in Quadrant 4 arise from a combination of a positive behavioral payoff and a negative object payoff. A buyer might participate in a transaction in which the seller's presence and behavior is very rewarding while the payoff received from acquiring the object held by the seller is mildly negative causing the total transactional payoff to be positive for the buyer. It is not unusual to find teen-age girls selling poppies rather than old veterans. Conversely, the total transactional payoff for the buyer could be negative if the object component is extremely unattractive and the seller's behavior is only mildly rewarding.

In any of the quadrants in Figure 3-1 and especially in Quadrants 2 and 4, the case may arise in which products and money are not actually exchanged thus causing the payoff from the objects of the transaction to be zero. Even though the object payoff is zero, behavior is exchanged, and the buyer receives either a positive or a negative payoff from the seller's behavior. In this case the behavioral payoff becomes the total
transactional payoff.

The wide variation in the potential transactional payoffs represented in the quadrants in Figure 3-1 illustrates, to some extent, that the seller's behavior may contribute either positively or negatively to the buyer's total transactional payoff. Thus the buyer's evaluation of the seller's behavior has a definite effect upon the outcome of the transaction. The interaction model of buyer behavior attempts to describe the major interaction variables and their interrelationships which influence the process and outcome of the buyer's evaluation of the seller's behavior. The model focuses directly upon the forces, unique to on-going interaction, from which the buyer derives a behavioral payoff from the behavior of the seller.

The Interaction Model

As indicated in the first section of this chapter, the process of human interaction requires that each participant evaluate the behavior of the other individual. The basic underlying assumption of the interaction model of buyer behavior is that the buyer places a value upon the behavior of the seller and that this value becomes a part of the total transactional payoff. Based upon this assumption the main purpose of the interaction model of buyer behavior is to set forth the major variables and interrelationships which influence a buyer's determination of a behavioral payoff acquired during on-going buyer-seller interaction.

In this section the basic components of the interaction model of buyer behavior are presented. Specifically, the boundaries as well as the major variables are set forth.
Boundaries of the Model

Since this model is microscopic in its focus upon buyer behavior, it is necessary to clarify several boundaries. First, the seller in the model is a person and not a machine, a company, or a group of personal salesmen.

Second, the buyer in this model is not the economic rational man. The buyer is not an economic rational man in the classical sense because (1) he does not possess perfect information about the market, (2) he is not aware of all of the alternatives that might solve his purchasing problems at a particular point in time, (3) he does not possess knowledge of the possible consequences of the alternatives that do reach awareness, and (4) he is not able to indicate his preferences in terms of a cardinal measure of utility.  

Third, the buyer and seller in the interaction arena do not exist in social isolation before interacting with each other. Each enters the transactional situation with certain motives, attitudes, and goals. Both participants have been subjected to social influence such as the family, peer groups, reference groups, social class, and sub-cultural factors.

Fourth, buyer-seller interaction exists whenever the buyer or the seller is aware of the other's presence.

The Variables

A structural framework for the interaction model is set forth in Figure 3-2. Even though this model focuses upon the buyer, his

---

Figure 3-2 The Structural Framework of the Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior
behavior is viewed as a function of the seller's behavior. Thus both the buyer and the seller are depicted in Figure 3-2.

Endogenous Variables

Three major sets of endogenous variables which are active within the individual and that play an important role in determining the behavioral payoff that the buyer receives through interaction with the seller include (1) interpersonal perception, (2) interpersonal attraction, and (3) potential effects of attraction. A fourth set of endogenous variables, interpersonal techniques, are included as ancillary variables which function to facilitate buyer-seller interaction.

The process of person perception occurs on the part of both the buyer and the seller. The buyer's perception of the seller is based upon information inputs sent from (or observed about) the seller. The seller's perception of the buyer is based upon information inputs sent from (or observed about) the buyer.

Interpersonal attraction occurs when one of the interactants assigns a positive valence to the impression which he has formed of the other. Likewise, interpersonal rejection arises due to the assignment of a negative valence to one's impression of another individual.

In the interaction model of buyer behavior one set of analyses focuses upon the variables which affect the buyer's assignment of a valence to his impression of the seller.

The potential effects of attraction upon the buyer may influence

---


both the buyer's overt behavior and his cognitive structure. These effects are sent to the seller through social techniques. The reactions of the seller to these types of inputs become information inputs for the buyer which again may affect the buyer's impression and valence associated with the seller.

Interpersonal techniques are the methods used by interacting individuals to send units of information to each other. These techniques may be verbal or non-verbal. Persons utilize social techniques both consciously and unconsciously.

The interaction model of buyer behavior contains an analysis of five categories of interpersonal techniques including (1) proxemic communication, (2) kinesic communication, (3) tactile communication, (4) language, and (5) paralinguistic communication. Proxemic communication is behavioral expression which occurs by changing spatial distance between the buyer and the seller during interaction. Kinesic communication is transmitted through the motion of the body or parts of the body. Tactile communication is social behavior which is sent to the receiver through touch. Paralinguistic communication is behavior that is sent to the receiver through non-verbal speech. Verbal speech is communicative behavior sent to the receiver by a socially learned system of vocal activities.

All persons develop a repertoire of interpersonal techniques. An individual does not use the same social techniques in dealing with all people with whom he comes in contact. Even in a specific interpersonal encounter such as a buyer-seller interaction there is wide

---

variation in the social methods utilized.

Exogenous Variables

Since a model, being a simplified representation of real world phenomena, allows one to focus upon two or more major variables and their relationships, it becomes necessary to delimit from the analysis a large number of variables of lesser importance in terms of their influence upon the existence of the phenomena.

The interaction model of buyer behavior is a microscopic model. Generally, microscopic models focus upon a rather limited portion of real world phenomena. Since models in general deal with a limited number of variables and microscopic models are oriented toward a very small number of variables, it is necessary for purposes of clarification to present the exogenous variables which influence the major variables included in the model but yet are not explained by the model. The fact that the exogenous variables are not analyzed in the model is not meant to imply that these variables do not have effects upon the other variables and relationships in the interaction model of buyer behavior. However, to simplify the analysis, the exogenous variables are treated as constants.

As stated earlier in terms of a boundary, the buyer and the seller in the interaction arena do not exist in social isolation prior to interaction. Each individual as a part of society is a member of several social systems. Persons both affect and are affected by the social systems in which they participate. As participants in social systems individuals are influenced by various components of social structures such as norms and roles. Even though buyers and sellers bring with them
into the interaction arena potential behavioral responses that are a function of their norms and roles, the effects of norms and roles upon on-going buyer-seller interaction are considered to be exogenous variables.

The components of social structure such as norms and roles are variables which assist in explaining the similarities in human behavior that arise due to the existence of social structure. The interaction model of buyer behavior takes as a given the presence of social structure and focuses upon a set of variables which cause variability in behavior during buyer-seller interaction.

Buyer-seller interaction occurs in an environment. From this environment a multitude of forces are exerted upon the buyer and seller. Major categories of environmental elements include economic factors, technological forces, and governmental and legal variables. Although environmental forces are active before, during, and after a specific buyer-seller interaction, these factors are considered to be exogenous variables because the interaction model of buyer behavior focuses upon variables that are active specifically during interaction and tend to be rather inactive prior to and after interaction.

A third set of exogenous variables include needs, motives, and personal goals of both the buyer and the seller. Each participant brings his needs, motives, and goals with him to the interaction arena. These are variables that influence the behavior of buyers and sellers. However, for purposes of the interaction model of buyer behavior, these variables are considered to be exogenous because they are forces which,
to a large extent, are generated prior to interaction.\textsuperscript{12} Needs, motives, and personal goals are factors that are a part of each participant's psychological set which, to some degree, has a pre-shaping effect upon behavior in interaction.\textsuperscript{13} These variables influence one's behavior whether or not the person is in the interaction arena. The endogenous variables in the interaction model of buyer behavior are active specifically during interaction and are relatively inactive prior to and after interaction.

The exogenous variables represent factors which are not explained by the model. Yet, the fact that these variables are referred to as being exogenous does not indicate that they do not have an effect upon the behavior of both buyers and sellers. Buyer-seller interaction does not occur in social isolation with each participant using a special psychological set just for interaction. Thus, the separation of variables into endogenous and exogenous categories is somewhat vague.

Summary

The process of interpersonal interaction requires the participants to evaluate each other's behavior. One's behavior exhibited during interaction may be rewarding or punishing to the receiver of the behavior. Regardless of whether the behavior is rewarding or punishing, it represents a payoff to the receiver.

In dealing with interpersonal economic transactions the major focus tends to be upon the values that the participants place upon the objects subject to exchange. The emphasis seems to be upon the relative


\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
differences in the values that each person holds for the objects under his control and for the objects under control of the other person. If the exchange actually occurs the payoff to both the buyer and the seller is generally a function of the relative differences in value that each person holds for the objects of the transaction.

Although the payoff one receives from the object he acquires is a major component of the total transactional payoff, the behavior exhibited by both the buyer and the seller during interaction is of value to each other. The value that the buyer places upon the seller's behavior is also a component of the buyer's total transactional payoff.

The interaction model of buyer behavior pertains specifically to the variables and their interrelationships which significantly affect the buyer's determination of a behavioral payoff acquired through interaction with the seller.

In Chapter II a survey of selected buyer behavior models indicated that the variables, which are unique to on-going interaction between the buyer and the seller, have been neglected. The initial section of Chapter III dealt with the assumption that an interactant assigns a value to the behavior of the other individual with whom he is interacting. The last section of Chapter III has set forth the major components of a model that focuses upon the variables of on-going interaction which are active in determining the buyer's behavioral payoff acquired through interaction with the seller. Chapter IV is the first of a series of three chapters which analyzes in detail the variables and relationships of the interaction model of buyer behavior. Specifically, the analysis in Chapter IV deals with the determinants of the buyer's impression of the seller.
CHAPTER IV

THE INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTUAL VARIABLES OF THE
INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

In the first section of Chapter III the process of human interaction was discussed briefly. As was pointed out human interaction necessitates each interactant to evaluate the behavior of the other individual. The major assumption of the interaction model of buyer behavior is that the buyer evaluates the behavior of the seller and, based upon this evaluation, the buyer derives a behavioral payoff by interacting with the seller. The behavioral payoff becomes a part of the buyer's total transactional payoff.

The major objective of this chapter is to isolate and analyze the determinants of the buyer's impression of the seller which in turn affects the determination of a behavioral payoff acquired through interaction with the seller. In order to accomplish this objective, the variables or forces which affect the buyer's perception, and thus his impression, of the seller are considered. Specifically, the analyses focus upon (1) the basic perceptual process, (2) the cognitive factors of impression formation, (3) the order effects of information inputs, (4) the perception of human physical characteristics, and (5) the process of attribution.

As indicated in the limitations section of the first chapter, the variables selected for inclusion in the model are, to a large degree,
determined by the extent to which the variables have been researched empirically. Thus, the five major variables discussed in this chapter have been included in the model because they have been the main focus of empirical research in the area of interpersonal perception and impression formation. There may be other major variables, which influence the buyer's perception and impression of the seller, that have not been ascertained through empirical research.

Set forth in Figure 4-1 is the structural framework of the interaction model of buyer behavior. The major components which are analyzed in this chapter are outlined in a darker line. Even though the emphasis is upon the buyer, one should keep in mind that the seller also derives a behavioral payoff from interacting with the buyer. Many of the variables which are analyzed in terms of ultimately influencing the buyer's derivation of a behavioral payoff are also active in influencing the seller's derivation of behavioral payoff.

A buyer, in order to initiate and/or continue interaction with the seller, must perceive characteristics of the seller. The buyer's concept or impression of the seller is, to a large degree, a function of buyer's process of person perception. Since the basic process of perception is operating when the buyer interacts with the seller, a description of a basic perceptual process is necessary.

The Perceptual Process

The process of perception allows the human being to create some degree of meaning from the information inputs which he receives through
Figure 4-1 The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon The Variables of Interpersonal Perception
his sense organs. The meaning that one develops may differ from one point in time to another. At a given point in time, two persons may produce different meanings in receiving similar information inputs.

A person's behavior is very much a function of his perception of the environment. The seller can place various cues in the environment of the buyer with the hope that the cues will be perceived in a manner which is favorable to the product and/or the company. Because the variation among persons' perceptions is large, the marketer has no real assurance that the cues will evoke the intended result.

For purposes of analysis, perception is defined as the complex process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets information inputs into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. The key terms in the definition of perception are select, organize, and interpret. In order to gain a better understanding of perception, a closer look at perceptual selection, perceptual organization, and perceptual interpretation is necessary.

Perceptual Selection

As indicated earlier not all of the inputs received by an individual are used in creating a meaningful picture of the environment. Of all the information inputs received only a small portion become a part of the perceived experience. For any moment in time the human being is not capable of being aware of all stimuli in his environment. Due to this

---


inability, the individual "selects" some inputs and ignores others. That is, some sensory inputs reach awareness while others do not. For example, if one is reading this paragraph and is concentrating on its content, he may not be consciously aware that the light is on, that air is rushing through the air conditioning ducts, that his favorite music from the radio is reaching his ears, that his coffee is getting cold, or that his beer is getting hot. Now, since some of these stimuli have been mentioned, one or two of these may reach his awareness. Before these stimuli were brought to awareness his sense organs were still receiving these sensory inputs.

Some sensory inputs reach awareness while others do not. Several factors help to explain this phenomenon. First, individuals are likely to attend to those environmental aspects which they anticipate. For example, if one is crossing a one-way street he may check for traffic in only one direction because he anticipates traffic from only one direction. Second, a person selects sensory inputs which he believes will lead to satisfaction of a current, powerful need. As the need intensifies, there is a tendency to ignore irrelevant stimuli. When a person has been without water for a long time, he will become more obsessed with finding water as time passes, and his awareness of irrelevant sensory inputs decreases.

Third, a change in the intensity of a stimulus may cause the sensory input to be selected. Individuals tend to adapt to constant intensities of stimuli. They tend to "get used to" a particular intensity.

---

3 Ibid., pp. 100-2.
The process of becoming accustomed to a sensory input is called "adaptation." When one has "adapted" to a specific intensity of a stimulus, the stimulus will no longer reach awareness. However, if the intensity changes, the sensory input may again reach awareness because adaptation means that an individual adapts to a specific intensity of the stimulus. If a person is studying and the light above him flickers, the person is likely to become aware of the light.

Perceptual selection is only one element in the process of perception. Because selected sensory inputs must be organized, perceptual organization is a very critical element of the perceptual process.

Perceptual Organization

People tend to respond to relationships created among several sensory inputs. Even though only a few stimuli reach awareness at a particular point in time, they must be structured in such a way that meaning is produced. The structuring of sensory inputs is called perceptual organization. Individuals organize selected inputs by several methods. Berelson and Steiner discuss numerous organizing methods, three of which are figure-ground, grouping, and closure. These three methods of perceptual organization are explained for purposes of illustration.

When one organizes using the principle of figure-ground, a part

---


5 Berelson and Steiner, loc. cit., pp. 104-7.
of the pattern stands out as the figure while all other elements appear to be more vague and remain in the background. Although figure-ground is often illustrated visually, the principle can be applied to other senses. For example, a buyer while listening and concentrating on the presentation of a salesman may perceive the words as the figure, while most of the other audible noises in the environment become the ground.6

Grouping, a second means of organizing selected inputs, occurs when elements in an experience or pattern are clustered according to their continuity, similarity, and/or proximity. In Figure 4-2 one may see horizontal rows of numbers or vertical columns of numbers. If he groups into columns, then he is grouping according to proximity, the 1, 4, and 7 being closer together than the 1, 2, and 3. On the other hand, if he groups according to rows, then he is grouping due to continuity, the series 1, 2, and 3 being more continuous than the series 1, 4, and 7. The elements in Figure 4-3 lack similarity, continuity, and proximity and are not so easily grouped. An individual might group these into a set or an aggregate of nine elements. To illustrate, a buyer may prefer shopping at a particular retail outlet because the arrangement of the merchandise more easily allows him to categorize the layout of the store and thus permit him to more quickly locate the products for which he is looking.

A third method that one uses to organize information inputs is called closure. Closure occurs when an individual is able to create meaning from an incomplete pattern by mentally filling in the missing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4-2 Grouping According to Rows or Columns*
Figure 4-3 Grouping by Rows or Columns
elements. For example, when Ford Motor Company spells "Ford" as "F-LIGHT BULB-R-D," they expect an individual to mentally fill in an "0" in place of the light bulb in order to produce a complete word. Closure, like figure-ground and grouping, helps an individual to bring order to information inputs received through sense organs.

Although perceptual selection and perceptual organization are important elements in the process of perception, perceptual interpretation is also needed to establish a meaningful picture of the world.

Perceptual Interpretation

Information inputs are sometimes inconsistent and ambiguous to the receiver. The selected inputs may be organized into several incongruent sets of relationships. An individual under these conditions must interpret the inputs in a manner which is most meaningful and consistent with what he believes to be reality.

Ambiguity among information inputs may arise for several reasons. First, a single element in the environment can create several sensory inputs. Second, several environmental objects can produce rather similar sensory inputs. For example, the howl of a cat and the cry of a baby produce rather similar information inputs. Third, sensory inputs may be ambiguous because they are weak. This weakness may arise because the signal is weak or because our detectors such as sense organs are defective or lack the capacity to receive the signals.

When receiving ambiguous inputs, an individual tends to interpret

---

7Berelson and Steiner, loc. cit., pp. 112-6.
in a manner which is congruent with his expectations. People see and hear what they want to see and hear. The most familiar relationship among the ambiguous inputs is generally the one which becomes a part of the interpretation. Humans tend to interpret in terms of the familiar.

Research by Bruner and Postman supports the hypothesis that people tend to interpret according to their expectations and in the direction of the familiar. Subjects were asked to identify by color and by suit rapidly exposed playing cards. The cards had been altered by reversing the colors and suits so that hearts and diamonds were black, and spades and clubs were red. As the cards were rapidly exposed to the subjects they either identified the cards in terms of the normal color to suit relationships, or they identified the color as being purple for all suits.

The perceptual process allows an individual to bring structure, stability, and meaning to his world. Perceptual selection permits one to create structure in his world in that the individual must deal with a relatively small number of information inputs at a given point in time. If a person did not possess such a selective mechanism, his perception of the world would be extremely chaotic and random. Through perceptual organization the individual is able to establish order among the information inputs that do reach awareness thus providing a certain degree of stability to the perceiver's world. The structure and stability arising from perceptual selection and perceptual organization along with the

---


process of perceptual interpretation makes the human being capable of creating varying degrees of meaning as he experiences his world.

Since the basic process of perception has been set forth, attention may now be more precisely focused upon the specific variables of interpersonal perception. An explanation will be presented regarding the unique elements of interpersonal perception as well as an analysis of the role that interpersonal perception plays in the determination of the buyer's behavioral payoff received from the seller.

**Flows of Social Information Inputs**

Information inputs have been dealt with as homogeneous units without any consideration being given to the source of these inputs. The sources of information inputs may be either social or non-social in structure. Social information inputs are derived through one's sensing a person, group, or institution. The sensing of information pertaining to units other than people results in the receipt of non-social information inputs. For purposes of analysis in the interaction model of buyer behavior the focus is upon social information inputs. Thus, the information flows in Figure 4-1 are social information units pertaining to individual persons, i.e., the buyer and/or the seller being the information source.

Although the basic perceptual process of selection, organization, and interpretation is operative when processing both social and non-social information inputs, there is one major factor which differentiates social perception from the perception of non-social objects.

---

Unlike the perception of non-social objects, one's social perception may be influenced by his own presence and behavior in the perceptual situation because such presence and behavior may affect the social object being perceived.\(^{11}\) For example, if a buyer perceives an automobile, the automobile, being a non-social object, does not perceive him back. The state of the automobile does not change due to the buyer's act of perceiving. However, if the buyer perceives the seller and the seller is aware that the buyer is perceiving him, the seller may alter his own behavior. Therefore, in Figure 4-1, the social information inputs flowing toward the buyer and those flowing toward the seller are, to some degree, a function of their own respective presence and actions.

As the buyer and seller interact the information in the two major flows between the interactants may be initiated by either individual for either one of the information flows. For example, the information inputs acquired by the buyer may be sent to the buyer by the seller through a direct behavioral response, or the buyer may be the force which initiates the input by observing the physical characteristics of the seller. In the latter situation the input is not a function of the seller's behavior but is a function of his presence.

The information flows and thus the information inputs are affected by the context of the buyer-seller interaction. If the buyer and the seller are interacting for the first time, there is reason to believe that behavioral emissions are somewhat restrained. In three separate studies, each performed by different researchers, Wiehe, Jersild, and

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 174.
Hyman, all reach similar conclusions which indicate that strangeness in terms of no previous history of interaction causes restraint and formality in face-to-face exchanges. Thus, it is probable that when a buyer and a seller are interacting for the first time, the social information inputs acquired by both the buyer and the seller are more limited than for buyer-seller interaction in which there has been prior dealings. There is some tentative evidence provided by a study performed by Maccoby and Maccoby which supports the hypothesis that inhibiting effects found in initial interactions may be reduced when one anticipates no further interaction. Based upon the findings of Maccoby and Maccoby it appears that information flows between a buyer and a seller interacting for the first time may not be as limited if either the buyer or the seller is transient.

McDavid and Harari indicate that initial interactions tend to be characterized by stereotyping, perceptual integration, and halo effects. Stereotyping refers to overgeneralization and oversimplification of conceptual categories in the perception of social objects. Perceptual

---


integration occurs when an individual attempts to fit isolated experiences with an interactant into a more comprehensive cognitive framework. The halo effect is active when one observed attribute of a person influences the perceiver's speculation about other attributes of the perceived person. The halo effect in initial perception of another individual is most dominant when the perceiver has very little information about the perceived person and the judgment concerns moral evaluation.\textsuperscript{15}

If the buyer and the seller have had prior dealings, the buyer will enter the interaction arena with an impression of the seller and by processing more information inputs the buyer may maintain the same impression of the seller or he may change his impression of the seller. A buyer who has not had prior dealings with a particular seller will form an initial impression of that seller. Regardless of whether or not the buyer has interacted with the given seller, the buyer, by processing social information inputs regarding the seller, forms and maintains an impression of the seller. From this impression the buyer derives either a negative or positive behavioral payoff. Since the buyer derives a behavioral payoff based upon his impression of the seller, it is necessary to analyze the major cognitive variables which influence impression formation and change.

Cognitive Factors of Impression Formation

As one interacts with another individual, he forms a concept of the other person. For purposes of analysis, the term impression refers to the concept one interactant holds about the other interactant.

\textsuperscript{15}P. M. Symonds, "Notes on Rating," \textit{Journal of Applied Psychology}, IX (June, 1925), 194-5.
Concept is viewed in this model as being a set of social information inputs which stand in certain relation to each other within the cognitive framework of the conceptualizer. One's concept or impression held about another individual may include aspects of personality, dispositions, and/or attitudes. The cognitive factors which affect impression formation and change are numerous. For analytic purposes these factors are grouped into three major categories including (1) cognitive organization, (2) cognitive complexity, and (3) degree of cognitive rigidity.

**Cognitive Organization**

Cognitive organization refers to the process by which the information inputs are placed into more comprehensive relationships. Two quantitatively based models have been used to explain the process by which well organized impressions have been created from a series of discrete information inputs. These models are the summation model and the averaging model.

The summation model of impression formation is based upon the addition of the values of each trait to acquire an impression. If a moderately favorable trait is added to several other favorable traits, the impression becomes even more favorable. Triandis and Fishbein determined that the summation model is the most predictive model in analyzing impression formation. Invoking this type of model the buyer in Figure 4-1 forms an impression of the seller based upon an accumulation

---


of information inputs pertaining to the seller. The buyer's impression of the seller would be \( I_s = H_1 + H_2 + H_3 \ldots + H_n \) where \( I_s \) represents the buyer's impression of the seller, and \( H_i \) represents an information input about the seller. An averaging model is one in which the impression is a function of the average value of the information inputs received. If one uses an averaging model in organizing his impression, then a moderately positive trait coupled with extremely positive traits would tend to reduce the positiveness of the total impression. In order to explain certain types of cognitive organization, a weighted-average model is utilized in which one or more of the information inputs has a heavier weight and thus more influence on the total impression. Anderson's research efforts found evidence which supports the averaging model. However, he had to develop a weighted average model to explain several relationships which did not fit the simple average model.\(^{18}\)

If the buyer uses a simple averaging process in deriving an impression based upon the information inputs relating to the seller, then the impression formation process takes the form of \( I_s = \frac{H_1 + H_2 + H_3 \ldots + H_n}{N} \) where \( I_s \) is the buyer's impression of the seller, \( H_i \) is an information input about the seller, and \( N \) represents the number of information inputs received by the buyer pertaining to the seller. Using the same notation, a weighted-average model would take the form of \( I_s = \frac{k(H_1) + l(H_2) + m(H_3) \ldots + p(H_n)}{N} \) where \( k, l, m, \) and \( p \) represent various weighting factors.

Another type of model (which is more qualitative in structure)

has as its major thrust a Gestalt approach. The central theme is that the whole is equal to more than the sum of its parts, or more specifically that the impression is much more comprehensive than the total of the information inputs.

Asch was one of the first researchers to be concerned about the cognitive organization process involved in forming and changing an impression of another individual. His research in 1946 was based upon interaction with a hypothetical person. Asch found that a subject after receiving several discrete information inputs regarding another individual is capable of forming a unified impression. The elements in the impression possess characteristics which reach out beyond the discrete traits given in the description. Through this study Asch also discovered that one's impression of another is organized by allowing certain qualities to become central traits. The central traits become the structure on which other information inputs are organized. Each central trait does not necessarily have equal weighting. He pointed out that an interactant does not view human qualities as isolated traits but instead, cognitively organizes information inputs into a structure based

---


21 Ibid., 284.
upon the central traits.

Asch's results suggest that the buyer is especially attentive to certain types of information inputs about the seller. The buyer, using these particular types of information inputs as central traits or characteristics as a primary framework, organizes other information inputs into a unified comprehensive impression of the seller rather than an impression consisting of discrete and isolated characteristics.

Although Asch carefully discussed the limitations of the methodology that he utilized, he was severely criticized by Luchins. The major thrust of Luchins' criticism was that interaction with a hypothetical person is quite different from interaction with a real person. Luchins replicated Asch's research, with the exception that his methodology included interaction with real people, and found that subjects do not form unified impressions from discrete information inputs to the extent that Asch believed that they did.

In a third study which tested the trait centrality effect, Kelley, using real persons as the stimulus persons in the interactions, found support for Asch's trait-centrality hypothesis. Kelley ascertained that certain labels cause subjects to transform their entire impression of a person. In addition Kelley's results suggested that (1) there are marked differences in the degree to which variation in one trait will

---


23 Ibid., 323.

produce changes in impressions, and (2) subjects with an unfavorable impression of the stimulus person tend either to not interact with the stimulus person or to at least limit interaction.\textsuperscript{25} The relationship between unfavorableness of impression and unwillingness to interact has a tendency to make more rigid the unfavorable impression because subsequent information inputs are restrained or non-existent.

Kelley's data, in supporting Asch's research, suggest that the buyer's impression of the seller may be altered if the buyer receives specific inputs which happen to be central organizing qualities for the buyer. However, the probability is somewhat limited that the buyer's negative impression of a seller will be changed in a positive direction by the buyer's acquisition of a central characteristic because, as indicated by the Kelley study, an unfavorable impression held by one interactant tends to limit his willingness to interact. Thus, a buyer who holds an unfavorable impression of the seller may, through his own unwillingness to interact, not acquire subsequent information inputs which would change his impression.

Even though the models which explain impression formation vary as to structure, a common characteristic among all these models is that the impression which the buyer forms regarding the seller is a function of processing social information inputs. The results of empirical research which focuses upon trait centrality vary as to the degree to which one forms a unified impression based upon the input of several central characteristics. Although these results differ as to degree, they generally support the hypothesis that several information inputs about

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 437.
the seller become basic structural units of the buyer's impression of
the seller, and from these basic structural units a buyer forms a more
comprehensive impression of the seller.

In regard to altering the buyer's impression, unfavorable im-
pressions tend to be reinforced because the buyer, who holds an unfavor-
able impression, is more likely to avoid or restrict interaction with
a seller for which he holds the unfavorable impression.

The way that a buyer organizes the social information inputs
which he acquires pertaining to the seller is a major determinant in
his impression formation process. Another determinant of his impression
is the number of social information inputs which he includes in his
impression of the seller.

Cognitive Complexity

The degree of cognitive complexity in relation to impression
formation and change has been of concern to several researchers. Cogni-
tive complexity as used here refers to the degree to which the buyer
processes a large number of information inputs and attempts to include
a large number of inputs in his impression of the seller.

In an experimental framework in which subjects viewed a series
of motion pictures scenes of a woman exhibiting ambiguous behavior,
Gollin determined that subjects, presumed to possess considerable cogni-
tive complexity tend to go beyond that perceptually given to form a
related impression, thus achieving unity of impression.26 Some of the

26 E. S. Gollin, "Forming Impressions of Personality," Journal
of Personality, XXIII (September, 1954), 75.
subjects judged to be less cognitively complex develop unity in their impressions by eliminating a set of characteristics and accepting one group of consistent information inputs. Other less cognitively complex subjects tend to create impressions consisting of an aggregation of inconsistent components indicating that they do not attempt to relate the discrepant information inputs.27

Since Gollin's assumptions concerning his subjects' degree of cognitive complexity were rather questionable, in a later study he used as a measure of cognitive complexity an ability test of concept formation to determine an individual's degree of cognitive complexity. He found that subjects who are more likely to form hierarchic concepts tend to be more skilled in relating numerous characteristics into an impression than persons referred to as non-concept formers.28

A buyer who is less cognitively complex may, in forming an impression of the seller, attempt to eliminate enough information to produce a unified impression from the remaining consistent information. The cognitively simple buyer has to discount discrepant information when it exists. This type of buyer's discounting problem is reduced to the extent that the information inputs received about the seller are more congruent. Buyers which are more cognitively complex, as suggested by Gollin's data, are capable of relating inconsistent information inputs into a unified impression by inferring more than is given by the inputs.

Based upon Gollin's research one might predict that an

27Ibid., 75.
interactant, such as a cognitively simple buyer, would hold a less differentiated impression of the other individual than would a cognitively complex interactant. Leventhal and Singer attempted to determine individual differences in impression formation and change between persons who are "simple" judges and those who are "complex" judges. Simple judges are individuals who have few interpersonal constructs while complex judges are people who possess a relatively large set of interpersonal constructs. These researchers found only a small amount of evidence which supports their hypothesis that simple judges have less differentiated impressions than complex judges. In terms of statistical inference, Leventhal and Singer concluded that cognitive complexity does not significantly affect initial impression formation. They did find that the more undesirable the information regarding the stimulus person, the more certain judges are of the clarity of their impressions and the adequacy of the information. However, complex judges possess more uncertainty in regard to their impressions than do simple judges. Assuming that uncertainty often produces search for more information, the cognitive complex buyer will tend to be more open to receiving larger amounts of information inputs pertaining to the seller than will the


30 Ibid., 216.

31 Ibid., 225.

cognitively simple buyer.

In an attempt to find a relationship between sex and levels of cognitive complexity in formation of impressions about others, Shapiro and Tagiuri compared trait inferences of men to those of women. They determined that both sexes are quite similar in the traits which they infer from a given trait. However, they found that women are more ready to reach conclusions about one's personality from available information than are men. Men tend to have more uncertainty in their impressions of others. If one compares the latter finding to the research results of Leventhal and Singer, women may not have as much cognitive complexity as men possess when forming impressions of other individuals.

Shapiro and Tagiuri's findings suggest that if the buyer is a woman, the impression of the seller may be formulated more quickly and based upon less information than if the buyer is a man. Since the male buyer tends to be more uncertain of his impression of another, he may be more willing than a female buyer to acquire and process larger amounts of information inputs.

In considering the degree of cognitive complexity in relation to impression formation, research findings indicate that the level of cognitive complexity varies significantly among persons. A cognitively simple buyer compared to a cognitively complex buyer (1) is more likely to eliminate information inputs which cause inconsistency in order to create a unified impression, (2) is generally more certain of his

---


34 Ibid., 136.
impression of the seller, and (3) is less likely to seek more information to clarify his impression. Buyers, regardless of the level of cognitive complexity, tend to be more certain of their impression as the favorableness of information pertaining to the seller decreases. There is tentative empirical support for the hypothesis that women buyers demonstrate less cognitive complexity than do men in forming impressions of sellers.

Even though both cognitive organization and cognitive complexity are major factors which influence the buyer's process of impression formation and change, the buyer's propensity to accept new social information inputs at a given point in time is another major determinant of the buyer's impression of the seller.

Cognitive Rigidity

Cognitive rigidity is a term that refers to the degree to which an individual's cognitive structure is subject to alteration at a given point in time.

There is research evidence suggesting that an individual's degree of cognitive rigidity appears to be a determinant of impression formation and change. In research performed by Cohen it was found that persons with a highly rigid cognitive state want less additional information and the information which they do desire is generally narrow and one-sided. Likewise, a subject with a less rigid cognitive state is more willing to accept contradictory information inputs.\(^\text{35}\) A more highly rigid cognitive state leads to a more highly polarized impression.

A buyer with a highly rigid cognitive state may tend to resist or inhibit the continuation of on-going interaction with a seller because, as Cohen's data indicate, the cognitively rigid interactant wants less additional information than does the cognitively flexible participant. Not only does the degree of rigidity affect the flow of information inputs, but it also influences the polarity of the buyer's impression of the seller. A highly polarized impression of the seller may be the result of the buyer's highly rigid cognitive structure.

The perceiver's personality has been considered by several researchers to have an effect upon his cognitive rigidity thus influencing his impression formation process. Kelley and Stahelski developed a study involving the interaction of two persons, one having a cooperative personality and the other having a competitive personality. Their data suggested that cooperators believe that other persons' propensities to be either cooperative or competitive are quite heterogeneous, while competitors tend to view all other persons as being uniformly competitive.\(^36\)

The results of the Kelley and Stahelski research supports the hypothesis that the perceiver's personality is a determinant of the degree of cognitive rigidity. A buyer with a highly competitive personality may tend to view all sellers as highly competitive. If the buyer behaves toward the seller as if the seller is highly competitive, the seller may be induced to behave in a more competitive manner.\(^37\) A buyer with a


\(^{37}\)Ibid.
cooperative personality may not view all sellers with which he interacts as being competitive. Buyers with this type of personality tend to see greater variability in the degree of competitiveness. Thus, a buyer with a cooperative personality who perceives the seller as being cooperative will not necessarily force the seller to behave in a more competitive manner.

A secondary part of the Kelley and Stahelski study dealt with the personality variable of authoritarianism of the perceiver. They determined that low authoritarians tend to believe that there is a wide variation among individuals as to the degree of competitiveness. High authoritarians tend to view all interactants as being highly competitive.38 These findings suggest that a buyer with a highly authoritarian personality is more likely to view the seller as possessing a high degree of competitiveness than is a buyer whose personality is low in authoritarianism. If a buyer has a highly authoritarian personality, and such a condition makes him perceive others as being competitive, then his behavior toward the seller may influence the seller to become more competitive.

Jones in performing research pertaining to authoritarianism determined that authoritarians seem to be more insensitive than non-authoritarians to personality characteristics of others.39 Jones' data support the results of Kelley and Stahelski's research in terms of a more broadly defined relationship. A lack of sensitivity toward personality

38 Ibid.
characteristics indicates that the authoritarian possesses a high degree of cognitive rigidity. Due to a high degree of cognitive rigidity, an authoritarian buyer may tend to inhibit the flow of information inputs from the seller, or he may, through his process of perceptual selection, choose not to allow very many information inputs to reach awareness.

In attempting to make some general inferences regarding the influence of cognitive rigidity upon the buyer's impression of the seller, empirical findings support the belief that greater cognitive rigidity leads to greater polarity of impressions. A large proportion of the studies dealing with cognitive rigidity focus upon aspects of personality of the perceiver. In general, the more competitive and/or the more authoritarian the buyer, the more likely he is to perceive all sellers as being competitive. Likewise, buyers who are more cooperative and/or less authoritarian tend to perceive greater heterogeneity in the degree of competitiveness possessed by sellers. The fact that buyer's who are highly competitive and/or highly authoritarian tend to view all sellers as being highly competitive indicates that such buyers possess a high degree of cognitive rigidity. This type of buyer tends to seek less information about a seller with which he is interacting, and the information that he does seek is generally one-sided.

Cognitive Factors of Impression Formation: A Summary

Because the buyer during interaction derives a behavioral payoff from the seller based upon his impression of the seller, the cognitive forces which influence the buyer's process of impression formation and change are significant variables in the interaction model of buyer behavior. Three major cognitive forces which appear to affect a buyer's
process of impression formation and change are cognitive organization, cognitive complexity, and the degree of cognitive rigidity.

A buyer organizes, maintains, and changes his impression of the seller by processing social information inputs acquired from the seller. Depending upon what way the buyer cognitively organizes, the buyer's impression may be (1) a function of the summation of information inputs, (2) a function of the average of information inputs, or (3) a cognitive structure which is more comprehensive than the sum of its parts.

The degree of cognitive complexity varies among buyers. A buyer who is more cognitively complex in forming an impression of the seller, seeks and processes more information, is less certain of the accuracy of his impression, and is more capable of creating a unified impression from incongruent information inputs.

Research results indicate that one's degree of cognitive rigidity is partially determined by his personality. To the extent that the buyer's personality is highly competitive and/or highly authoritarian, he tends to be more cognitively rigid in his impression of the seller. The existence of cognitive rigidity increases the polarity of the buyer's impression, thus lessening his propensity to seek and process new information.

The impression formation process, by which a buyer gains an impression of the seller, has been analyzed thus far in terms of the buyer's cognitive processes dealing with information inputs pertaining to the seller. The order or sequence in which the buyer acquires information inputs may also affect the buyer's impression formation process.
Order of Information Inputs in Relation to Impression Formation

As indicated earlier the initial interaction between buyer and seller may be characterized as inhibited and restrained. However, one should not perceive these initial information flows to be insignificant. The order in which social information inputs are received may influence one's impression of the other interactant. When the first social information inputs dominate an individual's impression of another, the primacy effect is operating. If the most recent social information inputs become strong forces in determining one's impression of another, then the recency effect is functioning.40

The research which has attempted to determine the order effects of information inputs upon impressions may generally be characterized as dealing with one's impression of a hypothetical person. This methodology can be criticized on the basis that the context of true face-to-face interaction is absent. However, this type of methodology may be justified on the criteria of consistency, control, and ease of repetition.

Several studies have been performed which suggest that the primacy effect, that is, the first information inputs received, seems to have the greatest influence upon one's total impression. Luchins reported that the first information inputs received have the more powerful impact on one's impression of another individual.41 He indicated


that one explanation is that the first information to reach awareness evokes a cognitive set which determines the manner in which subsequent information is interpreted.\textsuperscript{42} Similar primacy effects were found in two other research studies, one performed by Anderson and Barrios\textsuperscript{43} and a second conducted by Asch.\textsuperscript{44} Dailey\textsuperscript{45} as early as 1952 and Anderson and Jacobson\textsuperscript{46} in 1965 presented evidence that subjects who have formed impressions of another do not deal effectively with subsequent information inputs but tend to discount the weight or importance of subsequent, inconsistent information.

Hendrick and Constantini found that the primacy effect dominates one's impression because attention to subsequent information inputs is decreased as more information is received by the perceiver. In addition they found, as did Anderson and Hubert,\textsuperscript{47} that if a perceiver is forced


\textsuperscript{44}S. E. Asch, "Forming Impressions of Personality," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLI (July, 1946), 258-90.

\textsuperscript{45}D. A. Dailey, "The Effects of Premature Conclusion upon the Acquisition of Understanding of a Person," Journal of Psychology, XXXIII (January, 1952), 150-1.


\textsuperscript{47}N. H. Anderson and S. Hubert, "Effects of Concomitant Verbal Recall on Order Effects in Personality Impression Formation," Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, II (December, 1963), 381.
to attend to subsequent information inputs, the primacy effect is weakened. Rosenkrantz and Crockett, based upon their research results, suggested that the primacy effect is lessened when the latter information inputs are extremely forceful inputs. Their explanation for the reduced primacy effect is similar to that of Hendrick and Constantini's explanation in that they believe that the forcefulness makes the receiver of the inputs more attentive to the latter inputs than if such inputs are rather bland or weak.

If a person receives a forewarning which indicates that his impression, based upon initial information inputs, may be inaccurate, the recency effect becomes somewhat stronger. Luchins, in 1957, found support for this type of relationship between the forewarning variable and the recency effect. In further research in 1958, Luchins ascertained that the recency effect becomes more dominant when unrelated information inputs are received between the two blocks of inconsistent information pertaining to a given person.

One recent research effort, unlike the previous work cited, dealt

---


especially with order effects and impression formation of persons actually involved in face-to-face interaction.\textsuperscript{52} Wilson and Insko's results indicated that the recency effect is dominant in the formation of impressions, thus contradicting much of the results of early studies in which impressions were formulated about hypothetical persons. These researchers were careful to point out that the major contradiction between their results and the results of early studies might arise from factors other than the difference between hypothetical interaction and real interaction.\textsuperscript{53}

The evidence provided by the studies reviewed above is rather incongruent. Based upon findings of those studies the order effects of information inputs upon one's formulation of an impression of another are quite diverse depending upon one's attention span, the degree to which one's initial impression is solidified, the presence of intervening inputs, and the existence of a forewarning against the inaccuracy of initial impressions.

Although various factors which lessen the primacy effect have been discovered through empirical research, two of these factors generally are not present during ongoing buyer-seller interaction. First, the fact that primacy effects are lessened when one is forewarned regarding the inaccuracy of one's first impression, generally is not operable in buyer-seller interaction in that there is seldom such a forewarning given by a third person. Second, in order to reduce the primacy effects


\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, 23.
by introducing intervening information, again a third party would be necessary. Due to the structure of two-person, buyer-seller interaction, these factors which experimentally tend to lessen the primacy effect are absent in actual buyer-seller interaction. Therefore, although research results are ambiguous, one can reasonably predict that the order in which social information inputs flow between buyer and seller in Figure 4-1 has an effect upon the interactants' impressions of each other with the initial information inputs having a dominant influence.

The results of the empirical studies above suggest that the initial social information inputs received by the buyer may be quite dominant in his impression of the seller because the buyer may be more attentive to the initial inputs than he is to the latter inputs. To lessen such a primacy effect, the seller may present the buyer with latter information inputs in a very forceful manner.

Thus far, in analyzing the effects of order or sequence of social information inputs, as well as in the analysis of impression formation and change, social information inputs have been dealt with as homogeneous units. However, social information inputs may arise from several sources, and thus are not completely homogeneous. Some of the social information inputs arise from physical attributes such as an individual's size, color, and sex, while other social information inputs derive from action or behavior of the other interactant.\(^{54}\) As shown in Figure 4-1, the flows of social information inputs may consist of physical and/or behavioral inputs. For ease in further explaining interpersonal

perception, the analysis which follows will initially be concentrated upon the physical dimensions of interpersonal perception and subsequently will focus upon an analysis of the behavioral dimensions of interpersonal perception.

Perception of Physical Attributes of People

Even though one might reasonably believe that the perception of physical characteristics of human beings might be similar to one's perceptual processes of non-social objects, there is evidence which indicates that interactants attribute various types of personalities to persons based upon physical characteristics. Much of the initial empirical research dealing with interpersonal perception focused upon the perception of physical attributes and their relationship to personality impressions. The physical characteristics which appear to be associated most with a personality impression include facial characteristics, skin color, and attributes of physical deviance.

In an attempt to develop a relationship between perception of facial characteristics and personality impression, several studies have been performed. For purposes of control in this type of research, the experimental procedures in these studies called for the subjects to form personality impressions by viewing photographs rather than through actual face-to-face interaction. This is a common limitation of most of these research efforts in that actual interaction does not occur. In two

---

55 Ibid.
separate studies, one by Secord, Dukes, and Bevan\(^56\) and the second by Secord and Muthard,\(^57\) researchers determined that in general there is marked agreement among persons that certain facial characteristics create specific personality impressions. Secord, Dukes, and Bevan found that the person with deviant or eccentric facial characteristics is, to a significant degree, judged to have personality characteristics either above or below the average while the individual with average facial features is judged to have an average personality. The facial attributes which have the greatest influence in the determination of personality impressions include age, skin texture, fullness of lips, and facial tensions. The features which have the least relevance for personality impression are height of eyebrows, eyelid visibility, and width of face.\(^58\) Rather than finding relationships between single physiognomic traits and single personality traits, Secord, Dukes, and Bevan determined that clusters of facial features are correlated with clusters of personality traits. For example, they found that older faces, thin lips, level gaze, wrinkles at eye corners, medium eye depth, and average eye brightness, are associated with personality traits such as distinguished look, intelligent look, air of responsibility, air of refinement, and determined look and as being uncorrelated with such


\(^{58}\) Secord, Dukes, and Bevan, loc. cit., 276.
traits as carefree expression, easy going, sense of humor, patient expression, and indifferent look.\textsuperscript{59}

Secord and Bevan in a different study made a cross-cultural comparison of U.S. and Norwegians students' perceptual behaviors in associating facial characteristics and personality impressions. Using the same photographs, the researchers found that both U.S. subjects and Norwegian subjects acquired similar personality impressions from the same photographs.\textsuperscript{60}

There is evidence from research performed by Secord and Muthard that men's personality impressions of women developed by looking at female faces tend to vary according to the age of the man. Older men, it was found, tend to form a less favorable personality impression.\textsuperscript{61}

The studies cited above suggest that a buyer during interaction acquires social information inputs by observing the facial features of seller and from these inputs creates an impression of the seller's personality. Based upon the buyer's impression of the seller's personality, the buyer may make certain assumptions or develop certain expectations about the seller's behavior. Thus, the buyer in Figure 4-1 may hold specific behavioral expectations regarding the seller before the buyer has actually acquired behavioral inputs pertaining to the seller.

Skin color is another physical attribute which people use to

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., 277.


\textsuperscript{61}Secord and Muthard, loc. cit., 239-40.
formulate an impression of one's personality. Secord, Bevan, and Katz attempted to develop a relationship between degrees of Negroidness and stereotyped personality characteristics of Negroes. These researchers determined that regardless of the degree of physiognomic Negroidness, subjects generally include all of the Negroid stereotyped characteristics in their personality impressions. A second hypothesis supported by the results of this research is that anti-Negro perceivers tend to exaggerate the Negro personality stereotype whereas pro-Negro perceivers tend to de-emphasize such a stereotype.62

Interracial buyer-seller interaction within our own culture and possibly multi-national buyer-seller interaction may be influenced by differences in skin color. Specifically, the buyer and/or seller may be perceived to be Negroid, even if skin color is rather light with the perceiver attaching the Negroid personality. One may speculate that a similar effect could occur when persons from other racial or ethnic groups are involved.

A third category of human characteristics which have received the attention of researchers is physical deviation or mental deviation. The perception of characteristics, which may be described as stigmatized, has several effects upon social interaction. The terms stigma or stigmata are used here to refer to human attributes which deviate considerably from the norm such as physical or mental disability.63

---


Although one might minimize the importance of social interactions in which at least one person is stigmatized, the effects of stigmata may be rather prevalent in that it is probable that a significant number of persons perceive themselves as being viewed by others as being blemished in some manner. Thus, the influence of stigmata may appear in quite ordinary social interactions.  

The perceived strangeness which accompanies the initial stages of face-to-face interaction appears to be accented when one of the individuals is stigmatized with a physical disability. Richardson, Hastorf, Goodman, and Dornbush in a study dealing with interaction between the handicapped and non-handicapped determined that non-handicapped individuals report greater amounts of uncertainty and uncomfortableness in such situations. Similar results were reported by Davis. Under this type of interaction condition one could expect the presence of stigma to affect the perception and thus the interpersonal behavior of both individuals.

Researchers have concentrated upon the behavior of both the stigmatized and non-stigmatized interactants. In a study which compared the interaction of non-stigmatized persons to interaction in which one individual was stigmatized, Kleck, Ono, and Hastorf determined that the

---


presence of the stigmatized interactant leads to highly controlled behavioral output on the part of the non-stigmatized person. Specifically, they found that the non-stigmatized interactant tends to exhibit less variability in his behavior, attempts to terminate the interaction sooner, and expresses opinions which are less representative of his actual beliefs. The results of a study by Farina, Allen, and Saul indicate that the role of the stigmatized person is to try to dispel the unfavorable impression which he believes himself to have created. In doing so, his behavioral output causes the non-stigmatized person to reject him.

Assuming that a significant number of individuals perceived themselves to be stigmatized, as indicated by Farina, Allen, and Saul, numerous buyer-seller interactions may occur in an environment in which the buyer and/or seller restricts the flow of interpersonal information and changes his behavior in other ways in response to the stigma which one or both of the interactants possesses.

Because an individual generally has an opportunity to receive social information inputs pertaining to physical characteristics prior to receiving inputs regarding the behavior of the other interactant, a substantial proportion of the initial social information inputs acquired by the buyer pertain to the physical characteristics of the seller. In

67 Kleck, Ono, and Hastorf, loc. cit., 433.
68 Farina, Allen, and Saul, loc cit., 182.
69 Ibid., 169.
the earlier discussion of the order effects, the research results when considered in the context of the buyer-seller interaction support the hypothesis that the information inputs which the buyer initially acquires about the seller tend to dominate the buyer's impression of the seller's personality. As the forces of the primacy effect operate on a set of social information inputs with a high distribution of inputs pertaining to physical characteristics, the perception of physical attributes becomes quite significant in forming the buyer's impression of the seller.

A buyer's impression of the seller may be, to some degree, determined by the buyer's acquisition of social information inputs which deal with the physical characteristics of the seller. At a more general level empirical researchers have focused upon the effects of physical characteristics upon an impression which the perceiver holds regarding the perceived person. The physical characteristics which have been found to have significant effects upon one's impression of another person are facial features, skin color, and physical deviations.

Research results suggest that a buyer as he perceives the facial features of a seller may associate such facial characteristics with a certain type of personality. Facial features which appear to have the most relevance for forming an impression of the seller include age, skin texture, fullness of lips, and facial tension. There is also research evidence indicating that clusters of facial features are associated with clusters of personality traits.

Depending upon the degree to which the buyer is racially prejudiced, skin color may be another physical attribute influencing the buyer's impression of the seller. Research evidence indicates that regardless of the shade of skin color, a buyer tends to perceive a Negro
seller as possessing the stereotyped personality characteristics of Negroes. In addition, a highly prejudiced buyer is more likely to exaggerate the Negro personality characteristics in his impression of the Negro seller than is the low or non-prejudiced buyer.

The existence of stig mata or physical deviation influences buyer-seller interaction and the buyer's impression of the seller. Since the existence of a physical deviance causes the normal interactant to become uncomfortable and inhibited, he tends to (1) control his behavioral output, (2) express opinions which are less congruent with his actual beliefs, and (3) terminate the interaction more quickly. The stigmatized person tries to behave in such a manner as to minimize the stigma. Because of the presence of the stigma, both the stigmatized and the non-stigmatized interactants alter their behavioral outputs which in turn affects the impressions which each forms regarding the other.

Even though the buyer's impression is significantly influenced by social information inputs which have as sources the physical attributes of the seller, the buyer's impression of the seller is also affected by the social information inputs which pertain to the seller's behavior. In the following section the effects of the seller's behavior upon the buyer's impression of the seller are analyzed.

Attribution: The Perception of Behavior

As one perceives the behavior of another individual, he does not just merely sense the physical activity or motions of the other person. From a series of information inputs about one's behavior, a perceiver makes inferences about another individual's dispositions, attitudes, and character. A major determinant of one's impression of another is the
degree to which a person perceives the other individual as being the causal agent of events in the interpersonal life space.\textsuperscript{70} The variables and relationships which determine the extent to which one attributes cause to another are important components in the process of interaction. The buyer in Figure 4-1, upon receiving behavioral information inputs from the seller, attributes a certain degree of causality to him, thus allowing the buyer to infer certain characteristics, dispositions, and attitudes about the seller. From these and other inferences the buyer forms impressions about the seller.

In analyzing the variables which influence the manner in which the buyer perceives the seller's behavior two attribution models, as well as results of several empirical studies, are discussed. Subsequently three major types of attribution are analyzed.

Models of Attribution

Essential to the analysis of the attribution process is the basic assumption that man generally perceives behavior to be caused. Heider indicates that the location of causality can be in either the perceived person or the environment.\textsuperscript{71} A person may be perceived as behaving in a certain manner because he has to perform that way. That is, the external or environmental forces are strong. If the person is perceived to behave in a particular way because he so desires, then his behavior is a function of internal causality. Thibaut and Riecken found that an


individual perceives compliant behavior of a higher status person to be a function of internal causality and the same type of behavior on the part of a lower status person to be a function of external causality.\(^2\)

When the buyer acquires behavioral information inputs from the seller, the buyer may view the seller's behavior as being determined by external causes such as pressure from management and competition among salesmen as well as being a function of internal causes. The research by Thibaut and Riecken suggests that if a salesman is perceived to be a lower status person (which sometimes he is) and the salesman exhibits compliant or accomodative behavior, which is quite often the case, then the buyer is likely to perceive the salesman's behavior as being determined by external causes.

Another variable, that of one's role, has been analyzed to determine its effects upon an individual's perception of internal and external causality. A group of researchers have set forth the proposition that, since one's role or set of roles consists of behavioral expectations from other persons, one's behavior which is actually congruent with his role requirements is behavior attributed to external causality.\(^3\) They point out that when a person's behavior deviates from role expectations, his behavior is judged to be a result of internal causality. Using a methodology in which subjects listened to recorded interviews, Jones, Davis, and Gergen determined that "out-of-role"


stimulus persons are perceived to be exhibiting their true attributes to a greater extent than are "in-role" stimulus persons.\textsuperscript{74}

Thus, a second reason that the buyer may perceive the seller's behavior to be a function of external causality is that the behavior exhibited by the seller may be viewed as being "in-role" behavior. In-role behavior provides the buyer with very little information that allows him to attribute dispositions and attitudes about the seller.\textsuperscript{75} The buyer's impression formation process, in deriving an impression of the seller, is not facilitated to a large extent by receiving information inputs that arise from role behavior. As the seller tends to deviate from the behavioral expectations of his role as a seller, the buyer may perceive his behavior as being less attributable to external causality. As the seller departs from his role, the buyer may perceive the seller's behavior as being determined by internal causes thus revealing characteristics about his true self.\textsuperscript{76}

In dealing with the various forms of causality, Heider differentiates between personal causality and impersonal causality. Personal causality pertains to those events which the perceived person intended to occur. Impersonal causality refers to events externally produced and events which were caused by the perceived individual but who had no intention of such events occurring.\textsuperscript{77} He indicates that individuals are

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 310.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 302.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 303.
held responsible for effects categorized as personally caused because such effects indicate intentions. Information inputs about one's intentions allows the perceiver to develop inferences about another person's dispositions.\(^78\)

As the buyer receives behavioral information inputs which he perceives as internally caused, he must still differentiate between the intentional and unintentional effects of the seller's behavior in order to make inferences regarding the seller's dispositions. Only after the buyer has separated the externally caused effects from the internally caused effects and has determined intentionality of the effects due to internal causality, is he in a position to develop inferences about the seller's dispositions which in turn will allow him to form an impression based upon the seller's behavior.

Using Heider's work as a foundation, Jones and Davis have proposed a theory of attribution based upon correspondent inferences.\(^79\) Jones and Davis' analysis differs from that of Heider's in that they focus mainly upon internal causality.

The major thrust of Jones and Davis' correspondent inference theory is that an inference about a human characteristic is correspondent to the extent that the attribute and the observed behavior are similarly explained by the inference. In addition, the concept of correspondence should indicate the perceived person's uniqueness on the

\(^{78}\)Ibid., pp. 101-102.

dimension in question. Correspondence is high when the act tells the perceiver something about the perceived individual which the perceiver did not know prior to that time. 80 An inference that relates an attribute to an act increases in correspondence to the extent that the judged value of the attribute differs from the perceiver's conception of the manner in which an average person would behave. 81

Within the framework of correspondent inference theory maximum beneficial information 82 about the perceived is gained when the perceived person's choice of action is high, that is, he is not constrained by external forces, and the prior probability of the act occurring is low. 83 Likewise, little beneficial information is gained from the perception of behavior when the stimulus person has no choice or little choice as to his behavior and the prior probability of the act occurring is high.

The results of the Jones, Davis, and Gergen study (cited earlier) indicate that behavior which is in line with the behavioral expectations of the perceived person's role provides very little beneficial information regarding his disposition. 84

81 Jones and Davis, *loc. cit.*, 224.
82 The term beneficial information refers to information inputs which would be useful to the perceiver in forming an impression of the perceived.
83 Jones and Harris, *loc. cit.*, 2.
In terms of application the Jones and Davis model is quite similar to the Heider model. The buyer, as he receives information inputs from the seller, may initially evaluate the seller's behavior using a choice criterion. That is, the buyer may consider the seller's actions in a context of degree of choice. In addition, the prior probability which the buyer attaches to the seller's behavior is a determinant of the value of the information inputs received regarding the seller. To the extent that the seller is perceived to have a wide range in the choice of his actions, and the prior probability of the seller's behavior is low, then the information inputs received about the seller tend to have greater value to the buyer in making inferences about the seller's behavior.

The Heider model and the Jones and Davis model are similar in that both are based upon the assumption that behavior has effects and that an individual tries to deal with the causes of behavior in terms of the effects. While Heider's model focuses on both internal and external causality, the Jones and Davis model emphasizes internal causality. 85

The Heider model and related empirical findings yield several implications for explaining how the buyer forms an impression of the seller based upon the buyer's perception of the seller's behavior. First, the buyer may attempt to separate the seller's behavior as to whether such behavior is internally caused or externally caused. Second, if the seller is perceived to be of lower status, his behavior is more

likely to be perceived as being externally caused. Third, the buyer is likely to perceive the seller's behavior as being externally caused if the buyer believes the seller's behavior to be in-role behavior. Fourth, the buyer after differentiating the locus of causality of the seller's behavior, tends to infer dispositions, attitudes, and personality about the seller, thus influencing the buyer's impression of the seller.

Based upon the Jones and Davis attribution model and related empirical research, one may make several inferences regarding the effects of the buyer's perception of the seller's behavior upon the buyer's impression of the seller. First, the buyer tends to analyze the degree of choice which the seller possesses in selecting his actions. If the buyer believes the seller to have very little choice of actions, he may tend to view the seller's behavior as not representative of his real self. Second, the buyer may consider the prior probability of a specific act of the seller in attributing various characteristics to the seller. If the prior probability of a given act is high, such an action does not give the buyer very much additional information about the seller, while if the prior probability is low, such an act gives the buyer more additional information which is useful to the buyer in making inferences about the seller which in turn affects the buyer's impression of the seller.

Thus far, the analysis of the attribution models and the related empirical studies have focused upon the variables which are a part of the general process of attribution. Further analysis deals with three specific types of attribution.

Types of Attribution

Although the models and empirical research set forth in the
section above deal with the attribution process in general, there are other variables and related empirical research dealing with one of three specific types of attribution including (1) attribution of attitudes, (2) attribution of intentions, and (3) attribution of capabilities.

**Attribution of Attitudes**

Due to external causality people may behave in ways which are incongruent with their attitudes. At times individuals make statements that they actually do not believe. One's behavior may also be a function of real attitudes. A person's interpersonal behavior may be determined by internal causality and/or external causality. Attitudes expressed by both buyers and sellers during face-to-face interaction may or may not be their real attitudes.

Dispositions of the perceived person are sometimes derived by attributing attitudes to him. If the perceiver does not see strong environmental forces operating on the perceived individual, then the behavior exhibited by the perceived is considered to be indicative of his true attitudes. Attitudes presented with an extreme valence may be more likely perceived to be one's true attitudes. The results of a study performed by Eisinger and Mills indicated that persons who exhibit strong attitudes are perceived to be more sincere. 86

The Eisinger and Mills data suggest that if a seller expresses an attitude with an extreme valence, the buyer is more likely to view such attitudes as being the seller's own attitudes. However, as

---

indicated earlier if the buyer views the seller's behavior as being in-role behavior (such as a strong expression of a favorable attitude toward the product), the buyer may discount such an expression of attitude as being in-role behavior and thus not necessarily an expression of the seller's true attitude.

Perceivers, in attributing attitudes, to some extent consider the context of the stimulus person to determine if he has a choice or no choice in the behavior which he exhibits. Jones and Harris found experimental data which suggests that an individual does take into account prior probabilities and situational constraints in his attribution of attitudes. However, these variables do not carry as heavy a weight as one might predict based upon the Jones and Davis model. The moderate support for Jones and Harris' hypothesis, that situational constraints and prior probability of behavior on the part of the seller heavily influence attitude attribution, suggests that the buyer may view the seller's choice of action as being broader than that strictly prescribed by the seller's role. The buyer may perceive a seller's choice of action as not falling into a choice or no-choice dichotomy but instead views the seller as having a certain level of discretion in his actions. The results of the Jones and Harris study indicate that an individual such as buyer may view a seller as having greater discretion in his behavior than the seller actually possesses.

Jones and Harris' results also suggest that when the perceived in a no-choice situation indicates no personal commitment in either a

---

87 Jones and Harris, loc. cit., 22-4.
positive or negative direction, the perceiver attributes opposition to the assigned position on the part of the perceived individual. When a salesman in a perceived no-choice context does not make a personal commitment in regard to a product or service which he is promoting, the buyer may attribute a personal attitude in opposition to the attitude which the salesman is overtly presenting.

The research performed thus far regarding attribution of attitudes indicates that the seller is somewhat in a dilemma in exhibiting behavior which will be perceived as representative of his true attitudes. If he takes an extreme and strong position in his behavior, the buyer may perceive such behavior as being in-role behavior and thus discount much of it as being a function of external causality. On the other hand, if the seller remains equivocal, then the buyer attributes an attitude in opposition to the attitude which the situational constraints dictate. Only under the circumstances that the buyer perceives the seller as having some discretion in his choice of action, does the buyer, to some extent, make attributions of attitudes which he believes are true attitudes of the seller. From such attitudes the buyer is able to make inferences about the dispositions of the seller.

Attribution of Intention

Internal causality as defined earlier refers to the effects or events produced by one's behavior when his behavior is not affected by external forces. The effects of an individual's behavior may be either

---

88 Ibid., 1.
known or unknown to him. Attribution of intention pertains to that behavior in which the individual is perceived to have known the possible effects of his behavior before he acted in that specific manner. Intention is attributed to an individual who is perceived as having knowledge of the effects of his actions.

Even though a buyer may believe that a part of the seller's behavior is determined by external causes, the buyer, to some degree, will tend to view a portion of the seller's behavior to be a function of internal causes. The buyer as he receives information inputs regarding internally caused behavior, will attempt to determine intentionality. From the information inputs by which he attributes intention, the buyer develops inferences about dispositions of the seller.

Hastorf and others attempted experimentally to determine the effects on one's impression due to a change in the behavior of the stimulus person. They found that, after one has formed an impression of another, a change in the perceived person's behavior in a positive direction causes the perceiver not to attribute intention to the perceived for the more positive effects, but instead to view the change as a function of external causes. These researchers explained their findings by stating that persons, by attributing effects of behavior to external causes rather than attributing such effects to intentions of the actor, are more able to maintain constancy in their social sphere.


90Ibid., 410.
If the buyer forms an impression based upon initial information inputs which represent in-role behavior on the part of the seller, the seller's behavior, which may eventually depart from role expectations, may be perceived as being a function of external causality and therefore does not change the impression which the buyer holds for the seller.

Heider developed a scheme in which the amount of attribution of intention in relationship to total causality is structured into a five-level hierarchy of maturation. The first level is the one of least maturity. Heider believed that young children, in perceiving effects of behavior, attribute a large amount of internally caused effects to intention of the perceived. At the other extreme, the level of maximum maturity, the perceiver significantly differentiates between effects resulting from one's intention and effects for which the perceived does not intend. Shaw and Sulzer found only partial support for the hypothesis that children tend to differentiate less than adults between effects which are intended and those which are unintended.

Although the results of the Shaw and Sulzer research only partially supported their hypothesis, such data suggest that the maturity level of buyer may influence his attribution of intention to the seller.

Based upon current research findings and predictions of attribution models, it appears that the buyer's attribution of intention to the seller is a function of (1) the extent to which the buyer is capable

---


of separating intended effects from unintended effects of the seller's behavior, (2) the degree to which the buyer views a change in the seller's behavior as being determined by internal causes, and (3) the level of the buyer's maturity.

Attribution of Capability

Whether or not the buyer attributes intention to a seller may depend upon the extent to which he views the seller as being capable of producing such effects by the seller's actions. Capability may also be viewed in a context of non-performance. If the seller does not perform in an expected way, the perceiver may attribute a lack of intention and/or a lack of capability. In attempting to separate external causality from internal causality a buyer may attribute capability to a seller when external causes are not apparent.

At times a seller will send favorable information inputs to the buyer in terms of compliments or other positive statements about the buyer in the hope of creating a favorable impression. In a study dealing with the attribution of capability, Lowe and Goldstein found that subjects, interacting with an evaluator on a face-to-face basis, tend to inflate the capability of the positive evaluator (regardless of the intent to be accurate or to gain approval) and to underrate the capability of the negative evaluator.93

Jones and others performed an experiment to determine if the sequencing of information inputs regarding capability would influence

one's attribution of capability. They found that an individual who demonstrates a larger number of successful acts initially (with successful acts tapering off as interaction continues) is perceived as being more capable than one whose success increases as interaction continues. 94

The data from the study performed by Jones and others suggest that the initial behavioral information inputs which the buyer receives from the seller may be the most valuable in terms of attributing capability to the seller. As the number of information inputs regarding capability of the seller increases, the influence on the attribution of capability decreases.

In making inferences regarding dispositions or other characteristics of the seller, the buyer may attempt to determine whether or not the seller is capable of producing the events or effects through his behavior. As suggested by the results of empirical analysis, the buyer's attribution of capability to the seller tends to be influenced by (1) the order effects and (2) the degree to which the seller's evaluation of the buyer is perceived by the buyer to be positive or negative. The seller may have greater capabilities attributed to him if he exhibits successful acts during the initial stages of interaction. If the buyer perceives the seller to evaluate him in a positive direction, he may tend to overrate the capability of the seller. A perceived negative evaluation may lead to an underrating of the seller's capabilities.

In summary, the buyer's perception of the seller's behavior does not simply result in a mere sensing of physical actions or motions. Based upon the sensing of the seller's actions, the buyer may attribute intentions, attitudes, and/or capabilities to the seller. The buyer, in attributing various characteristics to the seller, tends to determine the locus of causality of the seller's behavior. The relative status of the seller, as well as the degree to which the seller exhibits in-role behavior, are factors which affect the buyer's determination of whether behavior is externally caused or internally caused. From the behavior which the buyer views as being internally caused, he attributes intentions, attitudes, and/or capabilities to the seller, and thus gains more inputs by which to form an impression of the seller.

Empirical findings suggest that numerous and varied forces affect specific forms of attribution. The buyer's attribution of attitudes appears to be influenced by the strength of the attitude exhibited by the seller and by whether or not the seller expresses personal commitment in a perceived no-choice situation. When attributing intention to the seller, two influential factors, the first suggested by the Shaw and Sulzer findings and the second by Hastorf, appear to be the maturity level of the buyer and the tendency toward perceiving the positive effects to be externally caused after an impression has been formed. Attribution of capability to the seller appears to be affected by primacy effects of successful acts, and the perceived direction of the seller's evaluation of the buyer.

Summary

One of the major assumptions of the interaction model of buyer
behavior is that the buyer places a value upon the behavior of the seller and thus derives a behavioral payoff from the seller's presence and behavior. The major objective of this chapter has been to isolate and analyze the determinants of the buyer's impression of the seller which, in turn, influences the buyer's determination of a behavioral payoff acquired by interacting with the seller.

Since the major hypothesis of the interaction model of buyer behavior is that the buyer's behavioral payoff is derived from the impression which the buyer holds regarding the seller, interpersonal perception has been analyzed as it specifically relates to the formation and alteration of the buyer's impression of the seller. Therefore, the major areas of interpersonal perception which have been analyzed are (1) the basic perceptual process, (2) the cognitive factors of impression formation, (3) the order effects of information inputs, (4) the perception of human physical characteristics, and (5) the process of attribution.

To facilitate the analysis of interpersonal perception variables, it was first necessary to discuss the general process of perception. Perception was defined as the complex process by which a person selects, organizes, and interprets information inputs into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Even though the process of perception is a basis for person perception, there are numerous variables which are unique to person perception which are not a part of the basic perceptual process.

In person perception information inputs which are selected, organized, and interpreted, are social information inputs because they represent information about social objects, namely the buyer and the
seller in this model. The information flows in Figure 4-1 consist of social information inputs. In both flows of information in Figure 4-1, the social information inputs may be initiated by either the buyer or the seller. During the initial stages of interaction the flows of information may be somewhat restrained. By processing social information inputs the buyer forms an impression of the seller from which he derives a behavioral payoff.

The buyer's impression of the seller may include the aspects of the seller's dispositions, attitudes, and/or personality. In order to analyze the manner in which the buyer forms and maintains an impression of the seller, several factors have been considered including cognitive organization, cognitive complexity, and the degree of cognitive rigidity. Several explanations dealing with how the buyer organizes social information inputs have been proposed. The buyer may organize his impression (1) as a function of the summation of information inputs, (2) as a function of the average of information inputs, or (3) as a cognitive structure which is more comprehensive than the sum of its parts. To the extent that a buyer exhibits a high degree of cognitive complexity, in forming an impression of the seller, he tends to seek and process more information, to be less certain of the accuracy of his impression, and to be more capable of creating a unified impression from inconsistent social information inputs. A buyer's degree of cognitive rigidity appears to be affected by his own personality. If the buyer is highly competitive and/or highly authoritarian, he is likely to be more cognitively rigid causing his impression of the seller to be more polar.

Although the cognitive forces summarized above appear to affect
the formation of the buyer's impression of the seller, the order or sequence in which the buyer acquires social information inputs also appears to be a force acting upon the buyer's impression of the seller. The analysis of the research on order effects supported the contention that primacy effects tend to be more dominant than recency effects in the buyer's impression of the seller. Primacy effects seem to be more influential, because the elements which lessen the primacy effects (such as a forewarning that cautions one about the inaccuracy of a first impression and the introduction of irrelevant information) are generally not present during on-going buyer-seller interaction.

The buyer's impression of the seller is not only determined by the cognitive factors and the order effects, but it is also affected by the type of social information inputs perceived by the buyer. For analytic purposes social information inputs were divided into two major categories, one which consisted of social information inputs regarding physical characteristics of the seller and a second category which contained inputs regarding the seller's behavior.

Based upon empirical findings, it was determined that a buyer's impression of the seller may be affected by the buyer's perception of certain physical characteristics of the seller. Physical features which have been found to influence one's impression of another are facial characteristics, skin color, and physical deviations. Empirical findings suggest that the facial features which affect a buyer's impression of the seller are age, skin texture, fullness of lips, and facial tension. Clusters of facial features are generally associated with clusters of personality traits. In regard to skin color, a Negro seller regardless of the shade of skin color tends to be perceived by a buyer
as possessing the stereotyped personality characteristics of Negroes. The highly prejudiced buyer may tend to over-exaggerate the Negro personality characteristics in his impression of the buyer. The presence of physical deviation on the part of either the buyer or the seller causes the normal interactant to be uncomfortable and inhibited. Since the normal interactant is more inhibited under such conditions, he is more likely to (1) control his behavioral output, (2) express opinions which are less consistent with his actual beliefs, and (3) terminate the interaction more rapidly.

Even though social information inputs which pertain to physical characteristics have been found to affect a buyer's impression of the seller, his impression appeared to also be a function of social information inputs which pertain to the seller's behavior. When the buyer perceives the seller's behavior, not only does he sense physical motion and activity, but he also attributes intentions, attitudes, and capabilities to the seller based upon inferences from the sellers' behavior. Since the buyer bases such attributions upon behavior which he perceives to be internally caused, he must determine the locus of causality of the seller's behavior. Two factors which make the seller's behavior appear to be externally caused are (1) low status possessed by the seller and (2) exhibition of in-role behavior on the part of the seller.

In regard to specific forms of attribution empirical findings suggested that the attribution of attitudes is determined, to some degree, by (1) whether the seller, operating in a perceived no-choice situation, expresses a personal commitment and (2) the strength of an attitude exhibited by the seller. Capability is more likely to be attributed to the seller if he exhibits successful acts during the initial
part of the interaction and if the direction of the seller's evaluation of the buyer is perceived to be positive. The attribution of intention to the seller tends to be affected by the maturity level of the buyer. As the buyer becomes more mature, he is more likely to differentiate internally caused from externally caused behavior. In addition, attribution of intention is affected by the tendency for a person to attribute positive effects to external causes.

The buyer's impression of the seller which the buyer forms during on-going buyer-seller interaction appears to be a function of a large number of variables. In attempting to explain the forces which affect the buyer's impression of the seller, several categories of variables have been analyzed including the cognitive factors of impression formation, the order or sequence effects of information inputs, the perception of physical characteristics of people, and the process of attribution. These factors are operative as the buyer forms an impression of the seller. The buyer, by attaching a valence to his impression of the seller, derives a behavioral payoff by interacting with the seller.

Even though, through the analysis of the variables which affect the buyer's impression of the seller, several forces which influence the attachment of a valence have been set forth, other factors which specifically deal with the assignment of a valence to an impression need to be more closely considered. Therefore, Chapter V focuses upon selected variables which influence interpersonal attractiveness.
CHAPTER V
THE INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION VARIABLES OF THE
INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR

In Chapter IV the analysis of buyer-seller interaction focused
upon the way that various types of social information inputs are per-
ceived by the buyer in order to form an impression of the seller. Based
upon the impression that the buyer has of the seller, the buyer places
a valence upon the interaction with the seller and thus establishes
the value of the behavioral payoff received from the seller during inter-
action. Even though the analysis of the variables which are a part of
the process of person perception explains, to some degree, the manner
by which the buyer places a valence upon the presence and behavior of
the seller, there are several other variables which are directly related
to the way that a buyer derives a valence of the seller's behavior
based upon his perception of the seller. These variables are major
components of the process of interpersonal attraction.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the forces which
determine or influence the degree of interpersonal attraction between
the buyer and seller which in turn affects the value which the buyer
places upon the seller's presence and behavior. For purposes of analy-
sis attraction is defined as a positive valence held toward another.¹

¹A. Pepitone and J. Sherberg, "Cognitive Factors in Interper-
sonal Attraction," Journal of Personality, XXV (June, 1957), 757.
Likewise, rejection refers to a negative valence held regarding another individual. The terms like and attract are used synonymously as are the terms dislike and reject. Although the forces which affect attraction between a buyer and a seller are numerous, they are grouped into three categories of variables for analytic purposes. As shown in Figure 5-1 the categories of variables which influence attraction include (1) perceived similarity of the interactants, (2) congruency of feelings, and (3) attribution of intentionality. These variables have been selected for inclusion in the model due to the availability of empirical research findings which pertain to these variables. Other variables, which have not yet been researched empirically, may be determinants of attraction between the buyer and seller.

Perceived Similarity of the Interactants

One major determinant of interpersonal attraction, which is supported very strongly by empirical findings, is perceived similarity between interactants. Similarity of several different dimensions have been found to be positively correlated with attraction. Research results indicate a positive relationship between attraction and similarity on such dimensions as economic status, responses to items of fact concerning both past and future events, and evaluative statements.

---


Figure 5-1 The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon the Variables of Interpersonal Attraction
concerning the subject. Although these findings are somewhat isolated in that there are not similar studies to support these precise relationships, these findings are supported in a more comprehensive context by a substantial amount of research which relates attraction to perceived similarity of attitudes or perceived similarity of personality.

Research studies which focus upon the relationship between perceived attitude similarity and interpersonal attraction, have been rather extensive and have overwhelmingly resulted in positive, direct correlations. Based upon the results of his earlier research, Byrne

---


6 See footnote 5.
and his associate, Don Nelson, developed a tentative law of attraction which states that attraction toward a person is a positive linear function of the proportion of similar attitudes held by the other interactant. Byrne indicates that one explanation of this relationship is the learned drive to be logical and to interpret information inputs accurately is reinforced by consensual validation and frustrated by consensual invalidation. Individuals who are interacting find attitude similarity rewarding and therefore are attracted to each other.

Several research efforts have focused upon generalizing the relationship between attitude similarity and attraction. Byrne and Clore found the law of attraction to remain valid when the stimulus person was presented to the subjects by three different methods including a color movie with a sound track, a tape recording, and a set of written responses on a mimeographed attitude scale. In another effort to ascertain the generalizability of the similarity-attraction relationship, Byrne and others performed a cross-cultural study. Using subjects in Hawaii, India, Japan, Mexico, and Texas these researchers determined that the effect of attitude similarity on attraction is not narrowly bounded by nationality, race, or language. Other studies which provided

---


8Ibid., 660.


support for generalizing the law of attraction include the Byrne and Griffitt research in which the attitude similarity and attraction relationship held for youth from high school down through fourth grade and the Byrne, Griffitt, Hudgins, and Reeves research which determined the same relationships to hold for middle aged persons.

As was pointed out in the section dealing with the effects of attribution in interpersonal perception, interactants, upon perceiving the behavior of the other, may attribute attitudes to the perceived person. Since the law of attraction suggests that attraction is a function of perceived attitude similarity, the role of attitude attribution on the part of the buyer is quite significant in determining the degree to which the buyer develops either a positive or negative valence toward the seller. If the buyer attributes attitudes to the seller which are similar to those of the buyer, the buyer may be attracted to the seller because such characteristics of the seller are rewarding to the buyer. A buyer, who attributes to the seller attitudes which are quite different from those of the buyer, will tend to attach to the seller a negative valence and thus derive a more negative behavioral payoff by interacting with the seller. The buyer's attribution of attitudes affects the attraction he feels for the seller which, in turn, contributes to the determination of the behavioral payoff received from interacting with that seller.

---


Several research efforts have been aimed at determining the intervening variables that affect the degree to which perceived attitude similarity leads to attraction. Gouaux tried to determine if the perceiver's emotional state would have any affect upon the attitude and attraction relationship. He induced in each subject a state of elation or a state of depression. He found that the effective state does not change the general relationship between attitude similarity and attraction, but that the degree of attraction, due to attitude similarity, is less for depressed subjects than for elated subjects.13

The buyer's affective state, according to Gouaux's findings, affects his receptivity and thus perception of the seller's attitudes. A buyer with a depressed effective state will tend not to be as attracted to a seller due to perceived attitude similarity as will be the same buyer if his emotional state is less depressed.

Another intervening factor, that of topic interest or interest in the object of the attitude, was analyzed to determine whether or not it influences the attraction-attitude similarity relationship. Clore and Baldridge ascertained that the degree of interest in the topic (or object of the attitude) is significant.14 If the interactants disagree on a topic thus demonstrating dissimilarity of attitudes and the topic is of little interest to the interactants, attraction is not reduced. During interaction a seller may try to avoid certain topics such as

---


politics, not due to a lack of interest, but because of too much interest. A seller may not want to take a chance on revealing an attitude which is highly dissimilar regarding a topic of significant interest to the buyer.

In further research which pertains to intervening factors that might influence the attraction-attitude similarity relationship, an attempt was made to determine the effects of racial prejudice. Byrne and Wong ascertained that highly prejudiced persons perceive significant attitude dissimilarity while the assumed similarity scores for subjects low in prejudice do not differ significantly between black and white. Thus, in an interracial buyer-seller interaction the buyer's degree of racial prejudice tends to influence his assignment of a valence to the behavior of the seller who is a Negro. A highly prejudiced buyer, according to these research results, will tend to perceive dissimilarity in attitudes and therefore derive a relatively more negative behavioral pay-off from interacting with the Negro seller. If the buyer does not possess a high degree of racial prejudice, the fact that the seller is Negro will tend not to influence the perception of attitude similarity.

The effects of perceived similarity of personality in relation to attraction have been the focus of several researchers. The findings

---


of various studies regarding this relationship are not as overwhelmingly one-sided as are the results of research pertaining to the relationship between perceived attitude similarity and attraction. The results of a study performed by Izard support the proposition that personality similarity is a significant factor in interpersonal attraction. Because her methodology of the research did not take into account the fact that the similarity in personality could have arisen after attraction developed, she subsequently performed a study which accounted for whether or not personality similarity existed prior to attraction. Again, the attraction-personality similarity proposition was supported. In attempting to determine the generalizability of this relationship Izard, in a third experiment, changed populations from college freshmen to college seniors and found that personality similarity is not a significant determinant of attraction. She suggested that the differences in the findings may have been due to differences in the maturity level of the two populations of the subjects. Izard indicated that it is possible that the more mature individual does not have as great a need for an interactant to reflect the perceiver's personality.

Although the findings of Izard's research are incongruent, the relationship between perceived personality similarity and attraction

---


should not be totally discounted. At least to some extent, the degree to which the buyer perceives the seller to have a similar personality may influence the direction of the valence which the buyer attaches to the behavior of the seller. As Izard suggests the maturity level of the perceiver may be an intervening factor which lessens the impact of perceived personality similarity on the buyer's attraction toward the seller.

Another intervening factor which may affect the influence that perceived personality similarity has upon the buyer's attraction to the seller is the personality type of the buyer. Hendrick and Brown ascertained that the personality of the perceived influences the effects of personality similarity upon attraction. They found moderate support for the proposition that both introverts and extroverts are attracted to extroverted strangers. These findings indicate that the relationship between attraction and personality similarity holds for the extroverted perceiver but not for the introverted perceiver.

The findings provided by Hendrick and Brown's research suggest that an extroverted seller is more likely, than an introverted seller, to be perceived as attractive by both introverted and extroverted buyers therefore allowing such buyers to acquire more positive behavioral payoffs from the interaction. However, an introverted buyer may attach a negative valence to an introverted seller thus deriving a more negative behavioral payoff from the seller.

In summary, although there appears to be a positive correlation

---

between attraction and similarity on a number of dimensions, the relationships between attraction and attitude similarity and between attraction and similarity of personality have been the focus of numerous empirical studies.

The relationship between attraction and attitude similarity has been so strongly supported empirically that a tentative law of attraction has been proposed. The tentative law of attractive states that attraction toward an individual is a positive linear function of the proportion of similar attitudes perceived to be held by the other interactant. Thus, according to the tentative law of attraction, the buyer may be more likely to attach a positive valence to his impression of the seller if he perceives a significant number of the seller's attitudes to be similar to his own. Since attraction is, to some extent, determined by perceived attitude similarity, the attribution of attitudes to the seller by the buyer is an important factor in establishing the degree of attitude similarity by the buyer.

Through several empirical efforts the tentative law of attraction has been generalized to other cultures including Hawaii, Japan, Mexico, and India. In addition the tentative law of attraction has been generalized to fourth graders, high school students, and middle-aged persons.

The effects of other variables upon the attraction-attitude similarity relationship have been studied. Research evidence suggests that the attraction-attitude similarity relationship holds when selected variables are introduced, but that the degree of attraction due to perceived attitude similarity is lessened (1) when the buyer's affective state is one of depression, (2) when the objects of the similar
attitudes are of little interest to the buyer and seller, and (3) when a racially prejudiced white buyer is interacting with a black seller.

Personality similarity in relation to attraction has been the focus of several empirical studies. The results in general tend to support a positive relationship between personality similarity and attraction, but these results are not as convincingly one-sided as are the findings which relate attraction and attitude similarity. The effects of personality similarity on attraction appear to be lessened and may disappear as the buyer becomes more mature. In addition, empirical data suggest that both introverted and extroverted buyers are attracted to extroverted sellers thus indicating that the effects of personality similarity upon attraction may vary depending upon the personality of the buyer.

Although the buyer's tendency to assign a positive valence to his impression of the seller may be, to some degree, a function of his perception of the seller as being similar in several ways to himself, his attraction toward the seller may also be influenced by whether or not he believes the seller to like him.

Congruency

If a buyer perceives himself to be liked by the seller, does this perceived liking cause the buyer to assign a more positive valence to the behavior of the seller? This is a question pertaining to congruency. Congruency refers to the tendency of an individual to like another person and to feel liked by him or to dislike and to sense
rejection on the part of the other person.  

On a more generalized level several researchers have found evidence which supports a positive answer to this question. Tagiuri, Blake, and Bruner found strong positive support for the relationship between the perception of being liked by another individual and liking him. Data generated by research conducted by Backman and Secord indicated that only during initial interaction does perceived liking increase attraction toward the perceived liker.

The importance of one's perception of being liked is indicated by Walster and Walster's research. They ascertained that when one highly values being liked, which many people do, the person tends to seek an interactant that is similar rather than dissimilar. These findings are generally consistent with the results of many of the studies dealing

---


with attraction and attitude similarity. A person chooses a similar person to interact with because he believes that the similar individual is more likely to be attracted to him. If one perceives that he is not liked by the other interactant, then similarity is of little importance to the perceiver. He tends not to be attracted to a similar interactant if he perceives dislike on the part of that person.

If attraction to the seller is, to some extent, a function of the buyer's perception of being liked by the seller, the factors that influence such perception are, in turn, determinants of the attraction toward the seller. Several types of empirical research have been aimed at the determination of such influential factors at a more general level.

One such factor which has been analyzed is the degree to which an evaluator discriminates in his evaluation of others. Landy and Aronson studied the effects of degree of discernment regarding the liking of an individual by an interactant and attraction toward the interactant. They determined that an individual is more attracted to a discerning interactant than a nondiscerning interactant. A discerning interactant, one who doesn't "like" everyone, is more likely to be perceived as revealing his true feelings than a nondiscerning or nondiscriminating interactant. When an individual perceives himself as being liked by a discerning interactant, he tends to believe that the


interactant is sincere. Such sincerity is rewarding to the individual and thus he is more attracted to the discerning interactant.

A seller, due to his role, may quite often be perceived as a nondiscerning person who "likes everyone." As a buyer interacts with a nondiscerning seller, the buyer may perceive him to be insincere when indicating a liking for the buyer thus causing the buyer not to assign a positive valence to the behavior of the seller. If the seller is capable of indicating to the buyer that the seller is a discriminating person, the buyer may believe himself to be liked by the seller and therefore may be more attracted to the seller.

Another factor which has been explored for possible influence on one's perception of being liked is relative increase or decrease of esteem. Aronson and Linder have hypothesized that if Person A's behavior toward Person B is initially negative but gradually becomes more positive, B will be more attracted to A than if A's behavior is constantly positive.28 The findings of Aronson and Linder's study support the hypothesis. They found that subjects liked an evaluator best when his evaluations moved from negative to positive. As the evaluations progressed from positive to negative, the evaluator was liked least.29 Thus a gain or loss in esteem appears to cause a greater liking or disliking respectively for the evaluator than does a constant level of esteem.

As indicated earlier a seller, due to his role, may be perceived by a buyer as being a nondiscerning person at the extreme of "liking

---


29 Ibid., 170.
everyone." If, instead of maintaining a constant positive "feeling" toward everyone, the seller would tend to move from indifference to a positive feeling toward the buyer, two factors are at work to increase the reward to the buyer. First, by indicating a change in feeling the buyer may view the seller as being more discerning, therefore causing the buyer to be more attracted to the seller because the discerning seller is perceived by the buyer as expressing his true feelings about another. Second, by moving from an indifferent position to a more positive position, the seller indicates that he holds greater esteem for the buyer which is rewarding to the buyer and, according to the findings of Aronson and Linder, will cause the buyer to place a more positive valence upon the behavior of the seller.

In considering the effects of congruency upon the buyer's assignment of a valence to the impression he holds of the seller, the buyer may be attracted to the seller if he believes that the seller is attracted to him. If being liked is important to the buyer, he may seek a seller which is similar to himself because such a seller may be more attracted to the buyer. The buyer is more likely to perceive himself as being liked by the seller if (1) the buyer views the seller as being a discerning judge and the judgment appears to be positive, and (2) the seller's evaluation of the buyer appears to move from indifference to a positive position so that the buyer gains esteem.

Although the buyer's attraction to the seller may be affected by perceived similarity and perceived congruency of feelings, the buyer may also take into consideration the seller's intentions.
Attribution of Intentionality

The degree to which a buyer is attracted to a seller is partially determined by the intentions which the buyer attributes to the seller. In seeking a positive response or support of the buyer, the seller may use such tactics as the giving of compliments, the presentation of appealing characteristics, and/or the exhibition of behavior in the direction of agreement, conformity, or imitation. These techniques are called ingratiation tactics. The effectiveness of ingratiation tactics in increasing the attractiveness of the user of such tactics is, to some extent, determined by the intentions which a buyer attributes to a seller.

The effects of conformity (expressed by constant agreement of opinions) upon attractiveness have been analyzed. Jones, Jones, and Gergen attempted to determine how constant opinion conformity influences attractiveness under varying conditions of dependence. Their findings indicate that when one has strong reasons for gaining approval (high dependence) from another person, and he does conform to the other's opinions, the other person attaches a negative valence to the conformer's behavior. High attraction was found for persons who are under strong pressures to ingratiate but who do not respond with a high incidence of opinion conformity.

---


31 Ibid., 272-4.

32 Ibid., 285.
These findings suggest that when an individual assigns a valence to the behavior of another, he attributes intention or makes an assumption regarding the intent of that person. The intention attributed to the seller is partially determined by the extent to which the seller uses ingratiation tactics and the degree to which the buyer views the seller as being dependent upon the buyer. The buyer's belief regarding the dependence of the seller upon him may be a function of the buyer's perception of market conditions. If he views the seller as having a large number of buyers who are actively seeking the seller's products, he may tend to see the seller's dependence as being lower than if he views the seller as having a small number of potential buyers. A seller who is significantly dependent upon the buyer and whose true opinions are quite similar to those of the buyer may be "victimized" by such conditions. When a seller under these conditions, continues to express his true opinions, he may be at a disadvantage, due to the victimization effect.33

Although the buyer, in evaluating the seller's dependence, may consider the market conditions, he may also take into account the existence of other environmental constraints from a more comprehensive point of view. For example, the seller may be operating under such environmental constraints as governmental regulations, marginal resources, managerial pressures from above, and/or severely adverse economic conditions. Nemeth hypothesized that although one usually likes and benefits a person who has helped him, such a reaction is dependent upon the

33 Ibid.
intention which he attributes to the person. He found that an individual is more attracted to a helping person who is free of environmental constraints than one who provides benefits due to the existence of environmental constraints. 34

A buyer as he interacts with a seller generally holds certain expectations about the role of the seller. More specifically, he expects the seller to exhibit helping behavior, and he usually does not view the seller's behavior to be free of environmental constraints. In the context of buyer-seller interaction attribution of intention to the seller is not a matter of existence versus non-existence of environmental constraints but is, instead, more a function of the perceived degree of existence of environmental constraints. Thus, the buyer's assignment of a valence to the seller's behavior is partially determined by the attribution of intention derived from the buyer's perception of the seller's behavior in a context of environmental constraints.

Thus, it appears that the buyer's attraction to the seller is to some degree, affected by the buyer's beliefs regarding the intention of the seller. In order to gain positive support of the buyer, the seller may use ingratiation tactics. Empirical findings suggest that if a seller uses the ingratiation tactic of opinion conformity, the buyer may be attracted to the seller if the buyer believes the seller is not strongly dependent upon him. Likewise, if the seller is perceived to be highly dependent upon the buyer, the buyer may reject the seller due to the seller's exhibition of opinion conformity. On a more general

level, research evidence suggests that helping behavior by the seller will lead to greater attraction toward the seller to the extent that the buyer views the seller as being free of environmental constraints.

Summary

The forces which influence the degree of interpersonal attraction between the buyer and the seller in turn affect the value which the buyer places upon presence and behavior of the seller. Attraction was defined as a positive valence held toward another individual. For purposes of analysis the forces of interpersonal attraction were divided into three categories including (1) perceived similarity of the interactants, (2) congruency of feelings, and (3) attribution of intentionality.

Even though there seems to be a positive correlation between attraction and similarity along several dimensions, the most dominant relationships appear to be the relationship between attraction and attitude similarity and attraction and personality similarity.

The empirical findings supporting a positive relationship between attraction and attitude similarity are so strong that a tentative law of attraction has been set forth in the literature. This tentative law states that attraction toward an individual is a positive linear function of the proportion of similar attitudes perceived to be held by the other interactant. The tentative law of attraction has been generalized to other cultures including Hawaii, Japan, Mexico, and India and to a number of age groups from fourth graders to middle-aged persons. As the buyer's attraction is somewhat dependent upon perceived
attitude similarity, his attribution of attitudes to the seller directly affects his attraction toward the seller.

A buyer's attraction to the seller, due to perceived attitude similarity, tends to hold generally but the intensity of attraction may lessen (1) when the buyer's affective state is one of depression, (2) when the objects of the similar attitudes are of little interest to the buyer and seller, and (3) when a racially prejudiced white buyer is interacting with a black seller.

Support for a positive relationship between attraction and personality is available in empirical findings. However, this relationship may not hold when the buyer is introverted. This relationship may lessen as the buyer becomes more mature.

In considering the effects of congruency, the buyer may be attracted to the seller if he believes the seller to like him. Since being liked is often important to the buyer, he may seek a seller which is similar to himself, because he believes such a seller to be more attracted to him. The buyer is more likely to perceive the seller as liking him if (1) the seller exhibits discernment in judging people and his judgment of the buyer is positive and (2) the seller indicates a gain in esteem for the buyer.

Although perceived similarity and perceived congruency of feelings may cause the buyer to be more attracted to the seller, the buyer also considers the intentions of the seller. The seller may use ingratiating tactics in order to gain the buyer's support. If the seller uses opinion conformity to gain the support of the buyer, the buyer, in attributing intention to the seller, may take into consideration the degree to which the seller is dependent upon the buyer. On a more
general level the buyer may try to determine the degree to which the
seller is operating under environmental constraints when the seller ex-
hibits helping behavior.

In Chapter IV interpersonal perception, and in the present chap-
ter interpersonal attraction, have been examined in order to isolate
and explain the variables which affect the buyer's derivation of a
behavioral payoff which he receives from buyer-seller interaction.
Chapter VI focuses upon potential cognitive and behavioral effects on
the buyer due to his attraction toward the seller. In addition, the
social techniques which buyers and sellers use to transmit social infor-
mation inputs are set forth.
CHAPTER VI

POTENTIAL ATTRACTION EFFECTS ON THE BUYER

AND INTERPERSONAL TECHNIQUES

In the former chapter several determinants of interpersonal attraction were analyzed in terms of the buyer's attraction toward the seller. Although several variables were suggested as factors which influence the buyer's attraction toward a seller, the potential cognitive and behavioral effects of such attraction upon the buyer were not considered.

The cognitive and behavioral effects on the buyer, due to attraction toward the seller, need to be analyzed because such effects may affect the information which flows to the seller. As the seller reacts to these information inputs, his behavior may become information inputs to the buyer, and such inputs may, in turn, influence the buyer's impression and valence of the seller. Because a major component of interaction is a cyclical flow of information, the effects of attraction upon the buyer affects his behavior toward the seller and indirectly affects the seller's behavior toward the buyer.

The major objective of this chapter is to isolate and analyze the effects on the buyer's cognitive structure and behavior which arise due to the buyer's attraction toward the seller. In addition, five interpersonal techniques which buyers and sellers use during interaction to transmit information are described including (1) proxemic communication, (2) kinesic communication, (3) tactile communication, (4) language, and
(5) paralinguistic communication. These social techniques are included in the interaction model because they fulfill a facilitative function during interaction.

In the first section of this chapter the potential effects of attraction upon the buyer's overt behavior are discussed. The second section focuses on the potential cognitive effects upon the buyer due to his attraction toward the seller. Finally, the interpersonal techniques which facilitate buyer-seller interaction are set forth.

Potential Behavioral Effects of Attraction Toward the Seller

Assuming that the buyer does form an impression of the seller and he assigns a valence to that impression, the behavior of the buyer toward the seller may be affected by the assigned valence. The information (consisting of the buyer's behavior) which flows from the buyer to the seller in Figure 6-1 is partially a function of the current state of the valence which the buyer associates with his impression of the seller.

Empirical research focusing upon the forces which determine attraction is rather extensive as indicated in the analyses in Chapter V. However, the effects of attraction upon one's behavior have not been as extensively explored. Robert Baron states:

A large number of experiments have been performed to investigate possible determinants of the degree of liking between human beings. In contrast, however, relatively little attention has been directed to the influence of interpersonal attraction on various forms of social behavior. In view of the common observation that our relations with others are often strongly affected by our degree of liking or disliking for them, the current lack of interest in this topic is somewhat surprising.

---

Figure 6-1 The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon Potential Effects of Attraction
Even though empirical research is limited for any one specific effect of attraction, empirical research has been performed regarding the effects of attraction upon four types of social behavior. As indicated in Figure 6-1, the potential behavioral effects of attraction to be explored as a part of the interaction model of buyer behavior are: (1) cooperative and competitive behavior, (2) anticipatory responses regarding subsequent interaction, (3) aggressive behavior, and (4) compliant behavior. Due to the exploratory nature of the interaction model of buyer behavior, these effects have been selected to be included in the interaction model on the basis of availability of empirical research studies. There may be other behavioral effects of attraction which have not been empirically studied.

Cooperative and Competitive Behavior

If the buyer assigns a positive valence to his impression of the seller, does such attraction cause the buyer's behavior to become more cooperative? There have been several attempts to determine the relationship between differential attraction and levels of cooperativeness and competitiveness. Krauss found that an increase in interpersonal attraction tends to lessen competitiveness during interpersonal bargaining.²

As indicated earlier in the section pertaining to attitude similarity and attraction, similarity of attitudes between interactants tends to cause the interactants to be attracted to each other. Using a laboratory competitive game, Tornatzky and Geiwitz attempted to ascertain the effects of attitude similarity upon the incidence of cooperative behavior.

responses exhibited between two interacting persons. They found that dyads characterized by high mutual attraction (high attitude similarity) tend to select cooperative responses more often than low mutually attracted pairs.³

Fisher and Smith, using a prisoner's dilemma game, also determined that attitude similarity is positively related to the exhibition of cooperative behavior.⁴

These empirical findings suggest that if a buyer finds the seller attractive, the buyer's subsequent behavior tends to be more cooperative. According to the findings of Kelley and Stahelski, discussed earlier in regard to personality influences upon cognitive complexity, the extent to which the seller perceives the buyer's behavior as becoming more cooperative is, to some degree, determined by whether the seller's personality is generally cooperative or competitive.⁵ If the seller's personality is cooperative, he is more likely to perceive the buyer's behavior as becoming more cooperative.

Anticipatory Responses Regarding Subsequent Interaction

There appears to be a very limited amount of empirical research dealing directly with the effects of attraction upon anticipations or


expectations regarding subsequent interaction. Specifically, the research question regards whether or not interpersonal attraction during initial interaction influences one's expectations about the positiveness of future interaction. In a study performed at Kansas State University, Griffitt attempted to measure the effects of attraction upon expectations of subsequent interaction. Subjects were informed that each would have future interactions with a stranger to which each was introduced. Varying degrees of attraction were created by manipulating attitude similarity between the pairs of subjects. Griffitt determined that the greater the attraction (as created by greater attitude similarity), the higher the ratings regarding anticipated positiveness of subsequent interactions.\(^6\)

As suggested by Griffitt's research results, attraction which the buyer holds toward the seller may cause the buyer to exhibit positive anticipatory responses regarding expected subsequent interaction. Although not specifically tested by Griffitt's experimental design, his results lend support to the proposition that if the buyer is attracted to the seller during the initial stages of a single given interaction, the buyer may exhibit more positive responses toward the seller as the interaction continues.

Aggressive Behavior

If a buyer is attracted to a seller, does such attraction tend to lessen aggressive behavior on the part of the buyer?

Hendrick and Taylor attempted to deal with the above question at

a more general level. They tested the hypothesis that aggressive behavior is altered, to some extent, by attraction. Through manipulating attitude similarity a stranger was presented as being attractive or as being unattractive to the subjects in a competitive game situation. Aggressiveness was measured by the intensity of an electrical shock which the subject administered to his opponent. These researchers ascertained that one's aggressive behavior is a function of the other interactant's aggressive behavior but is not significantly influenced by the amount of attraction between the interactants.  

In a study dealing with aggression Baron examined simultaneously the effects upon aggression of the magnitude of pain cues given by the victim, level of prior anger arousal, and similarity-dissimilarity of aggressor and victim. Like the results of Hendrick and Taylor, he found that the degree of attraction (manipulated by degree of similarity) does not influence aggression. Baron and Kepner, in a similar research effort, found that the intensity of aggressive behavior is not mediated by attraction but that attraction yields a minimally significant effect upon the duration of the aggressive behavior. An individual with low attraction toward an interactant tends to exhibit aggressive behavior longer.

---


The findings of the empirical studies which test the general hypothesis that attraction mediates aggressive behavior are, in general, not supportive of such a hypothesis. A buyer, who assigns a positive valence to his impression of the seller, may still exhibit aggressive behavior toward the seller. Likewise, the exhibition of aggressive behavior on the part of the buyer toward the seller is not indicative of a lack of attraction toward the seller.

Compliant Behavior

If the buyer assigns a positive valence to his impression of the seller, is the buyer more likely to behave in a manner consistent with the seller's desires? One of Baron's studies deals with this question on a more general level. He investigated the influence of attraction upon compliance with requests of an interactant toward which one is attracted. Baron's data suggested that compliance with requests from a stranger may be significantly affected by the degree of attraction held toward the stranger. However, this relationship holds only when the stranger's requests are above some minimal level.¹⁰ Baron explains that in situations where the stranger's requests are very small the norm of social responsibility dictates compliance regardless of attraction.¹¹

The seller, instead of overtly requesting the buyer to purchase a certain product, may request the buyer to relate to the product in certain ways in order to stimulate the buyer's interest. For example,


¹¹ Ibid.
the automobile salesman may request that the buyer take a test drive. The data generated by Baron's study of attraction and compliance suggest that the degree to which the buyer is attracted to the seller influences the extent to which the buyer will tend to comply with the seller's request. If the seller, however, makes very minimal requests, the buyer may tend to comply regardless of the degree of attraction he holds for the seller.

Summary of the Potential Behavioral Effects of Attraction

Even though empirical analyses of the effects of attraction on overt behavior have been sparse, the findings of existing empirical studies have several implications regarding the effects of attraction upon the buyer's overt behavior toward the seller. First, if the buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer's behavior may tend to become more cooperative. Second, the buyer's attraction toward the seller may cause the buyer to exhibit positive anticipatory responses regarding expected subsequent interactions. Third, attraction does not appear to mediate aggressive behavior that the buyer may exhibit toward the seller. If the buyer assigns a positive valence to his impression of the seller, the buyer may or may not behave in an aggressive manner toward the seller. Fourth, as the degree of attraction held by the buyer toward the seller increases, the buyer may be more likely to comply with the requests of the seller. However, for this relationship to hold, the seller's requests must be more significant in terms of difficulty than what one would expect to do under the norm of social responsibility.

Although the direction of the valence which the buyer assigns to his impression of the seller may affect the buyer's overt behavior,
such potential effects may not be limited to the buyer's overt behavior. In the following section several potential cognitive effects on the buyer, due to the buyer's attraction toward the seller, are considered.

Potential Cognitive Effects of Attraction Toward the Seller

Although the buyer's attraction toward the seller may have direct effects upon the overt behavior of the buyer, attraction may also have effects on the buyer which are less directly observable. Attraction toward the seller may affect the buyer's cognitive activities. Even though such effects are not directly visible, the consequences of such effects may be exhibited through overt behavior. As shown in Figure 6-1 three cognitive factors that appear to be influenced by attraction are (1) perception of communication content, (2) attitude and opinion change, and (3) inference of attitude similarity. Due to the exploratory nature of the development of the interaction model, the cognitive effects of attraction, which are included in the model, have been selected on the basis of availability of empirical analyses. There may be other cognitive effects of attraction which have not been dealt with empirically.

Perception of Communication Content

When the buyer assigns either a positive or a negative valence to his impression of the seller, does his evaluation affect his perception of subsequent information inputs from the seller?

Several empirical studies have been performed at a more general level in an attempt to acquire a better understanding of the relationship between attraction toward the sender of a communication and the receiver's perception of the content of the message. Kelley and Woodruff
found that individuals who acquire communication from a positively evaluated sender, tend to distort the content of the message in the direction of one's own opinion regarding a specific topic. Manis, by associating various communications with either high or low prestige sources determined that receivers tend to displace the message content of a high-prestige source in the direction of their own positions. However, Manis did not find a significant tendency for recipients to displace the opinion of the low prestige source away from their own positions.

In a more recent research effort Kelman and Eagly have ascertained that the tendency to perceive communication content in terms of one's attitude toward the communicator is likely to be most active when the sender arouses strong feelings. Thus, again it appears that the content of the communication from a positive sender tends to be misperceived in the direction of the receiver's attitude, and the content of the message from a negatively evaluated sender tends to be distorted in the direction opposite of the receiver's own position. Kelman and Eagly explain this finding by stating:

---


15 Ibid.
The finding is quite consistent with what one would expect from balance theory, if we make two fairly straightforward assumptions. First, as the feeling toward 0 (other) becomes stronger, the imbalance and the resulting forces to restore balance generated by any sign of incongruity also become stronger. Since misperception is one of the mechanisms for restoring balance, the likelihood of its use—provided the situation permits it—will thus increase. Second, as the feeling toward 0 becomes stronger, one of the major mechanisms for restoring balance—namely, changing one's attitude toward 0—becomes less and less available: it is difficult to devalue a strongly positive 0 just because one finds one's self in disagreement with him and it is difficult to open one's heart to a strongly negative 0 just because one finds one's self in agreement with him. Thus, the likelihood increases that other mechanisms for restoring balance, such as misperception, will come into play.

In general, the empirical findings which deal with the effects of attraction upon perception of communication content suggest that if a buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer is likely to perceive the content of the seller's message as being closer to the buyer's position than is the content in actuality. Likewise, when the buyer assigns a negative valence to his impression of the seller, the buyer may tend to distort the content of the seller's message in the direction opposite from the buyer's position.

A question which is closely related to the effects of attraction upon the buyer's perception of the seller's message content is to what extent does the direction of the assigned valence of the buyer's impression of the seller affect the buyer's susceptibility to the seller's attempts of attitude or opinion change?

Attitude and Opinion Change

As indicated in the previous section, the buyer's attraction to or rejection of the seller tends to influence the buyer's perception of information which he receives from the seller. Since attitudes appear
to be formed and changed through one's contact with various kinds of information inputs\(^{16}\) and attraction tends to influence the perception of information inputs, one may reasonably expect that the direction of the valence that the buyer places upon his impression of the seller tends to affect the buyer's susceptibility to attempts of attitude change made by the seller. Even though an attitude and an opinion differ definitionally in terms of generality and/or intensity,\(^{17}\) for purposes of analysis in this section these terms are grouped into a single category.

In general the findings of the empirical research efforts that pertain to the effects of attraction upon attitude change indicate that if an individual is attracted to a communicator, the communication is more likely to cause a change in the attitude of the receiver. The research studies dealing with the effects of attitude change due to the communicator's attractiveness have been explored by using several correlates of attraction. Attraction-related variables which appear to produce attitude change include (1) the communicator's height,\(^{18}\) (2) physical attractiveness in terms of clothing and personal cleanliness,\(^{19}\)

---


(3) congruency or the addressee's perception of the communicator's liking him,\(^20\) (4) race,\(^21\) (5) similarity in relationship to an object,\(^22\) and (6) perceived belief similarity between communicator and recipient.\(^23\)

These results of empirical research suggest that the direction of the valence which the buyer assigns to his impression of the seller affects the buyer's susceptibility to influence. If the buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer's attitudes or opinions tend to be more easily changed by communication received from the seller. When the buyer rejects the seller, the seller's communication tends to be less effective in changing the attitudes or opinions of the buyer.

Even though, in aggregate, the empirical findings support the relationship that attraction on the part of the recipient toward the communicator makes the receiver more susceptible to attempted attitude change, there appear to be several variables which may alter the


intensity of this relationship. The variables which have been tested empirically to determine if they are intervening variables in the attraction-attitude change relationship are (1) commitment, (2) ego-involvement, (3) desire to influence and (4) authoritarianism.

Commitment

Kiesler and Corbin attempted to determine if commitment to a group influences the effects of attraction upon attitude or opinion change. They found that if a person is not committed and is not attracted, the less he tends to conform to group attitudes and opinions. However, to the extent that the person is committed to the group and not attracted to the group the less likely he is to conform down to a certain point or level of attraction. Beyond that point, a further decrease in attraction tends to results in relatively heightened attitude conformity. 24

Although the Kiesler and Corbin research deals with commitment and attraction toward a group rather than an individual, their findings have implications for buyer-seller interaction. The buyer may be committed to continue transacting with a particular seller, due to market conditions or contractual obligations. If the buyer's valence toward the seller becomes more negative, the ability of the seller to influence the buyer toward conformity does not decrease proportionally. The rate of decrease in the seller's ability to influence appears to lessen when attraction falls below a certain level of attraction.

Ego-Involvement

In another empirical study which focused upon variables that influence the attraction-attitude change relationship, Johnson and Scileppi measured the influence of the recipient's ego-involvement with the content of the message upon the attitude change effects of attraction. Their findings indicate that the greatest amount of attitude change occurs when the communicator has high credibility (indicative of high attraction), and the receiver's ego-involvement toward the content is low. The amount of attitude change due to high communicator credibility (high attraction) tends not to be as great when the recipient is more ego involved with the content of the communication. Thus, if the buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer's susceptibility to attempts of attitude change is partially a function of the buyer's ego-involvement with the content of the message. High ego-involvement reduces the buyer's susceptibility to attitude change.

Desire to Influence

Two separate studies have been focused upon whether or not the attraction-attitude change relationship is affected by the communicator's statement indicating his desire to change opinions. Mills and Aronson hypothesized that an overtly stated desire to influence would enhance an attractive communicator's effectiveness. Their findings supported this hypothesis. An attractive communicator tends to be more effective if he announces his intent to influence while an unattractive

communicator, who behaves in a similar manner, does not tend to improve his effectiveness.\textsuperscript{26} In a later study Mills again focused his attention upon the effects of one's statement regarding his desire to influence. However, in this study he differentiated the levels of attraction by varying the communicator's perceived liking for the receiver of the communication. He determined that a receiver, who believes himself to be liked by the communicator, tends to be more likely to agree with the communicator if he announces his intent to persuade than if he does not make such a statement. Inversely, individuals who perceive themselves to be disliked, tend to agree less when the communicator states his intention to persuade than if he does not make such an indication.\textsuperscript{27}

Due to the nature of buyer-seller interaction the seller does not have to explicitly inform the buyer that he desires to influence or persuade the buyer. It is reasonable to believe that the seller's desire to influence is an implicit part of the buyer's expectations regarding the seller's behavior. The fact that an explicit statement pertaining to desire to influence appears to make an attractive communicator more effective tentatively suggests that a buyer's implicit understanding of the seller's desire to persuade may heighten the persuasive effectiveness of an attractive seller.

\textsuperscript{26} Mills and Aronson, \textit{loc. cit.}, 176-7.
\textsuperscript{27} Mills, \textit{loc. cit.}, 155-7.
Authoritarianism

Does the personality of the buyer influence the extent to which attraction toward the seller is a determinant of the buyer's susceptibility to attitude change attempts? Authoritarianism appears to be the only personality variable which has been tested to determine its effect upon the attraction-attitude change relationship. Johnson and Steiner's results suggest that a highly authoritarian receiver is "source-oriented" causing his degree of attitude change to be very much determined by high attraction toward the communicator. In a later research effort Johnson, Torcivia, and Poprick ascertained that a low authoritarian's susceptibility to influence tends to be affected more by differences in attraction, as manipulated by differential source credibility, than are high authoritarians. A third study dealing with the effects of authoritarianism was performed by Johnson and Izzett. Their findings indicate that level of authoritarianism is not an intervening variable in the attraction-attitude change relationship.

At this point in time the empirical research findings regarding the effects of authoritarianism upon the relationship between attraction and attitude change are too ambiguous and inconsistent to draw inferences.


Summary of Effects Upon Attitudes and Opinion Change

The valence which the buyer assigns to his impression of the seller appears to influence his susceptibility to attempts of attitude change made by the seller. As the valence, which the buyer attaches to the seller, becomes more positive, the buyer's susceptibility to the seller's influence tends to increase. Empirical findings suggest that several attraction-related variables may cause the buyer to change his attitude and opinions. These include (1) the seller's height, (2) the seller's physical attractiveness in terms of clothing and personal cleanliness, (3) congruency or the buyer's perception of the seller's liking for him, (4) race of the seller, (5) similarity to the seller's relationship to the object, and (6) the buyer's perceived similarity in beliefs between himself and the seller.

Though the empirical research results tend to support a positive relationship between attraction and attitude or opinion change, several factors have been tested to determine the extent to which they intervene in the attraction-attitude relationship. The attitude-change effects due to attraction to the seller may be lessened to the extent that (1) the buyer is not committed to the seller, (2) the buyer is ego-involved with the content of the seller's message, and (3) the seller's desire to influence is less explicit. The effects of authoritarianism on the attraction-attitude change relationship have been studied and have thus far resulted in highly inconsistent findings.

If attraction tends to cause the buyer to conform more to the attitudes of the seller, the buyer must first perceive the seller's
attitudes. Thus, a closely related question is whether or not the buyer's attraction to the seller affects the buyer's perception of the seller's attitudes.

Inference of Attitude Similarity

As indicated in the earlier discussion regarding the forces which determine attraction the results of empirical research overwhelmingly suggest a strong, positive relationship between buyer-seller attitude similarity and attraction. Even though empirical research is sparse, attempts have been made to determine the existence and strength of the inverse relationship, that is, whether or not attraction leads to inferences of similar attitudes.

Moss tried to determine the effects of attraction upon one's propensity to infer similar attitudes. Subjects initially were asked to complete a forty-four item attitude scale. Then each subject was shown an interpersonal judgment scale and asked if he had completed such a scale regarding another, what attitudes would the other person have expressed in order to elicit those interpersonal judgment responses. Moss found that if the hypothetical interpersonal judgment scale indicated strong attraction, the subject tended to infer attitudes similar to his own.\(^{31}\) In a study developed by Sachs and Byrne similar results were ascertained.\(^{32}\)

---


The results of the Moss study indicate that when a buyer is attracted to a seller, the buyer tends to infer or attribute attitudes to the seller which are similar to his own. If these findings are considered in conjunction with previously discussed empirical data which strongly support the hypothesis that attitude similarity increases interpersonal attraction, the attitude similarity-attraction-attitude similarity sequence appears to be a self-reinforcing, cyclical interrelationship. Thus, due to attitude similarity, a buyer may be attracted to a seller, and, in turn, such attraction may cause the buyer to infer to the seller attitudes similar to his own.

Summary of Potential Cognitive Effects of Attraction

The buyer's attraction toward the seller appears to have several potential effects upon the cognitive activities of the buyer. These potential cognitive effects may produce changes in the overt behavior of the buyer. Attraction toward the seller may affect the buyer's perception of communication content, his susceptibility to attempts of attitude and opinion change, and his inference of attitudes to the seller.

Empirical findings suggest that the buyer's attraction toward the seller tends to cause the buyer to displace the content of the seller's message in the direction of the buyer's own position. If the buyer assigns a negative valence to his impression of the seller, the buyer tends to misperceive the seller's message by displacing it away from his own position.

In regard to the effects of the seller's attractiveness upon the buyer's susceptibility to influence, the findings in general support the proposition that the buyer's attraction toward the seller makes the
buyer more susceptible to attempts of attitude change. Several attraction-related variables which the empirical findings suggest as factors that increase the buyer's susceptibility to influence are the seller's height, his physical attractiveness in terms of clothing and personal cleanliness, his perceived liking for the buyer, and his race. In addition, the buyer's perceived similarity of beliefs held by himself and the seller, and the buyer's perception of similarity of both interactants' relationship to the object are both attraction-related factors which increase the buyer's susceptibility to influence. Empirical findings indicate that several factors intervene in the attraction-attitude change relationship. The attitude-change effects of attraction are reduced to the extent that (1) the buyer is not committed to the seller, (2) the buyer is ego-involved with the content of the seller's message, and (3) the seller's desire to influence is less explicit.

A third potential cognitive effect upon the buyer due to his attraction toward the seller deals with the buyer's inference of attitudes to the seller. The limited findings support the belief that a buyer who is attracted to a seller tends to infer attitudes to the seller which are similar to those of the buyer. When these results are interrelated with previously cited findings regarding the attitude similarity-attraction relationship, attraction toward the seller may increase the attractiveness of the seller.

The buyer's attraction toward the seller has numerous potential consequences for the buyer. Attraction may produce directly observable effects in terms of overt behavior and/or effects on the buyer's cognitive structure which may in turn lead to changes in the buyer's overt behavior. The behavior of the buyer and the changes in his behavior,
which may arise due to the valence that he assigns to his impression of the seller, are conveyed to the seller through various forms of social techniques as shown in Figure 6-2. In the following section five different types of social techniques are briefly discussed.

Interpersonal Techniques

Although information inputs have been analyzed in terms of their effects upon the buyer's behavior, the methods by which information is transmitted to the buyer or to the seller needs to be considered. Since interaction is dependent upon one or more modes for transmitting information, it is necessary to include in the interaction model of buyer behavior several techniques for sending information between the interactants.

The set of interpersonal techniques are included as ancillary variables in the interaction model of buyer behavior. As ancillary variables, the interpersonal techniques serve a function of facilitating buyer-seller interaction.

As shown in Figure 6-2, the interpersonal techniques which appear to be operative during buyer-seller interaction are (1) proxemic communication, (2) kinesic communication, (3) tactile communication, (4) language, and (5) paralinguistic communication.33

Proxemic Communication

Interactants communicate through the variation in physical

Figure 6-2 The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior: Focus Upon Interpersonal Techniques
distances. Hall indicates that proxemic communication occurs when a person acquires understanding of the content of another individual's mind by perceiving the behavioral patterns associated with variations in proximity to that individual. Thus, the variations in physical space which separates the buyer and seller in Figure 6-2 is a technique used for sending information to each other.

Just as there are cross-cultural variations in verbal languages, so there are cross-cultural variations in the meaning of spatial relationships between interactants. For example, Arabs and Latin Americans, when interacting face-to-face, tend to position themselves closer to each other. In multi-national buyer-seller interactions the information

---


transmitted through proxemic communication may be misperceived due to cultural variations in the meaning of physical space between interactants.\(^{37}\)

When an interactant perceives his proximity to another to be inappropriate at a point during interaction, he may focus his attention upon the state of his own position or that of the other individual. Under such conditions when his attention is diverted from the verbal content of the message to the proximity of the interactants, misperception may arise not only because of proxemic problems but also due to a lack of attention toward message content.\(^{38}\) If the buyer or the seller in Figure 6-2 perceives their proximity to be too close or too distant, he may be inattentive to other information inputs during the time that he is attempting to move to a more appropriate physical distance.

Not only are the buyer and seller able to communicate due to the physical location of their bodies, but they may also communicate due to the movement of their bodies.

Kinesic Communication

As either the buyer or seller in Figure 6-2 moves his body or limbs, he is sending information to the other interactant by using kinesic techniques.\(^{39}\) Birdwhistell, a major contributor to kinesic theory and


\(^{39}\) For reviews and analyses of kinesic communication see: Ray Birdwhistell, *Introduction to Kinesics* (Louisville, Kentucky: University of Louisville Press, 1952); J. D. Matarazzo, and others, "Inter-
research, proposes that body motion is similar to other types of communication in that it is learned. In addition, he believes that the meaning of body motion may be determined only in context. For example, facial expressions of persons in a picture are more meaningful in communicating emotion when the persons are depicted in a context than if they are shown on a blank background.

The buyer and seller in Figure 6-2 send information to each other using a number of kinesic techniques. Kinesic communication may occur in such forms as facial expressions, eye contact and movement, head nodding, hand and arm gestures, movement of the torso, and patterns of leg movement. Communication through these kinesic techniques are, to some degree, culturally bound. The meanings of body movements are not universal but tend to vary from one culture to another. Thus, as with proxemic communication, buyer-seller interactions which are cross-cultural may be retarded or confusing because of the cross-cultural

---

40 Ray Birdwhistell, *Introduction to Kinesics* (Louisville, Kentucky: University of Louisville Press, 1952); p. 5.

41 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
differences in meanings of body motions.

Tactile Communication

When one or both interactants physically touches the other person, information is flowing through tactile communication. Frank states that tactile communication is probably the most elemental form of communication.

The type, frequency, and intensity of tactile communication is culturally determined. In regard to tactile activity Hall categorizes humans as being in either a contact group or a non-contact group. For example, he places Americans and Northern Europeans in the non-contact group and Arabs in the contact group.

Although tactile communication might be prevalent in certain types of multinational buyer-seller interactions, tactile communication between the buyer and seller in this country is quite limited. Tactile communication between buyers and sellers in the U.S. occurs mainly through hand-shaking. The transactions involving certain types of products such as cosmetics may provide an occasion for tactile behavior.

Due to the cultural norms in the U.S., tactile communication is

---


probably the least significant mode which the buyer and seller in Figure 6-2 utilize for sending information to one another.

Language

Language is a systematic structure consisting of social conventions that specifically relate symbols and ideas.\(^{45}\) A language includes both verbal and nonverbal symbols.\(^{46}\) Verbal language refers to words and is used to communicate meaning through writing and verbal speech.\(^{47}\) The buyer and seller in Figure 6-2 are able to send information to each other through the verbal symbols of speech and written words.

Although alphabetic and numerical symbols are used by interactants to communicate information and concepts, they are not strictly limited to verbal symbols. The buyer and seller, when interacting with each other, may express themselves through nonverbal symbols such as sketches, charts, and graphs.

In order for language to be an effective interpersonal technique for communication there must be a commonness of meaning between the interactants as to the relationship between the symbols of the language and the ideas to which the symbols relate. Due to cultural, sub-cultural,


\(^{47}\) McDavid and Harari, loc. cit., p. 151.
and occupational variations in languages, the communication between the buyer and seller in Figure 6-2 is sometimes not meaningful to one or both interactants.

The most important tools of communication for people are the spoken and written forms of language. Although spoken language may be an effective form of communication, the effectiveness of this form is not only determined by the linguistic content but also by the background of the linguistic content. This background is referred to as paralanguage.

Paralinguistic Communication

As the buyer and seller communicate verbally they may be sending information not only coded in language but also coded in paralanguage. Paralanguage consists of voice set, voice qualities, and vocalizations. Voice set is a function of one's age, sex, state of health, body build, and mood. Out of these characteristics one's voice set takes on a cultural identification of age category, gender, status, health image, and emotional mood. Voice qualities include such factors as pitch range, vocal lip control, articulation control, pitch control, resonance, and tempo. Vocalizations are actual identifiable noises but are different

48 Ibid., p. 159.
50 Ibid., 4.
51 Ibid.
from sounds of language.\textsuperscript{52}

As the buyer and seller in Figure 6-2 communicate through verbal speech, they are also communicating through paralanguage. Communication through paralanguage allows the buyer and seller another technique to express attitudes and emotions as well as message content.\textsuperscript{53}

Interpersonal Techniques in Perspective

Interpersonal techniques are mechanisms utilized by interactants to send information to each other. Since interpersonal interaction requires that information flows between the interactants, five interpersonal techniques are included in the interaction model of buyer behavior.

The five interpersonal techniques are (1) proxemic communication, (2) kinesic communication, (3) tactile communication, (4) language, and (5) paralinguistic communication.

The buyer and seller in Figure 6-2 are able to send information through the proximity and variation in proximity of their physical beings. Kinesic communication may occur between the buyer and seller due to the motion of various parts of their bodies such as the head, eyes, face, torso, arms, hands, and legs. Due to cultural norms tactile communication, communication through touching, is highly limited among buyers and sellers in the U.S. International buyers and sellers may experience larger amounts of tactile communication. Language is a set of culturally determined relationships between symbols and ideas. The buyer and seller may send information to each other through nonverbal symbols such as

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{53}Abrahamson, \textit{loc. cit.}, p. 43.
drawings, charts, and graphs and through verbal symbols such as writing and verbal speech. As the buyer and seller interact through verbal speech, they are not only communicating through language but also through paralanguage. Paralinguistic communication occurs when one's voice set, voice quality, and nonverbal vocalizations send information to the receiver. For example, the tone of the seller's voice may be indicative of his current emotional state.

Interpersonal techniques are included as ancillary variables in the interaction model of buyer behavior because they facilitate the interaction between the buyer and seller.

Summary

The analyses in this chapter have focused on the effects of the buyer's attraction toward the seller upon the buyer's overt behavior and his cognitive activities. In addition, five interpersonal techniques which serve a facilitative function for buyer-seller interaction have been set forth.

In regard to the potential behavioral effects, the buyer's attraction toward the seller appears to potentially influence the buyer's (1) cooperative behavior, (2) anticipatory behavior regarding expected subsequent interactions, and (3) compliant behavior. If the buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer may exhibit behavior which is more cooperative. The buyer's attraction toward the seller may cause the buyer to have positive anticipatory expectations about future interactions. As attraction toward the seller increases, the buyer may tend to be more compliant in dealing with the requests of the seller. However, this relationship holds only when the seller's requests are more
significant in terms of difficulty than what an individual would expect to do under the norm of social responsibility. The amount of aggressive behavior exhibited by the buyer toward the seller does not appear to be lessened by attraction. The empirical findings suggest that a buyer, although attracted to a seller, may still exhibit as much aggressive behavior toward the seller as he might do if he were not attracted to the seller.

In general the empirical findings regarding the relationship between the buyer's attraction toward the seller and potential cognitive effects suggest that the buyer's cognitive factors affected include (1) perception of communication content, (2) susceptibility to attempts of attitude and opinion change, and (3) inference of attitudes to the seller.

The data from empirical research suggest that the buyer's attraction toward the seller may cause the buyer to misperceive the content of the seller's message in the direction of the buyer's own position. When the buyer assigns a negative valence to his impression of the seller, the buyer tends to displace the seller's message away from his own position.

The results of research efforts which deal with the effects of the seller's attractiveness upon the buyer's susceptibility to attempts of attitude change in general support the proposition that the buyer's attraction toward the seller causes the buyer to be more susceptible to attitude change attempts exhibited by the seller. The attraction-related variables which the results of empirical research suggest as factors that tend to increase the buyer's susceptibility to influence are (1) the seller's height, (2) his physical attractiveness in terms
of clothing and personal cleanliness, (3) his perceived attraction for the buyer, (4) his race, (5) the buyer's perceived similarity of beliefs held by himself and the seller, and (6) the buyer's perception of similarity of both interactants' relationship to the object. Although the attraction-attitude change relationship is significantly supported by research data, there are empirical findings which indicate that several factors intervene in the attraction-attitude change relationship. The attitude-change effects of attraction tend to be reduced to the extent that (1) the buyer is not committed to the seller, (2) the buyer is ego-involved with the content of the seller's message, and (3) the seller's desire to influence is less explicit.

Another potential cognitive effect upon the buyer which may arise out of his attraction toward the seller is his inference of attitudes to the seller. The limited findings suggest that a buyer, who is attracted to a seller, tends to attribute attitudes to the seller which are similar to his own attitudes. When these findings are considered in conjunction with previously cited findings regarding the attitude similarity-attraction relationship, attraction toward the seller may lead to further attraction toward the seller.

Although an analysis of the buyer's attraction toward the seller indicates that several potential behavioral and cognitive effects may arise, the analysis does not focus upon the manner in which these effects are communicated. Therefore, the last section of this chapter consists of a description of interpersonal techniques utilized by buyers and sellers for communicating with one another. These techniques are included in the interaction model of buyer behavior as ancillary variables which serve to facilitate buyer-seller interaction.
Buyers and sellers send information to each other through at least five interpersonal techniques. Proxemic communication takes place as the buyer and seller adjust the physical distance between themselves. Through the movement of various body parts such as the head, eyes, face, hands, arms, legs, and torso, the interactants send information to each other. Because of restraining cultural norms in the U.S. tactile communication, is highly limited during buyer-seller interaction in the U.S. Language is a set of culturally determined relationships between symbols and ideas. The buyer and seller may communicate by language through nonverbal symbols such as writing and verbal speech. Paralinguistic communication occurs when one's voice set, voice quality, and non-verbal vocalizations send information to the receiver.

The consideration of the variables in this chapter completes the series of three chapters in which the variables and relationships of the interaction model of buyer behavior are analyzed. In Chapter VII, the final chapter, a summary of the model, a set of hypotheses for further research, suggested methodologies for selected hypotheses, and the conclusions are presented.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF THE INTERACTION MODEL OF BUYER BEHAVIOR,
SUGGESTED HYPOTHESES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH,
PROPOSED METHODOLOGIES FOR SELECTED
HYPOTHESES, AND CONCLUSIONS

As indicated in Chapter II, in a review of selected buyer behavior models, most of the models are oriented toward buyer behavior in the general case without taking into consideration whether the seller is a person, a self-service establishment, or a vending machine. The consumer behavior models which have been developed do not adequately consider the case of face-to-face buyer-seller interaction in which variables and relationships unique to on-going interaction affect the buyer's behavior.

The objective of this study has been to develop a buyer behavior model that deals with face-to-face buyer-seller interaction and not with the interaction of a buyer and a vending machine or self-service retail establishment. Specifically, the purpose of this research has been to develop an interaction model of buyer behavior which focuses upon the variables and relationships which influence a buyer's determination of a behavioral payoff acquired through interaction with the seller.

The model which has been developed is a microscopic model of buyer behavior rather than a comprehensive model in that it does not attempt to explain all of the variables which affect consumer behavior but instead is oriented toward an analysis of selected variables and
relationships unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction.

The methodology of this research used in the development of the interaction model of buyer behavior has been of an exploratory type. Thus, through the analysis of empirical research findings an attempt has been made to isolate the relevant variables, to establish relationships among these variables, and to develop a framework on which hypotheses for future research may be based.

The purposes of this chapter are (1) to summarize the interaction model of buyer behavior, (2) to present a set of hypotheses suggested for further research, (3) to propose several methodologies for selected hypotheses, and (4) to set forth the conclusions.

Summary of the Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior

The interaction model is based upon the assumption that interactants value behavior. Support for this assumption was presented in the Chapter III. Based upon this assumption the proposition on which the interaction model is founded is that the buyer, as he interacts with the seller, acquires a behavioral payoff through the interaction. Depending upon the direction of the valence, the behavioral payoff may increase the total transactional payoff.

Boundaries of the Model

Because the interaction model of buyer behavior is microscopic, it was necessary to clarify several boundaries. First, the seller in the model is a person and not a machine, a company, or a group of personal salesmen. Second, the buyer in this model is not the economic rational man. Third, the buyer and seller in the interaction arena do not exist
in social isolation before interacting with each other. Both participants have been subjected to social influences such as the family, peer groups, reference groups, social class, and subcultural factors. Each enters the transactional situation with certain motives, attitudes, and goals. Fourth, buyer-seller interaction exists whenever the buyer or the seller is aware of the other's presence.

The Exogenous Variables

Since the interaction model is microscopic, it was necessary for purposes of clarification to present the variables which were treated as exogenous. Even though the exogenous variables may influence the major variables included in the model, they were not explained by the model. The fact that the exogenous variables were not analyzed in the model is not meant to imply that these variables do not affect the other variables and relationships in the interaction model. However, to simplify the analysis, the exogenous variables were treated as constants.

The variables which were treated as exogenous are (1) culturally induced norms and roles, (2) environmental forces such as economic factors, technological forces, and government and legal variables, and (3) needs, motives, and goals of the interactants. These variables were considered to be exogenous because their effects may be manifested before, during, and after interaction. The endogenous variables were considered to be ones which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interaction.

The Endogenous Variables

Depicted in Figure 7-1 are the major components of the interaction model of buyer behavior. The major components of the model are (1) interpersonal perception, (2) interpersonal attraction, (3) potential effects
Figure 7-1 The Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior
of the buyer's attraction toward the seller, and (4) interpersonal techniques. Due to the exploratory nature of this study the variables which are contained in each of the components were selected on the basis of availability of empirical research pertaining to the variables. Since the buyer's determination of his behavioral payoff is, to some extent, a function of his impression of the seller, the first major component which was considered is interpersonal perception.

**Interpersonal Perception**

Interpersonal perception was explored in terms of how it specifically relates to the formation and change of the buyer's impression of the seller. The main areas of interpersonal perception which were analyzed are (1) the basic process of perception, (2) selected cognitive factors which are determinants of impression formation, (3) the order effects of information inputs, (4) the perception of human physical characteristics, and (5) the attribution process.

To facilitate the analysis of interpersonal perceptual variables, a discussion of the general process of perception was necessary. Perception was defined as the complex process by which a person selects, organizes, and interprets information inputs into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Although the perceptual process is a basis for person perception, other variables unique to person perception are active but are not a part of the basic perceptual process.

The information inputs which are selected, organized, and interpreted for person perception are social information inputs because they are units of information pertaining to social objects, namely the buyer and seller in this model. The information flows in Figure 7-1 consist
of social information inputs. In both flows of information, the social information inputs may be initiated by either the buyer or the seller. The flows of information may be somewhat restrained during the initial stages of interaction. The processing of social information inputs allows the buyer to form an impression of the seller from which he derives a behavioral payoff.

The buyer's impression of the seller may consist of aspects of the seller's dispositions, attitudes, and/or personality. In order to analyze how the buyer forms and maintains an impression of the seller, three cognitive factors were considered including cognitive organization, cognitive complexity, and the degree of cognitive rigidity. Several explanations dealing with the manner in which the buyer organizes social information inputs were proposed. The buyer may organize his impression of the seller (1) as a function of the summation of information inputs, (2) as a function of the average of information inputs, or (3) as a cognitive structure which is more comprehensive than the sum of its parts.

To the degree that the buyer possesses a high degree of cognitive complexity in forming an impression of the seller, the buyer tends (1) to seek and process more information, (2) to be less certain of the accuracy of his impression, and (3) to be more capable of creating a unified impression from incongruent social information inputs. A buyer's degree of cognitive rigidity appears to be affected by his own personality. If the buyer is highly competitive and/or highly authoritarian, he tends to be more cognitively rigid causing his impression of the seller to be more extreme.

Even though these cognitive factors seemed to influence the
formation of the buyer's impression of the seller, the order or sequence in which the buyer receives social information inputs also appeared to be a variable acting upon the formation of the buyer's impression of the seller. The analysis of the empirical findings pertaining to order effects supported the proposition that primacy effects tend to be more dominant than recency effects in the buyer's impression of the seller. Primacy effects appear to be more influential because the elements which lessen the primacy effects (such as a forewarning that cautions one about the inaccuracy of a first impression and the introduction of irrelevant information) are generally not present during on-going buyer-seller interaction.

The buyer's impression of the seller appeared to be not only a function of cognitive factors and the order effects, but also a function of the type of social information inputs received by the buyer. For purposes of analysis social information inputs were separated into two major categories including (1) inputs pertaining to physical characteristics and (2) inputs regarding the seller's behavior.

Facial features, skin color, and physical deviations are physical characteristics which were found to affect one's impression of another individual. Empirical findings suggested that the facial characteristics which influence a buyer's impression of the seller are age, skin texture, fullness of lips, and facial tension. Clusters of facial features are generally related to clusters of personality traits. In regard to skin color, a Negro seller, regardless of the shade of skin color, tends to be perceived by a buyer as possessing the stereotyped personality characteristics of Negroes. There is a tendency for the highly prejudiced buyer to over-exaggerate the Negro personality
characteristics in his impression of the buyer. The existence of physical deviations on the part of either the buyer or the seller tends to cause the normal interactant to be inhibited and uncomfortable. Since the normal interactant is inhibited under such conditions, he tends to (1) restrict his behavioral output, (2) express opinions which are less consistent with his actual beliefs, and (3) terminate the interaction more rapidly.

The buyer's impression appeared to be not only a function of social information inputs regarding the seller's physical characteristics but also a function of social information inputs pertaining to the seller's behavior. As the buyer perceives the seller's behavior, he not only senses physical motion and activity, but he also attributes intentions, attitudes, and capabilities to the seller. The buyer makes such attributions based upon behavior which he perceives to be internally caused. Thus, he must determine the locus of causality of the seller's behavior. Two factors which were found to cause the seller's behavior to appear to be externally caused are (1) low status possessed by the seller and (2) exhibition of in-role behavior on the part of the seller.

Three major types of attribution were analyzed including (1) the attribution of attitudes, (2) the attribution of capability, and (3) the attribution of intention. The empirical findings suggested that the attribution of attitudes is, to some degree, a function of (1) whether the seller, when operating in a perceived no-choice situation, expresses a personal commitment regarding the object being discussed, and (2) a function of the strength of an attitude exhibited by the seller. Attribution of capability is more likely to occur if the seller exhibits successful acts during the initial part of the interaction as opposed
to the latter part and if the direction of the seller's evaluation of the buyer is perceived to be positive. In regard to the attribution of intention, the findings suggested that the attribution of intention may tend to be influenced by the maturity level of the buyer. As the buyer becomes more mature, he is more likely to differentiate internally caused behavior from externally caused behavior. Attribution of intention is also affected by the tendency for a person to attribute positive effects to external causes.

Through interpersonal perception the buyer forms an impression of the seller. The analyses indicated that the buyer's impression of the seller, which the buyer forms during on-going buyer-seller interaction, appears to be determined by numerous variables. In attempting to explain the forces which influence the buyer's impression of the seller, the categories of variables analyzed included several cognitive factors of impression formation, the order effects of information inputs, the perception of physical characteristics of people, and the attribution process. The buyer, by attaching a valence to his impression of the seller, derives a behavioral payoff by interacting with the seller. Therefore, the forces which affect the assignment of a valence, were analyzed.

**Interpersonal Attraction**

Although the analysis of the interpersonal perceptual variables, to some degree, explained the manner by which the buyer places a valence upon his presence and behavior of the seller, there were other variables considered which are more directly related to the buyer's assignment of a valence to his impression of the seller. These variables are major components of the process of interpersonal attraction. The factors that
affect interpersonal attraction between the buyer and the seller, in turn, influence determination of a valence which the buyer places upon the presence and behavior of the seller. For analytic purposes attraction was defined as a positive valence held toward another. Likewise, rejection was defined as a negative valence held regarding another individual.

The interpersonal attraction variables which were analyzed in the interaction model of buyer behavior were, for purposes of analysis, divided into three categories including (1) perceived similarity of the interactants, (2) congruency of feelings, and (3) attribution of intentionality.

An analysis of the existing empirical findings indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between attitude similarity and attraction. The empirical findings regarding the relationship between attraction and attitude similarity are so strong that a tentative law of attraction has been set forth in the literature. The tentative law of attraction states that attraction toward an individual is a positive linear function of the proportion of similar attitudes perceived to be held by the other interactant. This relationship has been generalized to a number of age groups from fourth graders to middle-aged groups and to other cultures including Hawaii, Japan, Mexico, and India. Since his attraction toward the seller is, to some degree, a perceived function of attitude similarity, the buyer's attribution of attitudes to the seller directly influences his attraction toward the seller.

Even though the existing empirical findings were found to strongly support the relationship between attitude similarity and attraction, several factors which influence the strength of this relationship were
determined. The analysis of empirical research results indicated that the attraction due to attitude similarity may lessen (1) when the buyer's affective state is one of depression, (2) when the objects of the similar attitudes are of little interest to the buyer and seller, and (3) when a racially prejudiced white buyer is interacting with a Negro seller.

The findings of existing empirical studies tended to support a positive relationship between personality similarity and attraction. As the buyer becomes more mature, the strength of this relationship may decrease. If the buyer is introverted, the relationship may not hold.

A second major variable analyzed to determine its effects on the buyer's assignment of a valence to his impression of the seller was congruency. Congruency exists to the degree that a perceiver believes that the perceived person likes the perceiver as much as the perceiver likes the perceived person.

The analysis of existing findings suggested that a buyer may tend to be attracted to a seller if the buyer perceives the seller as liking him. Two factors were found that affect the buyer's perception of the seller's liking for him. The buyer is more likely to perceive the seller as liking him if (1) the seller exhibits discernment in judging people and his judgment of the buyer is positive, and (2) the seller indicates a gain in esteem for the buyer.

The third factor analyzed as a potential determinant of attraction was the attribution of intentionality. Results of empirical research suggested that if a seller, in order to gain the buyer's support, utilizes ingratiating tactics such as opinion conformity, the buyer in attributing intention to the seller may consider the degree to which the seller is dependent upon him. When the seller exhibits helping behavior, the
buyer may attempt to determine the extent to which the seller is acting under environmental constraints.

Interpersonal perception and interpersonal attraction were examined in order to explain the variables that are determinants of the buyer's impression and valence of the seller which in turn affects the behavioral payoff which the buyer receives from buyer-seller interaction. After focusing upon the variables of interpersonal perception and interpersonal attraction, the potential effects on the buyer due to his attraction toward the seller were analyzed.

The Potential Effects of Attraction

The potential effects on the buyer, due to his attraction toward the seller, were analyzed because such effects could affect the seller's behavior and in turn, as the seller reacts, affect the buyer's impression and the valence he assigns to his impression of the seller. Two major categories of potential attraction effects on the buyer were considered including (1) effects on the buyer's overt behavior, and (2) effects on the buyer's cognitive activities.

Although analysis indicated that empirical research pertaining to the effects of attraction on overt behavior is limited, the results of existing empirical studies had several implications regarding the effects of attraction upon the buyer's overt behavior toward the seller. In general the empirical findings suggested that if the buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer's behavior may tend (1) to become more cooperative, (2) to exhibit positive anticipatory responses regarding expected subsequent interactions, (3) to not necessarily increase or decrease in aggression toward the seller, and (4) to be more likely to
comply with the requests of the seller. For the fourth relationship to hold, the seller's requests must be more significant in terms of difficulty than what one would be expected to do under the norm of social responsibility.

The effects upon the buyer's cognitive activities due to his attraction toward the seller, appeared to be active in terms of the buyer's (1) perception of message content, (2) susceptibility to attempts of attitude change, and (3) inference of attitudes to the seller.

The results of available empirical research suggested that the buyer's attraction toward the seller may cause the buyer to misperceive the seller's message in the direction of his own position. If the buyer rejects the seller, the buyer tends to displace the seller's message away from his own position.

In regard to the buyer's susceptibility to attempts of attitude change, the analysis of the findings indicated that the buyer's attraction toward the seller causes the buyer to be more susceptible to attempts of attitude change. Several attraction-related variables which the empirical findings suggested as factors that raise the buyer's susceptibility to influence are (1) the seller's height, (2) his physical attractiveness in terms of clothing and personal cleanliness, (3) his perceived liking for the buyer, (4) his race, (5) the buyer's perceived similarity of beliefs held by himself and the seller, and (6) the buyer's perception of similarity of both interactants' relationship to the object.

Several variables appear to intervene in the attraction-attitude change relationship. The attitude-change effects of attraction decrease to the degree that (1) the buyer is not committed to the seller, (2) the buyer is ego-involved with the content of the seller's message, and (3) the
seller's desire to influence is less explicit.

An analysis of the available empirical results pertaining to the influence of the buyer's attraction toward the seller upon the buyer's inferences of attitudes to the seller, indicated that attraction toward the seller causes a tendency on the buyer's part to infer attitudes to the seller which are similar to those of the buyer. A comparison of these findings with the previously cited results regarding the attitude similarity-attraction relationship suggested that attraction toward the seller may increase the attractiveness of the seller.

After an analysis of the cognitive and behavioral effects of attraction upon the buyer, several techniques were set forth which the buyer uses for communicating these effects and more generally which both the buyer and seller use in sending information to each other.

The Interpersonal Techniques

The buyer and seller in Figure 7-1 send information to each other through interpersonal techniques. Because interpersonal interaction necessitates the flow of information between the interactants, a set of five interpersonal techniques were described as a part of the interaction model of buyer behavior.

The five interpersonal techniques are (1) proxemic communication, (2) kinesic communication, (3) tactile communication, (4) language, and (5) paralinguistic communication.

Proxemic communication allows the buyer and seller to send information to each other by altering the physical distance between themselves. The buyer and seller may communicate kinesically through the motion of various parts of their bodies such as the head, eyes, face, torso, arms,
hands, and legs. Since cultural norms in the U.S. are quite constraining regarding the touching of another individual, tactile communication is highly restrained among buyers and sellers in domestic interactions but may be more prevalent in multinational buyer-seller interaction. Language is a set of culturally determined relationships between symbols and ideas. Buyers and sellers may communicate by using nonverbal symbols such as drawings, charts, and graphs, and through verbal symbols such as writing and verbal speech. Paralinguistic communication allows the buyer and seller a method of sending information through voice set, voice quality, and nonverbal vocalizations. Thus, as the buyer and seller interact through verbal speech, they are not only communicating through language but also through paralanguage. The interpersonal techniques were included in the model as a set of ancillary variables which serve a function of facilitating interaction between the buyer and seller.

The variables and relationships of the interaction model of buyer behavior have been isolated and tentatively supported by the analyses of available empirical findings of research in the areas of psychology, sociology, and social psychology. Using the interaction model of buyer behavior as a theoretical base, a number of suggested hypotheses may be derived for further research.

Suggested Hypotheses for Further Research

Through the development of the interaction model of buyer behavior, a number of variables and interrelationships, pertaining to on-going buyer-seller interaction, have been set forth. These variables and interrelationships have been tentatively supported by the empirical find-
nings of researchers in the areas of psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Although the empirical results of studies in these areas tentatively support the variables and relationships in the interaction model of buyer behavior, a great deal of further research is needed to provide greater support for these variables and interrelationships. Thus a set of hypotheses, suggested for further research, is presented. The following hypotheses are classified in terms of the major categories of variables of the interaction model as shown in Figure 7-1.

Interpersonal Perception

The hypotheses set forth in this section pertain to specific variables and relationships regarding the buyer's perception of the seller. Specifically, these hypotheses are categorized into one of five areas including (1) flows of social information inputs, (2) cognitive factors of impression formation, (3) order effects of information inputs, (4) perception of physical characteristics, and (5) attribution or the perception of behavior.

**Flows of Social Information Inputs**

A. 1. 1. If the seller does not expect to have subsequent interactions with the buyer, the seller restricts the flow of social information inputs to the buyer less than if the seller expects to have subsequent interaction with that buyer.

A. 1. 2. When the buyer does not anticipate future interaction with the seller, the buyer restricts the flow of social information inputs to the seller less than if the buyer does anticipate future interaction with that seller.

**Cognitive Factors of Impression Formation**

A. 2. 1. The buyer's impression of the seller is a summation of the
social information inputs acquired by the buyer.

A. 2. 2. The buyer forms an impression of the seller by averaging the social information inputs received about the seller.

A. 2. 3. Based upon a relatively small set of central characteristics, the buyer forms a larger, more comprehensive impression of the seller.

A. 2. 4. After a buyer has formed an unfavorable impression of the seller, the buyer restricts the flow of information to the seller.

A. 2. 5. The level of a buyer's cognitive complexity is directly related to his (a) occupational level, (b) income, or (c) level of educational attainment.

A. 2. 6. Buyers view most sellers as being highly competitive.

A. 2. 7. The competitiveness of the buyer's personality is positively related to his perception of seller's level of competitiveness.

A. 2. 8. The buyer's perception of the seller's competitiveness is a function of the buyer's level of authoritarianism.

Order Effects of Information Inputs

A. 3. 1. In the buyer's impression formation process there is a primacy effect.

A. 3. 2. If there is a primacy effect in the buyer's impression formation process, this effect can be reduced by very extreme attitude statements on the part of the seller.

Perception of Physical Characteristics

A. 4. 1. If a buyer is aware that an individual is a seller, the buyer before verbally interacting with the seller, makes personality inferences based upon observation of facial features of the seller, and such inferences are different from those made when the buyer is not aware that the individual is a seller.

A. 4. 2. The impression held by a black buyer toward a black seller differs significantly from the impression held by a white buyer regarding the same black seller. The degree of variation is a function of the degree of racial prejudice held by the white buyer.

A. 4. 3. When the seller is physically stigmatized, the flow of information from the buyer to the seller is restricted.
A. 4. 4. When the buyer is physically stigmatised, the flow of information from the buyer to the seller is restricted.

Attribution: The Perception of Behavior

A. 5. 1. Assuming that a buyer, when attributing attitudes, capabilities, or intentions to the seller, attempts to separate externally caused behavior from internally caused behavior, environmental factors considered by the buyer are (a) visible managerial pressure, (b) presence of other customers, and/or (c) the specific economic conditions of the industry.

A. 5. 2. To the extent that the seller varies his overt behavior from "in-role" behavior, the buyer views the seller's behavior as being internally caused.

A. 5. 3. If the seller does not indicate personal involvement with the product which he is promoting, the buyer attributes to the seller an attitude regarding the product which is less favorable than if the seller does indicate personal involvement with the product.

A. 5. 4. The age of the buyer is a determinant of the buyer's tendency to accurately separate intentional behavior from unintentional behavior on the part of the seller.

A. 5. 5. When the seller exhibits successful acts in the initial part of the interaction, the buyer attributes capability to the seller to a greater extent than if the seller exhibits successful acts during other parts of the interaction.

Interpersonal Attraction

In this section hypotheses are suggested regarding selected variables and relationships pertaining to the buyer's assignment of a valance to his impression of the seller. These hypotheses are classified into the following areas: (1) perceived similarity of the interactants, (2) congruency of feelings, and (3) attribution of intentionality.

Perceived Similarity of the Interactants

B. 1. 1. To the extent that the buyer perceives the seller to have attitudes similar to his own, the buyer assigns a positive valence to his impression of the seller.

B. 1. 2. The degree of the buyer's attraction toward the seller, due to
perceived attitude similarity, is a function of common interest in the objects of the attitudes perceived to be similar.

B. 1. 3. Assuming (a) that environmental factors, such as the internal decor of a retail outlet, affect a buyer's emotional state, and (b) that an individual's emotional state influences the degree of attraction created by perceived attitude similarity, a pleasant in-store decor causes a buyer to find a specific sales-man to be more attractive than if the decor is depressing.

B. 1. 4. The degree to which a white buyer is racially prejudiced is negatively related to his perceived similarity of attitudes held by a black seller.

B. 1. 5. Due to the general relationships between personality similarity and attraction, an introverted buyer is more attracted to an introverted seller than to an extroverted seller.

B. 1. 6. As the buyer's maturity level increases, perceived personality similarity becomes less important as a determinant of a seller's attractiveness.

B. 1. 7. An extroverted buyer is attracted to an extroverted seller, while an introverted buyer is attracted to an introverted seller.

Congruency of Feelings

B. 2. 1. When the seller demonstrates a gain in esteem for the buyer, the buyer is more attracted to the seller than if the seller exhibits a constant level of attraction toward the buyer.

Attribution of Intentionality

B. 3. 1. The buyer does not totally discount the seller's ingratiating messages, and thus is attracted to the seller to a greater extent than if the seller does not use an ingratiating tactic.

B. 3. 2. If the buyer perceives the seller to exhibit discernment in his evaluation of the other persons, the buyer is more attracted to the seller when the seller expresses liking for that buyer.

Attraction Effects on the Buyer

As indicated in the analysis of the model, the buyer's attraction toward the seller may have (1) behavioral effects and (2) cognitive effects on the buyer. Since further research is necessary to provide stronger support for the propositions regarding these effects, several
hypotheses are suggested.

**Behavioral Effects of Attraction**

C. 1. 1. Attraction toward the seller causes the buyer to become more cooperative.

C. 1. 2. The degree to which the buyer exhibits cooperative behavior, due to his attraction toward the seller, is a function of the competitiveness of the buyer's personality.

C. 1. 3. If the buyer is attracted to the seller, the strength of the valence which the buyer assigns to his expectations regarding subsequent interactions with that seller vary directly with the strength of attraction.

C. 1. 4. The buyer's attraction toward the seller reduces the amount of aggressive behavior exhibited toward the seller.

C. 1. 5. Attraction toward the seller causes the buyer to be more compliant regarding the seller's requests.

**Cognitive Effects of Attraction**

C. 2. 1. Attraction toward the seller causes the buyer to distort the message of the seller in the direction of the buyer's own position. Likewise, rejection of the seller causes the buyer to misperceive the content of the seller's message in a direction away from his own position.

C. 2. 2. If the buyer is committed to deal with the seller due to contracts or lack of other alternatives, the buyer's susceptibility to attitude change attempts increases relatively as his attraction toward the seller decreases beyond a certain level.

C. 2. 3. When the buyer is ego-involved with the content of the seller's message, a buyer who is attracted to a seller is less susceptible to attitude change attempts made by the seller.

C. 2. 4. The attitude change effects of attraction toward the seller increase to the extent that the seller's desire to influence is more explicit.

C. 2. 5. If the buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer is more likely to perceive the seller to have attitudes which are similar to his own attitudes than if the buyer is not attracted to the seller.
Proposed Methodologies for
Selected Hypotheses

The hypotheses set forth in the last section are presented as suggestions for further research. In order to promote and facilitate further research in these areas, several methodologies for selected hypotheses are set forth. The major purpose for developing and presenting these methodologies is to indicate that the hypotheses are feasible and testable. The hypotheses for which methodologies are presented, have been selected on the basis of illustrating the feasibility of hypotheses in a large proportion of the categories and on the basis of demonstrating that these hypotheses may be tested in a number of settings including field experiments, classroom research, and behavioral laboratory experiments. The hypothesis to be tested by a specific methodology is identified according to its reference number found in the hypotheses section of this chapter.

The Buyer's Expectations of Future Interaction and the Flow of Information Inputs

Based upon the discussion of the flows of social information inputs in the initial part of Chapter IV there appears to be empirical support for the belief that a buyer's expectations regarding the existence of future interactions affects his behavior during initial interaction. The specific hypothesis to be tested is when the buyer does not anticipate future interaction with the seller, the buyer restricts the flow of social information inputs to the seller less than if the buyer does anticipate future interaction with that seller (A.1.2).

This hypothesis could be tested at an academic institution in a behavioral laboratory. The subjects could be acquired through an
advertisement in the college newspaper. The message in the advertisement in the newspaper would state that a certain individual is seeking persons who wish to participate in a series of experiments for unspecified compensation. (The reference to the series of experiments could be hypothetical or in fact the respondents could be used for subsequent experiments). When the applicants contact the researcher to inquire about the research program, each applicant would be subjected to one of two treatments. Half of the applicants would be placed into the experimental group while the other half of the applicants would become the control group. Each person in both groups would be asked to go into a room with the salesman so that he could explain the research program. In order to maintain some degree of consistency the same person should act as the salesman for all persons interviewed. The salesman would explain, in general terms, certain aspects of the research program to each applicant.

Subjects in the experimental group at the outset would be told that the entire program would be explained at that time if they were interested in participating, they would need to commit themselves at that time. In addition, the salesman would explain that regardless of the respondent's decision as to whether or not to participate, the salesman and the subject would have no future interaction.

In the control group each subject would be told at the outset that several meetings with the salesman would be necessary before the subject would be asked to decide whether he or she would prefer to participate. After such a statement, each subject would be told about the requirements of the program.

Both a hidden camera and a concealed tape recorder would be used
to record the behavior of each subject. A qualitative analysis of the recorded data could be used to determine whether or not the subjects in the experimental group tend to be less restrained and inhibited as compared to subjects in the control group.

In terms of quantitative analysis several elements related to the flow of information would be analyzed. For each subject the factors to be analyzed would include (1) the number of times the subject initiated communication, (2) the duration of his comments, and (3) the number of questions asked by the subject. Using a t-test the researcher could compare the means of these factors for the experimental group with the means of the control group to determine if the differences are significant.

The Buyer's Impression Formation Process and the Primacy Effect

The primacy effect has been found to dominate through several empirical studies some of which were discussed in Chapter IV. However, an examination of the empirical studies indicates that the order effects of information inputs pertaining to a salesman have not been investigated. Thus, a hypothesis which requires testing is that in the buyer's impression formation process there is a primacy effect (A.3.1).

This hypothesis may be tested through a field study. The field study in a simplified form could be conducted by two persons. One of the individuals, with the cooperation of a firm which markets its products by door-to-door selling, sells a product such a set of encyclopedias or a dictionary on a house-to-house basis. The behavior of the salesman as well as the sales presentation would have to be well planned and structured in order for each customer to be exposed to approximately the
same experimental treatment.

One day after the salesman called at a particular house, the second person would call at the house at which the salesman was allowed to make a full presentation. The second person, with the cooperation of the firm, would represent himself as being a field supervisor for the company. The individual, acting as a field supervisor, would ask customers questions regarding the sales presentation and their impression of the salesman who had called the day before. In order to determine the existence of a primacy effect, the questions on the questionnaire would need to be keyed to the behavioral and sales presentation of the salesman. That is, some of the questions would need to be oriented toward both the salesman's behavior during the initial part of the presentation while other questions would be oriented toward his behavior during the latter portion of his presentation.

By analyzing the respondent's answers for accuracy, the researcher should be able to determine whether the behavior and information presented to the buyer by the salesman during the initial part of the presentation is more dominant than that presented in the latter part of the presentation.

A major problem with this type of field study is the maintenance of consistency on the part of the salesman. Even though the salesman's behavioral program may be highly structured, he may experience difficulty in exhibiting the same behavior to all customers.

Personality Inferences as a Function of the Seller's Facial Features

As indicated in the section which dealt with the perception of physical characteristics, empirical results indicate that an individual makes inferences regarding another person's personality based upon the
Based upon these findings the question may arise that if a buyer knows that an individual is a seller, does such knowledge affect the buyer's impression of the seller's personality when the impression is based upon observation of the seller's facial features.

The specific hypothesis to be tested is if the buyer is aware that an individual is a seller, the buyer, before verbally interacting with the seller, makes personality inferences based upon observation of the facial features of the seller, and such inferences are different from those made when the buyer is not aware that the individual is a seller (A.4.1).

To test this hypothesis one possible approach is to perform the research in a behavioral laboratory. After selecting the subjects on a probability basis, the subjects are divided into two groups.

The setting for the experiment is two rooms separated by a common partition with a one-way mirror. On one side of the mirror is a male accomplice sitting in a chair. From the other side of the partition only the face of the accomplice is visible.

Subjects in both the experimental group and control group are individually instructed to go into the room one at a time and to look at the man's face through the one-way mirror. After observing the man's face, each subject is asked to go into a third room and write out a brief character sketch of the man. Subjects in the experimental group are told that the man is a salesman waiting to see a faculty member. Subjects in the control group are told that the man has an appointment and is waiting to see a faculty member.

After collecting the data the content of each character sketch
should be analyzed for terms which are descriptive of personality. The frequency of terms which describe personality should be recorded and tabulated within groups. Upon completion of the within group tabulations, the terms and frequencies of use should be compared between the groups to determine if there are differences between the two groups.

Attribution of Attitudes and the Seller's Expression of Personal Involvement with the Product

In Chapter IV in the section dealing with the attribution of attitudes, empirical results suggested that when an individual does not exhibit personal commitment or involvement in performing his role, the perceiver of this person will attribute to him an attitude (or attitudes) which is in opposition to the position dictated by his role. The hypothesis to be tested by the methodology which follows is if the seller does not indicate personal involvement with the product which he is promoting, the buyer attributes to the seller an attitude regarding the product which is less favorable than if the seller does indicate personal involvement with the product (A.5.3).

With the cooperation and assistance of the management of a retail home furnishings store this hypothesis may be tested in a field experiment. Through an agreement with a carpet salesman, the researcher would have the salesman utilize two types of sales presentations. For approximately half of the customers, the control group, the salesman would make a sales presentation in which he would indicate a strong amount of personal involvement with the product. For example, he might indicate that he uses that particular type of carpeting in his own home and from that point, elaborate further regarding his personal experiences
with that type of carpeting. For the other customers, the experimental group, the salesman would make a similar presentation but would not indicate any personal involvement with the product.

Using the customer's names collected by the salesman, the researcher would administer a questionnaire to each of the subjects in their own homes. Although the questionnaire might be disguised by containing a number of different types of questions regarding the retail store and the salesman, the researcher would include several questions regarding the salesman's attitudes toward the product.

By comparing the means of the product attitude scores of the two groups through the use of a statistical test such as a t-test, the researcher could determine if there is a significant difference in the attribution of product attitudes to the salesman due to the differences in the two sales presentations.

Personality Similarity and Seller Attractiveness

As discussed in Chapter IV there is strong empirical support for the proposition that persons with similar attitudes are attracted to each other. Even though not as strong, empirical findings suggest that persons with similar personalities tend to find each other attractive. The hypothesis to be tested by the following methodology is that an extroverted buyer is attracted to an extroverted seller, while an introverted buyer is attracted to an introverted seller (B.1.7.).

A methodology to test this hypothesis could be conducted in a classroom setting. The researcher on a certain day would schedule two "outside" speakers to come into the class to make sales presentations. Although accomplices of the researcher, each speaker would be represented
as a salesman from a new firm which is marketing a business news magazine. In addition the researcher would explain, prior to the arrival of the speakers, that the students would have an opportunity to evaluate each salesman on his sales presentation.

One or two class meetings prior to the appearances of the guest speakers, the researcher, under the guise of illustrating a personality test, would administer to the class the Mandsley Personality Inventory (MPI), a scale that measures the degree to which a subject is extroverted or introverted.

One of the accomplices as he speaks to the class would portray an extroverted salesman while the other would behave in a rather introverted manner.

After the speakers have made their presentations and have left the room, each student would be given two evaluation forms on which he would rank the salesmen. Each form would be a rating scale which would deal not only with the salesman's presentation but would also pertain to the attractiveness of the salesman to the evaluator.

In order to analyze the results the students, based upon the MPI scores, could be divided into two groups, namely extroverts and introverts. Based upon the attraction questions on the evaluation forms, an attraction score for each salesman could be determined for each subject. Using analysis of variance the researcher could determine whether there is a significant difference between the two groups as to the attraction scores assigned to both salesmen.

The Effects of an Ingratiation Tactic on Attraction

Even though there is an old saying that "flattery will get you
nowhere," maybe it will. At times a seller may use an ingratiation tactic in order to gain support from the buyer. The proposed hypothesis to be tested is that the buyer does not totally discount the seller's ingratiating messages, and thus is attracted to the seller to a greater extent than if the seller does not use an ingratiation tactic (B.3.1.).

This hypothesis may be tested through a field experiment. The researcher, through a special purchase agreement with a manufacturer, would buy one hundred manually operated food choppers to be sold on a door-to-door basis. He would also develop a "canned" sales presentation in which the salesman would periodically ask the customer to express an opinion.

The researcher would send two persons into the field. One of the persons would attempt to sell the food choppers house-to-house using the sales presentation prepared by the researcher. Although the salesman would use the same sales presentation for all customers, at half of the houses when he asked for the housewife's opinion, he would agree outwardly with all of her opinions. When asking for the opinions of the other half of the housewives contacted, he would neither agree nor disagree. Thus, for half of the customers, the salesman would use the ingratiation tactic of opinion conformity. This group of customers would be the experimental group. The remainder of the customers would be the control group.

Approximately twenty-four hours after the salesman had called, the second person acting as a field supervisor would call on the housewife and ask her to answer a few questions regarding the salesman who had called the day before. The questionnaire used by the field representative would consist of both questions pertaining to the sales
presentation as well as questions relating to the seller's attractiveness. The questions regarding the seller's attractiveness would be so designed that the customer's answers could be converted into an attraction score.

To test for significance the researcher could use either a t-test or a one-way analysis of variance.

Attraction Toward the Seller and the Buyer's Compliance

A discussion of the effects of attraction in Chapter VI indicated that attraction toward an individual tends to cause a person to be more compliant regarding the requests of that individual. The hypothesis to be tested is that attraction toward the seller causes the buyer to be more compliant regarding the seller's requests (C.1.5).

This hypothesis may be tested by using a field experiment. The experiment would require the cooperation of management of an automobile agency. At times when one is looking at new automobiles, the salesmen will request him to take a test drive. In order to conduct this experiment the researcher would ask that the management (1) make a list of persons' names who are requested to take test drives and (2) record which persons comply with such requests and which persons do not comply. In addition the researcher would ask that the salesman not go with the customers on the test drive. The researcher would design a questionnaire which would consist of questions regarding the buyer's attitudes about the product, the agency, and the salesman. Some of the questions pertaining to the salesman would deal specifically with measuring the buyer's attraction toward the salesman. This questionnaire would be administered through personal interviews to both "compliant" and "non-
compliant" customers approximately twenty-four hours after the customers appeared at the automobile agency.

The data could be analyzed by separating the subjects' responses into a "compliant group" and a "non-compliant group" and performing a statistical test of significance.

Attraction Toward the Seller and the Buyer's Attribution of Attitudes

As pointed out in Chapter V there is strong empirical support for the proposition that interpersonal attraction is, to some extent, a function of attitude similarity. The results of several empirical studies discussed in Chapter VI suggest that if a person is attracted to a certain individual, the person tends to attribute attitudes to that individual which are similar to his own. The specific hypothesis to be tested by the methodology which follows is if the buyer is attracted to the seller, the buyer is more likely to perceive the seller to have attitudes which are similar to his own attitudes than if the buyer is not attracted to the seller (C.2.5).

A field survey method could be used to test this hypothesis. The researcher would need to gain the cooperation of the management of a firm which markets industrial goods through the use of field salesmen. Through personal interviewing the researcher would need to survey a salesman's customers who had been customers for at least one year. (The research could be expanded to survey the customers of several of the firm's salesmen). The instrument used in the personal interviews should have three purposes including (1) the measurement of the degree to which the buyer is attracted to the salesman who calls on him, (2) the measurement of selected attitudes which the buyer perceives the
salesman to possess, and (3) the measurement of selected attitudes of the buyer.

Based upon the attraction questions, each buyer's attraction for the salesman could be established and expressed in an attraction score. A measurement of similarity of the buyer's attitudes and the attitudes he attributes to the seller could be performed through correlation analysis. The determination of the degree to which attraction and perceived attitude similarity are related could be determined by attempting to correlate attraction scores with the measures of perceived attitude similarity.

Conclusions

The interaction model of buyer behavior was developed to deal with an area of consumer behavior which has been neglected in other buyer behavior models. Based upon the analyses of this research, several conclusions may be set forth.

First, the models of buyer behavior, which have been presented in the past do not adequately focus upon the variables which are unique to on-going buyer-seller interactions.

Second, the empirical findings in the areas of psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology are significant enough, in terms of quantity and quality, to provide tentative support for the interaction model of buyer behavior.

Third, the interaction model of buyer behavior, by isolating and interrelating the variables which are determinants of the buyer's behavioral payoff, provides a theoretical base from which a number of hypotheses may be derived for further research.
The goal of the researcher has been to develop a model which deals specifically with the variables and relationships of buyer-seller interaction. It is hoped that further research will be performed which focuses upon the hypotheses set forth in this chapter as well as other hypotheses which may be derived from the interaction model of buyer behavior.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Hall, Edward T. "Proxemics—The Study of Man's Spatial Relations."  
*Man's Image in Medicine and Anthropology.* Edited by I. Gladston.  

Hastorf, Albert H.; Schneider, David J.; and Polefka, Judith.  

Heider, Fritz.  
*The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations.* New York:  

Hill, Archibald A.  
*Introduction to Linguistic Structures.* New York:  

Homans, George Casper.  
*Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms.* New York:  

Howard, John A.  


Jersild, A. T. "Emotional Development."  


Kassarjian, Harold H., and Robertson, Thomas S.  


Kuhn, Alfred.  

Lombard, George F. F.  
*Behavior in a Selling Group.* Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1955.

Luce, Duncan R.; Busch, Robert R.; and Galanter, Eugene.  

Luchins, A. S. "Experimental Attempts to Minimize the Impact of First Impressions."  
*The Order of Presentation in Persuasion.* Edited


**Articles**


Argyle, M., and Dean, J. "Eye-Contact, Distance, and Affiliation." *Sociometry*, XXVIII (September, 1965), 289-304.


Byrne, D. "Response to Attitude Similarity-Dissimilarity as a Function of Affiliation Need." *Journal of Personality*, XXX (June, 1962), 164-77.


French, Cecil. "Correlates of Success in Retail Selling." American Journal of Sociology, LXVI (September, 1960), 128-34.


Gollin, E. S. "Forming Impressions of Personality." Journal of Personality, XXIII (September, 1954), 65-76.


Hare, A. P., and Bales, R. F. "Seating Position and Small Group Interaction." Sociometry, XXVI (December, 1963), 480-86.


Kirchner, Wayne; McElwain, Caroline S.; and Dunnette, Marvin D. "A Note on the Relationship Between Age and Sales Effectiveness." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, XLIV (April, 1960), 92-3.


Symonds, P. M. "Notes on Rating." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, IX (June, 1925), 188-94.


**Reports**


Rich, Stuart V. *Shopping Behavior of Department Store Customers.* Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1963.


VITA

William Morgan Pride was born on October 1, 1942 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was reared in Enid and Alva, Oklahoma and graduated from Alva Senior High School in May, 1961.

In September, 1961 he entered Northwestern State College in Alva, Oklahoma and majored in general business and economics. After graduating from Northwestern State College in May, 1965 with a Bachelor of Science degree, he entered graduate school at Oklahoma State University and was granted a Master of Business Administration degree in May, 1967. During the 1967-1968 academic year he was an Instructor of Marketing at Oklahoma State University.

In the fall of 1968, he became a doctoral student at Louisiana State University and majored in marketing while minoring in management and sociology. He was an Instructor of Marketing at Louisiana State University during the 1970-1971 academic year and an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Illinois State University during the 1971-1972 academic year. He is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in marketing at Louisiana State University.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: William Morgan Pride

Major Field: Marketing

Title of Thesis: An Interpersonal Interaction Model of Buyer Behavior

Approved:

Parks B. Dimodale Jr
Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Fred L. EndoJey

C. Jeff Harris

Quentin Jenkins

Stephen W. Brown

Date of Examination:

July 11, 1972