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## Stuck Like Glue: The Formation Of Product Attachments Among Salespeople

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STUCK LIKE GLUE: THE FORMATION OF PRODUCT ATTACHMENTS AMONG  
SALESPEOPLE

A Dissertation  
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of Marketing  
The University of Mississippi

by

ERIN ADAMSON GILLESPIE

August 2013

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## ABSTRACT

Determining why salespeople put forth more effort than others is of particular interest to sales researchers. Identifying factors that influence the intensity of effort is an important area of research. This research proposes that salesperson product attachment is a key factor in determining effort levels.

Expectancy theory has been frequently used to support the use of quotas in that salespeople engage in behaviors that will be perceived by them as most likely to yield valued rewards. Thus, according to this theory, salespeople will place the most effort on products that are expected to yield the best results in regards to the quota system. However, this research uses attachment theory and the theory of human needs to demonstrate that salespeople may act in less rational ways, by placing more effort on products to which they feel strongly attached even if these specific products are less likely to yield the best results financially.

Through qualitative interviews, antecedents of attachment are identified. These antecedents were empirically tested in Study 1, using a Qualtrics panel of salespeople. Using structural equation modeling, identification and ownership were shown to directly and positively impact attachment. Study 2 consisted of paired results from salespeople and managers at a large food brokerage company. In this study, the antecedents of identification and ownership were again found to significantly lead to attachment, thus demonstrating the robustness of the results. In addition, it was determined that attachment directly and positively impacts effort level and

that high market share products can weaken this link. Finally, the relationships between quota and effort and between effort and performance were confirmed.

This research has important implications for both theory and practice. An important predictor of effort, salesperson product attachment, is identified. Attachment theory is thus extended into sales research. In addition, identification and ownership were found to be significant predictors of attachment, which supports human needs theory by meeting the needs of relatedness and autonomy, respectively. Based on this research, managers can encourage attachments through increasing feelings of identification and ownership among their salespeople in order to increase effort, particularly among low market share products.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Corey Gillespie. Without his constant encouragement, love, and support, I could not have done this. Thank you for keeping me sane! This is also dedicated to my parents, Randy and Linda Adamson, who have loved and supported me throughout everything I have ever done.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION

Companies in the United States spend over a trillion dollars annually on their sales forces and accompanying support, which to put in perspective, is more than four times the amount spent on advertising (Zoltners and Sinha 2005). Clearly, companies have a heavily vested interest in the actions of their salespeople. It has been noted that determining why some salespeople put forth more effort than others would represent a significant advance in the sales research stream (Srivastava, Strutton, and Pelton 2001). Thus, identifying factors that influence the intensity of effort is an important area of research. This research proposes that salesperson product attachment is a key factor in determining effort levels.

Salespeople are often responsible for a portfolio of products, with the company's expectation that the salespeople will sell each of these products with an appropriate amount of time and effort. Having responsibility for multiple products can be quite challenging in that it may be difficult to sell each product the appropriate amount of time and effort that the company expects due to limited resources—a finite number of hours in front of a customer, a limited budget, etc. The salesperson must decide in what manner he or she should allocate his or her resources (Rangaswamy, Sinha, and Zoltners 1990; Atuahene-Gima 1997; Basu et al. 1985; Lal and Srinivasan 1993). Ensuring that salespeople adequately balance their portfolios in their sales calls may be difficult for companies as salespeople often lack close supervision, making it difficult for companies to determine exactly how much time and effort is spent on each product.

If products are not given the adequate amount of selling time, then those products are likely to suffer in performance, adversely affecting the company.

### Use of Quotas to Direct Effort

One of the most critical resources that salespeople must allocate is their level of effort. Salesperson effort has been defined as “the force, energy, or activity expended by the salesperson against the focal brand relative to that expended against all other brands” (Hughes and Ahearne 2010, p 92). Companies often attempt to direct salesperson effort by using quotas in combination with commission; this is an outcome-based performance measure versus a behavior-based performance measure. Quotas can be defined as task goals or performance targets assigned by sales managers (Chowdhury 1993). Such quotas are frequently used to forecast sales, establish standards of evaluation, and motivate salespeople (Chowdhury 1993; Anderson, Hair, and Bush 1988; Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977).

### Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory is often used to support the use of quotas in that this view perceives individuals as engaging in behaviors that will be perceived by them as most likely to yield valued rewards (Vroom 1964). Thus, if a company places a differing level of quota on each product in a salesperson’s portfolio, it can be expected that the salesperson will engage in behaviors (such as effort) in order to yield the highest rewards. Based on expectancy theory, the salesperson should place the most effort on the product with which the quota will yield the best results.

## Quota → Effort

While a direct link between quota systems and effort has been established (Chowdhury 1993; Davis and Farley 1971), little research has examined what other factors enhance or diminish this relationship. Chowdhury (1993) found that self-efficacy and expectancy are significant moderators of this relationship. Although this research aids in understanding the quota to effort link better, to date, no research was identified that has conceptualized or studied salesperson attachment.

## Attachment

Attachment can be defined as the strength of the bond connecting individuals (or even connecting an individual to an object) (Park et al. 2010), and salesperson product attachment is defined here as the bond between a salesperson and a specific product. Attachment theory states that individuals are born with innate behaviors that serve to attract and maintain closeness to attachment figures to protect against threats (both psychological and physical) when the individuals are in stressful situations (Richards and Schat 2011). Importantly, this research seeks to show that salesperson product attachment may result in either improvement or failure by the salesperson to adhere to the direction placed by the quota levels, depending on whether the quota system is congruent with the proposed product (e.g., the attached product is weighted highest in the quota system). Thus, there is potential that the quota system may not result in the expected allocation of effort that the company desires.

## Healthy Versus Unhealthy Attachments

This research proposes that when selling a portfolio of products, the salesperson may become attached to one of those products more so than to others. In some cases, this attachment

may be beneficial. For instance, attachment is proposed in this research to lead to increased effort; increases in effort have been shown in past research to lead to improved performance (Hughes and Ahearne 2010). In addition, the quota system can be enhanced if congruent with the attached product. Conversely, this attachment may be detrimental when that increased effort for one product leads to decreased effort on other important products, or when the attachment attenuates the impact of the quota system on effort. In this research, the attachment that leads to enhancement of the quota system is termed a “healthy attachment,” while the attachment that is detrimental is considered “unhealthy.”

### Constructs Affecting Attachment

In this paper, it is argued that career stage and market share both affect the impact of attachment. Based on career stage theory, a salesperson moves through four stages (exploration, expansion, maintenance, and disengagement) throughout his or her career. Since these stages are marked by significant differences in motivation and behavior, it is proposed that career stage will affect the impact of attachment. Market share is the percentage of the market that the product possesses. Based on the level of market share, it is argued that salespeople will have more freedom to express an attachment on lower market share products as higher market share products are more closely monitored by companies. This argument as well as these constructs will be discussed further in the description of the conceptual model and in greater detail in Chapter II.

### Conceptual Model

Salesperson product attachment has not been investigated in the past. This research proposes a conceptual model of salesperson product attachment (see Figure I., p 6). Six

antecedents of salesperson product attachment are identified through qualitative research. This qualitative stage consisted of in-depth interviews with sales representatives of three different companies in separate industries—pharmaceuticals, canned goods, and food brokerage. These antecedents include those that satisfy the needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy, which are identified in human needs theory (Deci and Ryan 1985). According to human needs theory, antecedents are considered to meet the needs of competence if the person is given feelings of achievement, challenge, or curiosity (e.g., challenge), of relatedness if the person feels connected to some object (e.g., identification), or of autonomy if the person is provided with feelings of initiative and volition (e.g., ownership). As Figure I. shows, these antecedents include challenge, length of time selling the product, novelty, identification, nostalgia, and ownership. Appendix D provides the conceptual definitions of all the constructs in Figure I.; a more detailed description is provided in Chapters II. and III.

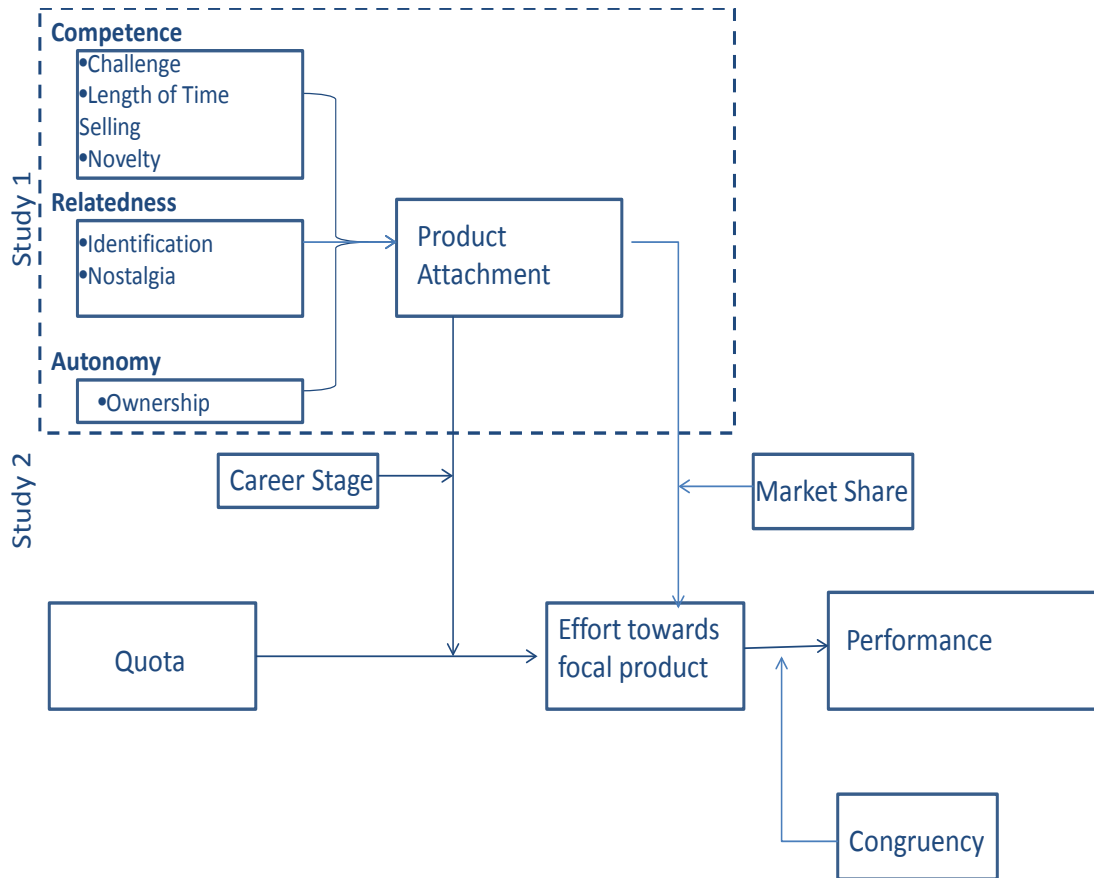
The impact of career stage theory on the relationship between attachment and effort is explored. As noted previously, career stage theory states that individuals progress through four distinct career stages throughout their professional lives (exploration, expansion, maintenance, and disengagement) and furthermore that each career stage is unique in terms of motivation, work experiences, job attitudes, and relationships (e.g. Allen and Meyer 1993; Cron and Slocum 1986). Thus, based on career stage theory, salesperson product attachment may have a differential effect on effort depending on the stage in which the salesperson currently belongs.

Finally, as salespeople might become attached to a company's main products or smaller, less well known products, the influence of market share on these relationships is explored. Market share is conceptualized in this research as the percentage of the market that the product captures versus the product's competitors. Using theories of attachment, expectancy, and human

needs (all defined in the next two chapters), this research seeks to answer the following questions:

- RQ1:** What antecedents lead to the formation of salesperson product attachment?
- RQ2:** Does product attachment alter the relationship between the quota system and salesperson effort?
- RQ3:** What role does career stage play on the influence of product attachment and the quota system on salesperson effort?
- RQ4:** How does market share impact the relationship between salesperson product attachment and effort level?

**FIGURE I. CONCEPTUAL MODEL**





## Contributions and Implications

This research provides several contributions. The first contribution lies in the theoretical implications of this research. This research is enhancing expectancy theory by delineating contingencies to that theory, namely salesperson product attachment. The predictions resulting from expectancy theory will not be accurate when a salesperson becomes attached to a product, thus overriding pure logic. In addition, a thorough literature review failed to produce any instances in which attachment theory was used in sales research. In marketing, this theory has only been applied to consumers. This new application will enhance future sales research by widening its theoretical lens.

The second contribution is that the paper develops a new construct—salesperson product attachment. This research is expected to show that this new construct, salesperson product attachment, directly affects effort. Understanding factors that influence effort level among salespeople has been noted as being critical to sales research (Srivastava et al. 2001; Hughes and Ahearne 2010). This research will allow companies to identify attachment and, furthermore, to determine how attachment impacts the relationship between quota system and effort. Since quota systems are so frequently used in an attempt to direct effort, understanding the influence of another factor on this relationship is vital. In addition, managers will be able to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy attachments.

This research has important implications for practitioners. Salespeople have been noted to represent unique human resources that are less susceptible to imitation and more durable than other types of organizational resources (Barney 1991). Clearly, salespeople play an important role in an organization, and thus the motivation of the sales force is widely recognized as an

essential component of organizational strategy (Pappas and Flaherty 2006; Pullins 2001; Alonzo 1998). Much of the sales literature suggests that salesperson motivation is primarily a result of rational thought processes (Brown, Cron, and Slocum 1997). But as Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) argue, emotions can be a very powerful psychological force that affects both behavior and performance in very important ways. These authors examined the role of emotions as an energizing force driving salesperson goal-directed behavior. Their findings indicate that salespeople “act on their feelings, as well as on their thoughts, and that emotions provide a powerful motivation force” (p 47). Their study suggests that hot cognitions and emotions are very important in relation to motivation, behavior, and performance. Brown and colleagues (1997) further note that viewing salespeople as solely using rational thought in making decisions versus emotion is incomplete. A more holistic view of salespeople should be developed. By doing so, the improved understanding of the affective influences on motivation and behavior “can contribute importantly to more effective and humane sales force management” (Brown et al. 1997, p 48).

In order to form a more holistic view of salespeople, attachment theory is applied in this research. Attachment theory helps form the theoretical framework for this research in that this theory suggests that people innately seek closeness to persons or objects that give them feelings of security (among other things), and thus, they may engage in behaviors that will not be most logical according to expectancy theory. This research proposes the use of attachment theory to explain why certain salesperson behavior (i.e., salesperson product attachment) occurs that greatly affects effort level, thus filling this gap in the literature by adding a theoretical base that also considers emotion instead of pure cognition in salesperson behavior.

Policies related to salesperson compensation are a critical piece in the issue of motivation (Pappas and Flaherty 2006). In recent years, compensation research has begun to focus on studying potential moderators in the link between compensation and sales performance (Pappas and Flaherty 2006). This research proposes a new construct, salesperson product attachment, that is an individual difference variable expected to moderate this relationship between compensation (i.e., quota) and sales performance. Since firms do rely so much on compensation systems to direct effort, this new construct will prove very important to managers in that they can identify factors that are impacting this link and take corrective action if need be. This will aid in ensuring that the firm's product goals are met.

Finally, because effort has such an impact on profitability of a company and because it has been suggested that uncovering factors influencing the intensity of effort is of high importance, this research seeks to provide not only a major contributing determinant of effort level but also the antecedents of that factor. This research also has important implications for the design of compensation and monitoring systems that are used to control the sales force, which is of vital interest for many companies (Krafft 1999).

### Organization

The remaining chapters are organized as follows. First, a thorough literature review outlines research in both the attachment and sales literature in Chapter II. Chapter III. presents the theoretical foundations and results of an exploratory research phase guiding the development of the conceptual model and hypotheses to be tested in this dissertation. Next, the research design and methodology that was employed in testing the hypotheses are described fully in

Chapter IV. In Chapter V., the results of the studies are presented. Finally, in Chapter VI., the results, implications, and future research directions are discussed.

## CHAPTER II.

### LITERATURE FOUNDATIONS

This chapter provides a review of the literature that serves as a foundation for this project, and begins with an exploration of the use of quota systems in sales. Next, a discussion of salesperson effort is presented as well as existing empirical work in the area of factors affecting effort level. The link between effort and salesperson performance is reviewed. The psychology background of attachment research is presented, followed by an examination of the attachment construct in the branding literature. Attachment theory is then discussed as a mechanism to explain how an attachment may manifest itself, including characteristics of such an attachment. Finally, a review of career stage as a key variable is presented, and research questions are put forth. Appendix A contains a synopsis of key sales literature, focusing on the constructs of effort, performance, and career stage. The conceptual literature table (See Appendix B) and the empirical literature table (see Appendix C) contain a synopsis of the attachment literature, including that on brand attachment.

#### Quota and Commission

Because of the autonomy of salespeople and the often far-reaching sales force, controlling the activities of salespeople is a difficult task (Davis and Farley 1971). Companies typically use control systems to encourage desired behaviors and outcomes while preventing undesirable or at times even dysfunctional behavior (Choi, Dixon, and Jung 2004). A control

system can be defined as “an organization’s set of procedures for monitoring, directing, evaluating and compensating its employees” (Anderson and Oliver 1987, p 76). Salesperson control systems can be either outcome-based or behavior-based, or a combination of the two. In outcome-based control systems, salespeople are accountable for tangible results, with little managerial monitoring of the methods the salesperson employs to achieve the results. In outcome-based control systems, the compensation of the salesperson frequently is dependent on overall sales (Anderson and Oliver 1987). In contrast, in behavior-based control systems, salespeople experience a high level of direction and close supervision from management of the activities deemed important in achieving the desired results. While few sales organizations are likely to utilize a sales force control system that is purely behavior-based or purely outcome-based, most emphasize one or the other (Cravens et al. 1993). In this research, the emphasis is on outcome-based control systems because it is in these systems that the sales representative will have more freedom to act on his or her attachment whereas in behavior-based control systems, a sales representative’s behavior is under much greater scrutiny, allowing him or her less opportunity to allocate effort among products in the way he or she sees fit.

Commissions and quotas are both commonly used outcome-based control mechanisms (Schwepker and Good 2004). Many sales organizations use assigned goals such as these to motivate salespeople (Douthit 1976; Dubinsky and Barry 1982; Walker et al. 1977). Hewitt Associates conducted a survey in 2001 that found more than 75% of the 224 US companies surveyed reported using sales quotas as part of their sales incentive plan (Hewitt Associates 2001).

Commissions are often used to both control and motivate a sales force, essentially turning over to the salesperson part of the decision regarding how he or she should allocate his or her

time and effort. Quotas, which are sales volume objectives, are also frequently used to control, motivate, and direct the allocation of effort over various products within a company (Davis and Farley 1971). Essentially, a quota system pays a fixed salary which is further supplemented by commissions that are a pre-specified fraction of the dollar sales that exceed the quota (Raju and Srinivasan 1996). For simplicity, from this point forward, “quota” refers to the quota system (including commission).

Quotas are result-focused and are considered critical managerial control tools (Schwepker and Good 2004). The heavy use of such quota systems can be explained by several reasons. One reason is that sales quotas can provide benchmarks against which salesperson performance can be gauged (Schwepker and Good 2004). A second reason is that quotas can direct salesperson effort towards selling a specific product (Schwepker and Good 2004). Furthermore, previous researchers have stated that the allocation of effort problem can be solved by setting quotas (Davis and Farley 1971). Chonko, Tanner, and Weeks (1992) suggested that a company’s reward system is used to direct the sales force toward achieving specific goals set by the company and add that if the reward system is properly designed and implemented, this will aid in balancing the sales effort problem.

Researchers have stated that quotas clearly direct certain selling behaviors—salespeople sell products with the most quota credit (Schwepker and Good 2004). In essence, quotas are suggested as serving as a catalyst that affects motivations, strategies, attitudes, and performance (Oliver and Anderson 1994). The power of quotas can be seen in the caution Schwepker and Good (2004) note when they suggest that management be very careful when constructing and utilizing quotas to guide salesperson effort because the power of the incentive strategy “seems to have effects throughout the sales force and their corresponding behaviors” (p 176).

Ross (1991) demonstrated that salespeople are quota achievers, meaning that the salesperson will behave in a manner that affords them the best opportunity to reach quota. An underlying assumption of this research is that salespeople will always attempt to allocate their effort among products in a way that will result in the maximum income for themselves (Winer 1973). However, the present research suggests that salespeople may not always behave in such a rational manner and may actually behave in a way that is detrimental to achieving their quota. It is suggested in this paper that salesperson product attachment may hamper or enhance (depending on whether the quota system is congruent with the attached product) the control that quota systems are intended to have over salesperson effort.

### Expectancy Theory

As previously mentioned, the use of a quota system to direct effort relies on an assumption grounded in expectancy theory. Expectancy theory suggests that individuals, acting on self-interest, adopt courses of action that are perceived by the individual as maximizing the probability of obtaining a desirable outcome for him(her)self (Vroom 1964). The founder of this theory, Vroom, suggested that people consciously choose particular actions, based upon their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs, in order to enhance pleasure and diminish pain. Expectancy theory can be classified as a process theory (versus content theory) of motivation (Fudge and Schlacter 1999) due to its emphasis on individual perceptions of the environment and subsequent actions that arise as a consequence of personal experience. Content theories, on the other hand, focus more on the internal qualities of an individual. Expectancy theory has been used to explain workplace behaviors (Leonard, Beauvais, and Scholl 1999), as well as many other topics.



## Salesperson Effort

Effort has been identified as one of the pivotal constructs in sales force and organizational behavior research (Walker et al. 1977). As stated in Chapter I, salesperson effort has been defined as “the force, energy, or activity expended by the salesperson against the focal brand relative to that expended against all other brands” (Hughes and Ahearne 2010, p 92). Srivastava and colleagues (2001) describe effort as a “key ingredient contributing to sales success that is essentially controllable by individual salespeople—within reason people can regulate the intensity with which they perform their job tasks” (p 12). Sales effort can also be conceptualized as an individual, belief-based, volitional behavioral outcome that is induced by relational factors (e.g., Benadapudi and Berry 1997). While it has often been suggested in the literature that effort consists of two components—level (working hard) and direction (working smart) (Blau 1993; Katerberg and Blau 1983; and Sujana 1986), more recent research has more often conceptualized effort as working hard (level) (Rapp et al. 2006). Thus, in this research, effort is conceptualized by level.

For many years, effort was viewed as a similar, if not equivalent, construct to motivation (Srivastava et al. 2001; Brown and Peterson 1994). However, more recent conceptualizations have clearly distinguished between the two constructs. Motivation is seen as representing the driving force that directs humans toward a course of action (Schiffman and Kanuk 1991); conversely, effort has been described as some amount of energy invested in a behavior per unit of time (Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen 1980). Effort is seen as an outcome of motivation, serving as a vehicle by which motivation is translated into accomplished work (Chonko 1986; Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1978).

## Effort → Performance

The link between salesperson effort and performance is well established as Brown and Peterson refer to it as the “mechanism by which motivation is translated into accomplished work” (1994, p 71). Using an input-output framework, effort can be viewed as an input to the selling job with sales performance as its outcome (Brown and Peterson 1994; Christen, Iyer, and Soberman 2006). Performance sales goals are “one of the most widely used tools in sales management” to motivate and direct salesperson effort (Dalrymple and Cron 1998, p 493). Sales force performance is a result of a multitude of variables, some of which are controllable by the salesperson and some of which are not. One such variable that the salesperson does have control over is effort level.

Many motivation theories propose a positive relationship between effort and performance (e.g., Porter and Lawler, 1968; Churchill et al.1987), and this relationship has been empirically supported (e.g., VandeWalle et al. 1999, Brown and Leigh 1996, Brown and Peterson 1994). Ingram, Lee, and Skinner (1989) found that although effort and performance are positively related, a conceptual and operational distinction can be made between the constructs.

Due to the significant effect of effort on performance, researchers have paid considerable attention to its antecedents. Antecedents to effort may include motivation (Williams and Plouffe 2007), personality characteristics (e.g., competitiveness, instrumentality, self-efficacy) (Jaramillo and Mulki 2008), role perceptions (e.g., role ambiguity, role conflict), supervisory behaviors (e.g., feedback, contingent rewards), job characteristics (e.g., task variety, task significance, autonomy), and environmental factors (e.g., territory potential, workload) (Brown and Peterson 1994). Although much research has been done in this area, as Srivastava and colleagues (2001)

state, many of the factors that influence the quantity of salespeople's work-related efforts remain uncertain.

As mentioned in Chapter I., there are outcome-based systems and behavior-based control systems. Considering that in outcome-based systems, the salesperson's compensation is based on his or her sales numbers, the salesperson's objective should be to allocate effort in a manner in which overall sales will be maximized (Ahearne and Lam 2011). The salesperson in this outcome-based control system will have more flexibility to adapt effort allocation across products in his or her portfolio (Anderson and Oliver 1987; Eisenhardt 1989). These salespeople will make choices regarding effort allocation by comparing the marginal utility of the effort spent on each product. In behavior-based control systems, a salesperson's behavior is under greater scrutiny, and so he will have less opportunity to allocate effort among products in the way he sees fit. Instead, the salesperson will be motivated to allocate effort among his portfolio in line with the company's direction (Ahearne and Lam 2011). Considering that a key focus in this research surrounds the quota system, this research focuses only on salespeople that are monitored by outcome-based control systems.

Dubinsky and Skinner (2002) expand the view of effort to include discretionary effort, which they define as "performance (certain behaviors or activities) where the salesperson goes beyond the call of duty, goes the extra mile, or exceeds normal demands or requirements or expectations of the job" (p 589). Discretionary effort is a behavior that salespeople do not have to engage in but actually choose to do so. Extra-role performance is considered to be salesperson behavior that is discretionary, that is not specifically recognized by the firm's reward system, and has a salutary impact on the organization (p 590). When the relationships between buyers and sellers are strong, salespeople are inclined to go the extra mile. The current research takes this

stream further by demonstrating that the relationships between the salesperson and a product can also cause him or her to go the extra mile. In this research, discretionary effort is considered part of total effort the salesperson puts forth in selling his or her products. Thus, in this paper, both discretionary effort and mandatory effort are measured in order to have a richer understanding of total effort.

Due to its strong impact on performance, as outlined previously, researchers have called for studies investigating the factors that prompt salespeople to expend higher effort (Dubinsky and Skinner 2002). This research proposes that salesperson product attachment is such a factor, and furthermore, this antecedent to effort will also impact the relationship between another antecedent, quota, and effort. Attachment Theory, including its background, is discussed next. The use of the attachment construct in both the psychology and marketing literature streams are then outlined, followed by how this construct translates into the sales literature. A synopsis of key attachment literature pieces can be found in Appendix B (conceptual pieces) and Appendix C (empirical pieces).

### Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1982) was a pioneer in attachment research. He defined attachment as an emotion-laden, target-specific bond between a person and a specific person or object (1982). Attachment theory's history began in the 1930s when Bowlby became increasingly interested in the link between maternal loss or deprivation and later personality development (Bretherton 1992). He proposed that human infants are born with attachment behaviors designed by evolution to assure proximity to supportive others (attachment targets) so as to secure protection from physical and psychological threats, promote affect regulation, and foster healthy

exploration. Mary Ainsworth joined Bowlby in this work and made many contributions to attribution research (Ainsworth and Bowlby 1991). Bowlby and Ainsworth drew from ethology, control systems theory, and psychoanalytic thinking (Bretherton 1992).

Attachment theory “posits that individuals are born with innate behaviors that function to attract and maintain proximity to attachment figures (supportive others) to protect against psychological or physical threats when the individuals are in distress” (Richards and Schat 2011, p 169). The attached person or object gives a sense of security to the individual. In psychology, attachment relationships can be classified by secure, ambivalent, or avoidant based on Ainsworth’s infant classifications of attachment patterns (Sable 2008).

Attachments can vary in strength, and the stronger the attachment to an object, the more likely an individual is to seek and maintain proximity to that object (Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005). The strength of an emotional attachment to a person or an object may be associated with investment in the person/object, meaning the willingness to forego immediate self-interest to promote the relationship (van Lange et al. 1997). Furthermore, attachment theory suggests that this desire to make a strong emotional attachment to a person or an object serves a basic human need (Ainsworth et al. 1978; Bowlby 1980; Thomson et al. 2005). Thus, it seems humans are hardwired to seek attachments.

Attachments usually are first experienced as children with their parents but later in life, these attachments routinely develop with other targets such as human brands (Leets, De Becker, and Giles 1995). It is generally believed that the main function of attachment is to provide emotional security to the attached party by being responsive to a person’s needs (Hazan and Shaver 1994). This has been recently expanded by research on fundamental human needs, which

suggests that if a person or an object is responsive to a person's needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence (also known as A-R-C), intense attachments may result (La Guardia et al. 2000; Ryan and Deci 2000).

Attachment has been researched in many different research streams, and the conceptualization of adult attachment has evolved over decades of research (Bartholomew and Shaver 1998; Ross, McKim, and DiTommaso 2006; Richards and Schat 2011). For instance, not only has attachment been found in human relationships, but research has also shown that people can become attached to nonliving entities (Belk 1988; Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1989; Mehta and Belk 1991; Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1993; Park, MacInnis and Priester 2006). Previous research has examined attachments to marketplace entities such as brands (Fournier 1998; Keller 2003; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), celebrities (Thomson 2006), and also special possessions (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine and Baker 2004). Richards and Schat (2011) found that attachment theory can even explain employee behavior at work.

#### Attachment in Marketing Literature

Although attachment has been extensively studied in psychology (Bowlby 1979; Mikulincer and Arad 1999), the construct has received limited attention in the marketing discipline (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Thomson 2006; Thomson et al. 2005). Park and colleagues (2006) define brand attachment as the “strength of the cognitive and emotional bond connecting the brand with the self” (p 3). While there may be differences between attachment to a person and attachment to an object, Park and colleagues (2006) suggest that the fundamental conceptual properties and behavioral effects of attachment are likely to be quite similar.

Park and colleagues (2006) further state that the strength of this bond evokes a readiness to allocate one's processing resources toward a brand. Schouten and McAlexander (1995) find that although consumers interact with thousands of products and brands in their lives, they tend to develop a deep emotional attachment to only a very few of these products and brands. These attachments are very important as is demonstrated by Fournier's statement that feelings of attachment lie at the "core of all strong brand relationships" (1998, p 636). Brand attachment is considered an ultimate, long-term outcome of brand relationships (Esch et al. 2006).

Bowlby's research (1979) indicates that the degree of attachment to an object predicts the nature of the individual's interaction with that specific object. An attachment is unlikely to develop if the starting point of the relationship is characterized by intense negative feelings and thoughts (Boon and Lomore 2001; Thomson 2006). Attachments are associated with stronger feelings of connection, affection, love, and passion (Aron and Westbay 1996; Bowlby 1979; Brennan, Clark, and Shaver 1998; Collins and Read 1990, 1994; Feeney and Noller 1996; Fehr and Russell 1991; Sternberg 1987). In a similar vein, Thomson and colleagues (2005) developed a three-factor model characterizing brand attachment in terms of three main components: (1) affection (characterized by items such as "loved," and "friendly"), (2) passion (characterized by items such as "passionate" and "captivated"), and (3) connection (characterized by items such as "connected," and "bonded").

While the psychology attachment literature focuses on attachment as a characteristic of a relationship, attachment in marketing research has focused more on the extent to which a person's relationship to an attachment object is strong or weak as opposed to whether the primary relationship experiences have created secure, ambivalent, or avoidant attachment styles. This focus is based on the perception that brand relationships (and thus attachments) can be

cultivated, whereas attachment styles are individual difference variables and thus non-actionable by marketers (Park et al. 2006).

Attachments form with a specific material object, involve psychologically appropriate possessions, are self-extensions, require a personal history between the consumer and the possession, tend to be emotionally complex, and evolve over time with the changing meaning of the self (Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent 2010). Ball and Tasaki (1992) stress that greater attachment is related to longer ownership and increased emotional significance. Thomson and colleagues (2005) find that strong attachments require time, repeated interactions, and memories pertaining specifically to the object, which encourage the person to invest the object with greater meaning.

The emotional bonds that connect the brand to the self implicates “hot affect” (Mikulincer and Arad 1999; Ball and Tasaki 1992; Thomson et al. 2005). This hot affect creates desire for the brand, satisfaction when acquired, frustration when unavailable, fear over potential loss, sadness over actual loss, and hope for future acquisition (Park et al. 2006). Brands, similar to people, can offer many resources to help consumers achieve desired goals (Schultz, Kleine, and Kernan 1989; Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1993). When consumers appreciate this instrumental role, they begin to regard the brands as personally meaningful and significant (Park et al. 2006).

Park et al. (2009) propose that brand attachment has two main indicators: brand-self connectedness and the prominence of brand-relevant thoughts and feelings. Brand-self connection is the degree to which consumers view the brand as a part of themselves and as reflecting who they are (Escalas 2004). The more the brand has been incorporated into an



individual's sense of self and the greater the connection the individual feels between the self and the brand, the stronger the brand attachment (Park et al. 2009). Being connected does not reflect self-identity but instead personal meaningfulness. According to Mittal (2006), these are two different yet related parts of brand-self connectedness. Prominence of brand-relevant thoughts and feelings can be revealed by the ease with which such thoughts and feelings are retrieved and the frequency of such retrieval. Thus attachment will be stronger for a brand that is more prominent in the individual's mind.

Park and colleagues (2006) suggest three broad categories that may be linked to brand attachment. The first is enrichment, which can affect consumers in three ways: brands can enrich the self by serving as an anchor to and symbolically representing one's core past self; by symbolically representing one's current self—reflecting who one is and what one believes; by symbolically representing who one wants to be, linking the brand to an ideal future self. Brands can enrich the self through any or all three routes (Park et al. 2006). These authors' second category includes brands that can enable consumers. Enabling creates a sense of efficacious and capable self; enabling consumers to exert control over his or her environment so as to approach desired goals and avoid undesired one. This fosters a sense of mastery over one's environment. Finally, brands can gratify by providing the consumer with pleasure. Keller (2001) has indicated that when a consumer gains feelings of fun, excitement, and self-respect from a brand, then he or she is likely to become attached to it. Park and colleagues (2009) suggest that future empirical research is needed to understand when brand attachment would be most likely to develop.

Brand attachment has been noted as leading to different behaviors among consumers. One such example may involve derogating others who use competing brands (Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006). Individuals may be willing to make sacrifices to maintain a

relationship with the brand. Individuals may also be willing to sacrifice personal resources for the brand (Park et al. 2009).

Thomson and colleagues (2005) determined that four behaviors reflect attachments. These behaviors include proximity maintenance, emotional security, safe haven, and separation distress. Specifically, the degree of proximity maintenance can reflect the strength of the attachment. This proximity confers emotional security. Environmental stress can trigger a search for the attachment object as a safe haven. The fourth behavior, psychological distress, may occur if separation (real or threatened) occurs (Thomson et al. 2005).

The attachment literature indicates that individuals avoid separation of danger from the attachment object by adopting hyperactivating attachment strategies (Mikulincer and Shaver 2005; Berman and Sperling 1994); such strategies involve an increased vigilance to threat-related cues and a reduction in the threshold for detecting cues of the attachment object's unavailability (Bowlby 1973). Park and colleagues (2009) suggest that in the marketing context, this may translate into several different behaviors, including self-defensive motivation, which can be seen in the marketing context through such behaviors as counter-arguing of competitive information that is seen as derogating the brand, biased processing of information that is ambiguous about the brand, and selective attention to information that is positive about the brand (Jain and Maheswaran 2000).

Thomson et al. (2005) developed a scale for measuring attachment that entailed the three dimensions mentioned earlier: affection, passion, and connection. However, these dimensions reflect solely the affective responses to the attachment object (Park et al. 2009), thus this scale does not fully capture both the cognitive and emotional bonds of an attachment, which are key

conceptual properties of the attachment construct. Park et al. (2009) developed their own scale, reflecting both cognitive and affective responses to attachment, and found that their model significantly outperformed that of Thomson and colleagues (2005) when predicting commitment. As both of these scales are based on the original Ball and Tasaki (1992) scale, this is the scale that has been adapted for this paper's purpose.

### Attachment in Management Literature

Attachment has also been studied to a lesser degree in management literature. It is said that attachment theory can be strongly used to explain various aspects of work behavior (Hardy and Barkham 1994). The organization may serve as the attachment figure (Sable 2008; Lin 2010). This research applies attachment theory's main tenet that attachment needs are primary and when they are sufficiently met, then an exploration of the environment occurs (Hardy and Barkham 1994).

### Differentiating the Construct of Brand Attachment

Concerning marketing's use of the construct brand attachment it is important to differentiate it from other frequently studied marketing constructs. Brand attachment is not to be confused with brand attitude strength, brand love, brand satisfaction, brand commitment, brand involvement, or brand identification. The distinctions between brand attachment and each of these other constructs will be described in depth.

Park and colleagues (2006) note that while brand attachment and brand attitude strength do share similarities, the two are distinct constructs that differ in several important aspects. First, as mentioned earlier, attachment in general is associated with "hot" affect (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007), whereas strong brand attitudes reflect evaluations and "cold" affect involving a

judgment about the brand. Secondly, with attachment, the strength lies in the bond connecting the brand with the self, whereas with strong attitudes, the strength lies in a person's judgment of the goodness or badness of the brand (Park et al. 2006). Third, these two constructs differ in their range of valence, with strong attitudes ranging from positive to negative and attachment ranging from weak to strong (Park et al. 2006). Fourth, brand attachment is likely to be time dependent whereas brand attitude strength may not be. These authors conclude that while the brand attitude strength construct may capture a brand's mind share of a consumer, attachment is uniquely positioned to capture both heart and mind share. Finally, Park and colleagues (2006) note that attitudes tend to be temporally instable whereas attachment is more stable across time.

Brand attachment is also a distinct construct from brand love. Brand love is defined as the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006). This love includes passion for the brand, attachment to the brand, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand, and declarations of love for the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006). The first authors introducing the feeling of love in marketing are Shimp and Madden (1988). They adapt in a marketing context the interpersonal love theory of Stenberg (1986) named the triangular theory of love. While Park, MacInnis, and Priester (2006) note that attachment does bear some similarity to love, these authors distinguish between the two constructs in that love is an emotion that characterizes the attachment bond but is not the bond itself. Conversely, attachment is more than a feeling. Further adding to the distinction between brand attachment and brand love, Whang and colleagues (2004) found that bikers who were "in love" with their bikes did not necessarily feel strongly attached to their bikes. Instead, these bikers were capable of loving multiple bikes at

once, even bikes from different brands. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) list attachment as a characteristic of love, but these authors consider attachment as a separate construct from love.

Brand attachment is also different from brand satisfaction. Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005) note that satisfaction can occur instantly following consumption, whereas attachments tend to develop over time with multiple interactions. In addition, satisfaction is considered a judgment whereas, as mentioned previously, attachment is not a judgment (Mano and Oliver 1993). Regarding the difference between brand attachments and commitment, Park, MacInnis, and Priester (2006) note that attachment can lead to commitment. Brand attachment is distinct from the construct of brand involvement. The concept of involvement can be said to tap the realm of cognition (Thomson et al. 2005), whereas, as mentioned previously, attachment may tap both cognition *and* emotions.

Brand attachment is different from the construct of brand experience as well. Brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of the brand (e.g., the packaging, the communications, etc.) (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello 2009). In contrast to brand attachment, brand experience is not considered an emotional relationship concept; over time, brand experiences may result in emotional bonds but emotions are considered only one internal outcome of the stimuli that creates the experiences (Brakus et al. 2009).

Finally, brand attachment is distinct from brand identification. Brand identification involves a sense of shared fate and perceived similarity (Hughes and Ahearne 2010). Brand identification may lead to attachment as identity development has been suggested as a key driver

of emotional attachment (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1991). However, brand attachment may occur without brand identification.

A summary of key attachment literature can be found in Appendices B and C.

### Salesperson Product Attachment

Clearly, attachment is a frequently studied construct, primarily in the psychology realm, but also to some degree in marketing through brand attachment and in management through workplace attachment. Brand attachment was discussed in length above because the construct developed in this research, salesperson product attachment, should be similar in that salesperson product attachment is still translating the concept of attachment into marketing, but this time in a sales context versus a branding context. When the concept of attachment was implemented in branding, some differences were noted versus the use of the construct in psychology. One key difference is that the attached figure is always an object, thus making the relationship somewhat unidimensional. Also, whereas attachment is classified in psychology literature by secure, ambivalent, and avoidant, as noted earlier, in marketing the construct has been classified by strength—weak or strong. Just as there are differences when translating attachment from the psychology field to branding, there will be differences in translating attachment to sales. In addition, there will be some differences between the construct used in branding and in sales; these differences will be outlined below.

From this literature review, it is clear that brand attachment is a distinct construct that leads consumers to behave in various ways in order to remain close to and to protect the brand to which they are attached. While brand attachment in this context of consumers has been

researched extensively, a thorough literature search did not produce any research in the context of salespeople developing the attachments.

While attachment has been studied in other contexts as noted above, salesperson product attachment has not. There are several factors that make attachment in a salesperson context different from that in a personal relationship or that in the relationship between a consumer and a brand. For example, in the sales context, the salesperson may not own or even use the product (e.g., perhaps a male representative is selling a female-oriented product). In addition, whereas consumers are able to select which brands they will use, and in personal relationships people are often able to choose with whom they are in close relationships, salespeople usually lack this discretion, as their product portfolio is determined by the firm. As noted by Hughes and Ahearne (2010), sales representatives also have a higher level of exposure to and involvement with the brands (compared to consumers), and the product's success or failure has consequences for sales representatives' economic well-being, which also makes this type of attachment different from that in personal relationships. Thus, it may be possible that the effect of an attachment may be even more pronounced, especially versus a consumer context. Thus, further research of this construct in the salesperson context is needed.

It is proposed that when selling a portfolio of products, the salesperson may become attached to one of those products more so than the others. He/she may invest more resources in that specific product (e.g., time, money, effort) in an effort to retain closeness. This attachment and the resulting increase in effort are likely to lead to greater performance of that particular product. Unfortunately, the other products in the portfolio may be neglected due to limited resources, which may result in poor performance of other products.

## Healthy versus Unhealthy Attachments

Attachments involve economic, time, and psychic costs (Kleine and Baker 2004) as well as a commitment of resources that could be invested elsewhere (Belk 1988). Salespeople may underestimate the cost of their efforts, such as the opportunity cost of other product sales lost (Wicker et al. 2004). When this increased effort is congruent with the company's goals (i.e., the company's quota structure), the attachment can be deemed "healthy" because the representative is acting in a manner congruent with company strategy. In contrast, if the extra effort is towards an attached product that is incongruent with the company's goals (i.e., the company's quota structure), the attachment can be categorized as "unhealthy" because the representative is acting in a manner contrary to the company's strategy. The concept of healthy/unhealthy attachments was briefly mentioned by Park et al. (2006) when they note that understanding how attachments can be weakened can provide insight into how to avoid unhealthy attachment relationships.

As Ahearne and Lam (2011) note, very little research has examined negative performance of a salesperson (e.g., opportunistic behavior). Yet, Brown et al. (1997) note that it is possible that very high levels of salesperson emotions may have more negative than positive effects and may lead to maladaptive behavior. For instance, when salespeople strongly identify with a customer he or she serves, they may then engage in excessive customer-oriented behaviors (Ahearne and Lam 2011), which may be considered deviant.

Ahearne and Lam differentiate between positive deviant behavior and negative deviant behavior. Ahearne and Lam define proactive behavior as positive deviant behavior that "consists of constructive behavior or behavior with honorable intentions" (2011). This has also been termed prosocial rule-breaking (Morrison 2006) and constructive deviance (Warren 2003). In



contrast, negative deviant behavior can be defined as “voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both” (Robinson and Bennett 1995, p 556). Based on these definitions, an unhealthy attachment in which an individual performs in a manner contrary to the company’s quota structure would be an example of negative deviant behavior. In contrast, an attachment that leads to placing more effort on the product(s) congruent with the company’s strategy could be considered positive deviant behavior.

This distinction is important for managers to understand in that healthy attachments should be encouraged, whereas if any unhealthy attachments exist, attempts should be made to weaken these. In order to weaken the attachments, managers may need to assign the attached product to another salesperson.

### Career Stage

Consumers can begin a long-term attachment to a brand at any age, not just in their early formative years (Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent 2010). Thus, it is intuitive to expect that salespeople can form product attachments at any career stage as well. Career stage is believed to affect salespeople’s attitudes, opinions, and behaviors (Cron and Slocum 1986). Career stage theory asserts that individuals progress through four distinct career stages throughout their professional lives and that each career stage is unique in terms of motivational processes, work perceptions and experiences, job attitudes, performance levels, and relationships between work experiences and job attitudes (e.g. Allen and Meyer 1993; Cron and Slocum 1986; Cron 1984; Cron, Dubinsky, and Michaels 1988). In addition, Pappas and Flaherty (2006) found that career

stage plays an important role in determining the impact of compensation on the components of motivation.

The four stages of career stage theory are exploration in which needs include peer acceptance, support, and a job in which one can succeed; establishment (also referred to as expansion) in which needs include achievement, esteem, autonomy, and competition; maintenance in which needs include security, reduced competitiveness, maintaining motivation, and productivity (Miao, Lund, and Evans 2009); and finally, disengagement in which needs are maintaining an acceptable performance level while detaching from the organization. It should be expected that salespeople shift their levels of motivation throughout these stages as the impact of different aspects of life and work become more salient. Research (e.g., Cron and Slocum 1986) has indicated that differences across stage categories occur most often between individuals in their early career stages and later career stages.

Miao et al. (2009) find that challenge seeking was higher during the establishment stage than during disengagement. Significant differences in levels of challenge seeking were not found between exploration stage and maintenance or disengagement. Salespeople in the establishment stage seem to be most receptive to more challenging goals and tasks.

As mentioned earlier, salesperson focus on compensation has also been found to change depending on the career stage. Compensation seeking was found to be higher during the exploration and establishment stages than during maintenance. For people in the maintenance stage, they typically have proven themselves at selling and are experiencing high levels of financial income and therefore compensation is no longer as salient a concern (Flaherty and Pappas 2002). Flaherty and Pappas (2002) also found that in the exploration stage, task

enjoyment and compensation seeking dominate challenge seeking and recognition seeking; in the establishment stage, task enjoyment dominates challenge seeking and recognition seeking; in the maintenance stage, no significant differences were found; in the disengagement stage, compensation seeking dominates challenge seeking.

Desire for extrinsic rewards (lower-order) and intrinsic rewards (higher-order) has also been found to change based on career stage; however there have been mixed results for the exact manner in which it changes. Individuals in the exploration and establishment (early) career stages have a greater proclivity for higher-order rewards than those in the maintenance and disengagement stages (Cron 1984; Cron, Dubinsky, and Michaels 1988). Sales managers in the early career stages ranked achievement of market goals as the most important reward (Mehta, Anderson, and Dubinsky 2000). Achievement of market goals was also highest for late career stage managers. Yet, early career stages have also been stated as being associated with a greater desire for higher-order, intrinsic rewards (Murphy and Sohi 1995). It has also been stated that late-career stage salespeople are more likely to have internalized the values, norms, and goals of their organizations, which could result in gradual disregard of extrinsic rewards and increasing levels of importance given to the intrinsic aspects of the job.

Effort has also been suggested as changing depending on career stage. It has been said that effort tends to be less focused in the exploration stage, as emphasis here is on finding a career (Dubinsky and Skinner 2002). Taking an additional responsibility even when not expected is likely.

## Market Share

Market share is the portion of the market that a product holds versus its competitors. This is one of the primary ways of measuring the success of a product, and this variable is frequently used to measure performance of salespeople. There have been several studies examining salesperson behavior and market share, but mixed results have highlighted the need for further research examining these complex links (Park and Holloway 2003).

## Summary

This chapter has explained how quota systems are used to direct effort, and how that effort is expected to lead to performance. This research introduces the construct of salesperson product attachment, which is argued here as impacting this relationship between quota system and effort. The expected impact of salesperson attachment on the relationships among quota system, effort level, sales performance, and career stage are detailed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### Overview

This chapter will first discuss the preliminary exploratory study. The relevance and importance of salesperson product attachment is exemplified through several quotes. In addition, the antecedents of salesperson product attachment that were developed through these in-depth interviews are outlined. As the antecedents are described, support from literature and theory reinforces these constructs, after which the hypotheses are delineated.

### Exploratory Study

A preliminary exploratory study was conducted in order to determine the relevance of salesperson product attachment, to gauge the generalizability of this construct across industries of the topic, and to determine possible antecedents to attachment. This qualitative phase consisted of seven in-depth interviews, lasting from 35 to 50 minutes each. Three salespeople from a large food brokerage company were interviewed, and two salespeople from a large canned goods company were interviewed. Finally, two salespeople from a large pharmaceutical company were interviewed. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using methods suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Various categories emerged, which were supported in the literature and are described in detail below.

As mentioned in Chapter I., salesperson product attachment is defined as the strength of the bond connecting a salesperson and a specific product in his or her portfolio. The interviews reveal not only the presence and prevalence of salesperson product attachment but also the relevance of the topic to salespeople and managers (while all interviewed were salespeople, the salespeople from the brokerage company also had management responsibilities). Below are a few illustrative quotes of the construct we termed “salesperson product attachment”:

*“Attachment is very relevant! When you’ve got 25 to 30 clients to juggle, it becomes difficult to balance them all and attachment can really become an issue! My team always joked about having other clients that pay five times as much in revenue but instead of focusing on that product, we’re all out there selling lip care products because they were more fun to sell.” ---David, food broker*

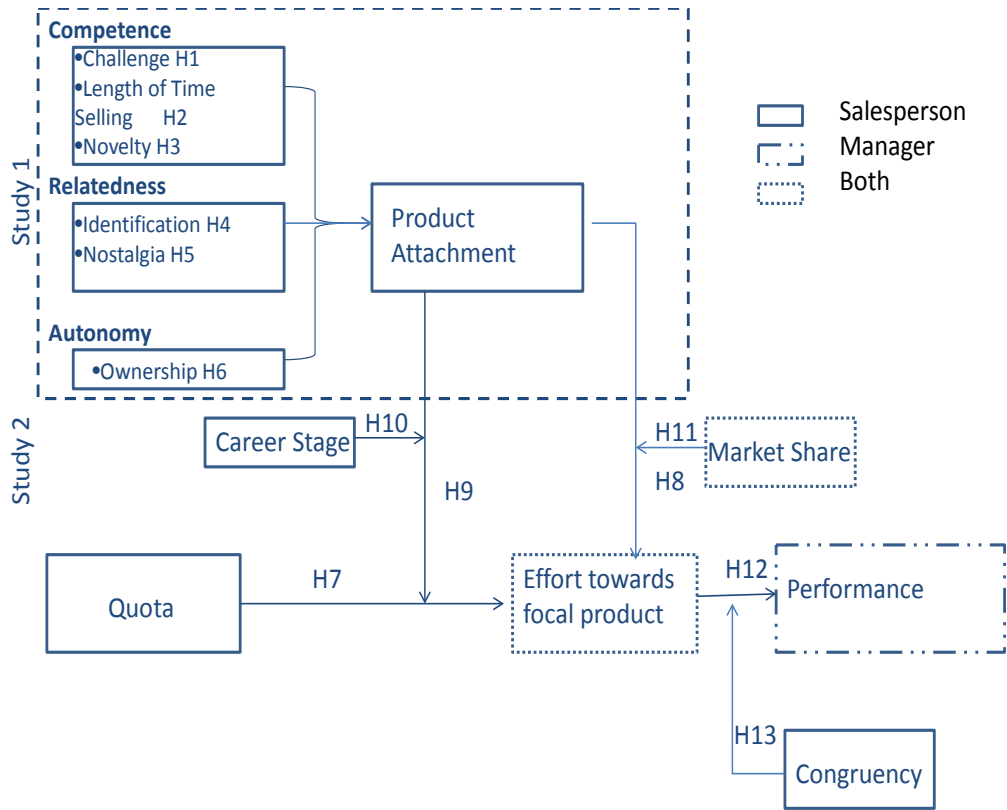
*“I’ve definitely felt attached to certain products where I’ve felt a vested interest, an attachment of sorts....kinda like my little babies that get special attention...they were mine!” ----John, canned goods sales representative*

*“We have various product lines... I know every manager in my company has some emotional bond to one versus the other, as a result of that they work harder to ensure the success of it.” ---Marty, canned goods sales representative*

*“Even if they were to go, ‘hey we want you on a much bigger, much more profitable, and even more lucrative business, let’s say we have a bigger incentive for you to go somewhere’ ...I told them that I kinda like doing this. I’m really attached to these initiatives, to these certain products.” ---John, canned goods*

As in the quotes above, throughout each interview, salesperson product attachment was clearly demonstrated and deemed an important topic by the salespeople interviewed. After interviews were transcribed and coded, several themes emerged. In total, six antecedents emerged from the interviews. The moderators of career stage and market share were also determined. Thus, this led to the empirical model to be tested, as seen in Figure II. on the next page.

FIGURE II. EMPIRICAL MODEL



## Antecedents to Salesperson Product Attachment

The results of the qualitative phase, along with previous literature, point to several antecedents, which are described below. Human needs theory helps in explaining these antecedents as well as categorizing them. According to human needs theory, three basic needs that humans strive to fulfill are those related to competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci and Ryan 2000). These categories are discussed in detail below. The hypotheses surrounding these antecedents are tested in Study 1, as will be further outlined in Chapter IV.

### Competence

Competence is included as one of the three main needs that humans need to fulfill. Such competence can be defined as a person's tendency to seek feelings of achievement and challenge in his or her work or activities (Deci and Ryan 2000). According to this definition, the following three antecedents can be seen as aiding the salesperson in feeling competent: challenge, length of time selling, and novelty. The rationale behind this categorization is delineated for each antecedent below.

### Challenge

Challenge can be defined as a desire to fight for a product that is not the market leader, in other words, a product that is an underdog. Challenge-seeking has been found to be significantly correlated with the amount of time and effort devoted to task performance (Amabile et al. 1994)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, previous research has indicated that challenge-seeking is related to task creativity (Amabile et al. 1994), greater time and effort dedicated to task performance

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<sup>1</sup> As a direct link between challenge and effort has been found in previous literature (Amabile et al. 1994), this direct link will be controlled for in the present study.



(Amabile et al. 1994), and higher behavioral performance and outcome performance of salespersons (Miao, Evans, and Shaoming 2007). Challenge can be conceptualized as task difficulty, and it has been associated with increased task interest (Hackman and Oldham 1980) and increased task effort (Locke and Latham 1990). For an intrinsically motivated person, a challenging task may be viewed as promising a reward in terms of personal and professional growth as well as an accomplishment which may in turn increase motivation (Lee 1998). This supports Miao et al.'s finding that challenge seeking is an important part of intrinsic motivation (2007).

Human needs theory emphasizes the need for the feeling of competence. Such competence can be defined as a person's tendency to seek feelings of achievement and challenge in his or her work or activities (Deci and Ryan 2000). Cognitive evaluation theory (Deci and Ryan 1985) also supports this line of reasoning by suggesting that individuals have cognitive needs for meaningful and challenging tasks. If a salesperson feels a sense of challenge in selling a product (e.g., perhaps the product is viewed as a "me-too" product, and the salesperson feels challenged to differentiate it), he or she will feel an attachment to that product. Several sales representatives noted this sense of challenge, also referred to by some as the feeling of being an underdog. For example,

*"I guess I was attached because it was a little bit of underdog...that's not the right term, but it's a brand that we have to work a little harder to sell...some of these other ones are a pretty easy sell and I think salespeople like a challenge..."*

*---John, canned good salesperson*

This leads to the following hypothesis:

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between challenge and salesperson product attachment.

### Length of Time Selling

Length of time selling refers to the amount of time a salesperson has been assigned to sell a particular product. Such experience can be viewed as part of the construct job experience, which has often been measured as the number of months or years an employee worked in his or her present occupation (Borman et al. 1993; McDaniel, Schmidt, and Hunter 1988; Schmidt, Hunter, and Outerbridge 1986). It has been suggested that this tenure may be a strong predictor of salesperson behavior (Park and Holloway 2003; Levy and Sharma 1994). While tenure within a company and within a sales career has been examined frequently, length of time selling a particular product is notably absent from the sales research stream. It is suggested here that just as length of time with a company or in a certain career can predict certain behaviors, length of time selling a product can as well. Specifically, it is argued in this paper that length of time selling a product can lead to an attachment. Length of time allows an individual a strong sense of familiarity with the product which will lead to feelings of competence, one of the three main needs of human needs theory. Considering that attachment theory considers close proximity a key indicator of attachment, selling a certain product for a lengthy period of time would also lead to attachment due to the close proximity and increased familiarity. This was evident in the qualitative phase, as can be demonstrated by the following quote:

*“We were attached because, well, I think one of the things for us is that we represented it for a long time...I think people do grow very close to brands over time as well.”*  
---David, food broker

The qualitative research phase, along with past research on tenure, lead to the following hypotheses:

**H2:** There is a positive relationship between length of time selling a product and salesperson product attachment.

### Novelty

The third proposed antecedent is novelty. Novelty has been defined as having two main aspects (Hirschman 1980). The first aspect is seeking something new, and the second aspect can be explained as seeking variety or some form of stimulus (Hirschman 1980). This antecedent can be explained by the theory of optimal stimulation. This theory suggests that individuals strive to maintain an optimal level of stimulation and departures from this level lead to behaviors to reestablish stimulus input into the optimal range (Mittelstaedt et al. 1976; Berlyne 1960). Thus, salespeople are likely to also seek and attempt to maintain such a level of stimulation, which may be met through a product in their portfolio, thus leading to an attachment.

In addition, according to self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci 2000), when a work environment encourages employees to seek out novelty, this constitutes an important source of task enjoyment. Task enjoyment is the affective component of intrinsic motivation. When people enjoy the activities related to a task, the reward is the ongoing experience of performing the task (Deci and Ryan 1985), which is independent of immediate outcome rewards. Prior research has suggested that high levels of task enjoyment lead to those persons being more willing to accept failure as a learning experience because immediate outcome rewards become relatively less important (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). Miao and Evans (2007) find that a salesperson's intrinsic/extrinsic motivation is multi-dimensional in nature; the complex

ramifications in the sales control context can only be fully understood through its distinct cognitive and affective dimensions. Thus attachment, which by definition encompasses both cognitive and affective dimensions, aids in explaining motivation to increase effort in selling when the product is perceived as novel.

Novelty, as mentioned above, is seen as task enjoyment, thus making it likely that novelty leads to salesperson product attachment. Novelty has been studied in sales primarily to determine how a salesperson will manage very different (i.e. novel) situations (Sujan 1999). However, when novelty is viewed as an aspect of task enjoyment, it can be viewed as an important determinant of how a person handles failure, as mentioned above. Dealing with failure well is an essential skill in sales (Dixon and Schertzer 2005), and as such, it can lead to feelings of competence, one of the three main needs according to human needs theory. Furthermore, Deci (1975) says that competence also concerns people's feelings of curiosity, which novelty would ignite. Thus, examining novelty in a sales context other than that of problem-solving is needed. As discussed earlier, attachment in the brand context versus the salesperson context has key differences (e.g., the salesperson depends on the attachment object for economic well-being). Thus, although Park et al. (2006) noted that task enjoyment likely leads to attachment, this relationship needs to be empirically tested in order to determine if it holds in a different context.

This antecedent was clearly present in the in-depth interviews. The sales representatives interviewed viewed products as novel when the salesperson perceived the product as unique in some manner or fun to sell. Three illustrative quotes follow:

*“I would say that the reason I was more attached to [pharmaceutical name] was because it was so different—it was definitely a unique drug, no one had even heard of this disease state!” ---Bobbie, pharmaceutical sales representative*

*“Why did I feel attached? Maybe it was just me, you know the novelty of selling a candy type item...it’s hard to sell candy and not be in a good mood, maybe? That was the brand I felt more of an attachment to versus selling pasta...you know, it’s just pasta.”*  
---Mark, food broker

*“That’s probably one of the things over the years, the things that people get more excited about as salespeople are when you have new ideas, new concepts that are being brought to the marketplace, rather than products that are merely line extensions of an existing product. I think it has to be something unique and exciting about it to form an attachment.”* ---David, food broker

The frequency with which novelty was referred to indicate that novelty is indeed an antecedent of product attachment. Stated more formally,

**H3:** There is a positive relationship between novelty and salesperson product attachment.

### Relatedness

Relatedness is the second need of human needs theory. Relatedness involves feeling connected to another. This second need categorizes the antecedents of identification and nostalgia. Each of these antecedents, including their relation to human needs theory, are discussed thoroughly below.

### Identification

Identification is defined here as the degree to which an individual finds similarities between himself and the target. This construct has been named a key driver of attachments in personal relationships (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1991). While identification was identified in Kleine et al.’s (1991) research, the context used of personal relationships is different from the context of attachment in salesperson-product relationships, as were outlined in Chapter II. As mentioned, several key differences between the two contexts exist. For example, in the sales

context, the salesperson may not own or even use the product (e.g., perhaps a male representative is selling a female-oriented product). Also, whereas consumers are able to select which brands they will use, and in personal relationships people are often able to choose with whom they are in close relationships, salespeople usually lack this discretion, as their product portfolio is determined by the firm. Furthermore, as noted by Hughes and Ahearne (2010), sales representatives also have a higher level of exposure to and involvement with the brands (compared to consumers), and the product's success or failure has consequences for sales representatives' economic well-being, which also makes this type of attachment different from that in personal relationships. Considering these key differences, it is important that this research determine whether identification holds as an antecedent of attachment in this different context.

Identification with a product is conceptualized here as occurring when a salesperson forms a psychological connection with the product by incorporating the attributes he or she believes define the product into his or her own self-concept. This conceptualization is based on previous organizational identification research (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail 1994). Identification has been noted as serving as a powerful motivator as self-goals and product goals merge; the realization of product goals then becomes more intrinsically satisfying (Hughes and Ahearne 2010).

It is argued here that if a salesperson identifies with a product in his or her portfolio (e.g., perhaps the salesperson is diabetic and identifies with the diabetes medication he or she sells), he or she will be likely to form an attachment to that product. Social identity theory assists in explaining this by suggesting that brands (or in the current context, products) can act as symbolic resources used in constructing social identity, which allows people to claim meaning for themselves and communicate that meaning to others (McCracken 1988; Hughes and Ahearne

2010). Thus, salespeople may feel that a particular product helps communicate who they are to others. Park et al. (2006) note that in the context of brand attachment, a consumer may become attached to a brand when it enriches the self by representing or defining the actual (or desired) self. The brand enriches by symbolically representing one's current self, reflecting both who one is and what one believes. In addition, human needs theory suggests that people need relatedness, which involves feeling connected. Identification allows the salesperson to feel connected to the focal product, which meets the need of relatedness.

Furthermore, interviews with several sales representatives also support identification with the product as a precursor to product attachment. One sales representative illustrated this feeling of identification in the following way:

*"Thinking about why I'm attached...I don't know—I just feel I really get my product. My dad died of a heart attack at a very young age, and I just think that if [the product] had been available then, he would still be alive. So, I really identify with the patients who need this drug, and so I identify with the product too."*

*---Scott, pharmaceutical sales representative*

This illustrative quote, in addition to past research on identification, leads to the following hypothesis:

**H4:** There is a positive relationship between identification and salesperson product attachment.

### Nostalgia

Nostalgia can be defined as the recollection of personal or episodic events (Holbrook and Schindler 1994). Holbrook and Schindler (1991) suggest that consumers may be predisposed towards those objects that were more common when they were younger, creating a sense of

nostalgia. This construct has been noted as shaping consumption preferences by influencing patterns of consumer tastes (Holbrook 1993). As noted earlier in the discussion of the human needs theory, relatedness refers to a person's need to feel a sense of closeness to others (Deci and Ryan 2000). An object that creates nostalgia fulfills this need by allowing an individual to feel close to the past.

The power of nostalgia has been recognized in the consumer context (Braun, Ellis, and Loftus 2002; Poniewozik 2002), noting the favorable impact on consumers and brand relationships. Some companies have reintroduced certain slogans and characters from the past while others have simply reminded consumers that brands have been part of their lives for years (Garretson and Niedrich 2004). Research has noted consumers' interest in nostalgic campaigns (Langer 1997), which is attributed to consumers' longing for connections to their childhood. Consumers may be reminded of a brand that they may have used and trusted from childhood.

A product in a salesperson's portfolio may be able to provide this sense of closeness to others by reminding the salesperson of his or her childhood or past; this fond remembrance of the past is termed nostalgia. Thus, if a salesperson feels a sense of nostalgia related to a product in his or her portfolio, he or she will likely feel an attachment to that product. This sense of nostalgia was also illustrated in the in-depth interviews. For example, one sales representative noted his attachment to a certain product because of its ties to his hometown.



*“I think about one brand in particular...it’s called [product name], and it’s probably the smallest brand we have. It’s a brand that sells in New Orleans, or Creole I should say, it’s more Creole than Cajun. It only sells in that geographical area--in that delta area, and I have an emotional attachment to it. I lived in New Orleans for a long time, and so I have an emotional or desire to ensure that it was successful. I would work harder selling it than the other brands in our portfolio just from that standpoint.”*  
---Marty, canned good salesperson

In the context of brand attachment, Park et al. (2006) note that a likely precursor to the development of an attachment occurs when the brand enriches the self. These authors further note that this can occur by brands “serving as an anchor to and symbolically representing one’s core past self... [and has] the capacity to evoke feelings of bittersweet nostalgia...” (p 13). These brands foster a sense of an individual’s origin and history, proving the foundation from which an individual views him or herself and from which the future self is framed. Thus, according to this literature, it is logical that a salesperson may become attached to a product when that product produces feelings of nostalgia within the salesperson. Again, as there are key differences between the consumer attachment context and the salesperson context, this relationship needs to be tested to determine if it does indeed hold in a different context.

Based on the above literature, having a sense of nostalgia regarding a product, specifically when the product reminds the salesperson of his/her past, leads to forming an attachment to that specific product. More formally,

**H5:** There is a positive relationship between nostalgia and salesperson product attachment.

### Autonomy

As discussed earlier, research on fundamental human needs has suggested that a person may form intense attachments if the object of the attachment meets the needs for autonomy,

relatedness, and competence (La Guardia et al. 2000; Ryan and Deci 2000). Autonomy refers to a person's need to feel that his or her activities are self-chosen and self-endorsed. Autonomy can be described as feelings of initiative and volition (Deci and Ryan 1985). As is discussed below, the antecedent of ownership provides such feelings of initiative and volition, allowing for the salesperson to meet his or her need of autonomy.

### Ownership

Ownership can be defined as a sense of leadership or responsibility for a particular product. Ownership may be considered as "having a stake in the game." It has been noted that when an individual feels such a stake in a relationship (in this case, the relationship with the product), he or she will be motivated to pay attention to the relationship (Anderson and Weitz 1989). This increased attention to the relationship will foster an attachment to the product based on close proximity.

In a sales situation, salespeople often lack autonomy in choosing the products which they are to sell; however, feeling in charge of a product (also termed a "sense of ownership" of the product) (e.g., helping to launch a product or being the "point person" in charge of the product) may give salespeople a sense of autonomy, which is then likely to foster strong attachment to that product. In addition, this sense of ownership was also uncovered in the in-depth interviews. For example, the following quote illustrates this antecedent:

*"Yeah, I was attached. Having a stake in the game in that I was the one to help create the marketing plan, I was the one that kind of put the energy behind it to come up with the approach toward these products in this market...it really felt like a small mini-business of mine, so I was passionate about the market opportunity...I like that product line, I helped author the plan.... I helped launch this line of products...I really worked hard on that initiative. So, I guess ownership is the best way to describe why I became so attached to that line of products. I just kind of feel like they're my babies, and I have to protect them." ---John, canned goods sales representative*

Therefore, based on research in human needs and level of stakes, as well as the results from the qualitative research phase, the author hypothesizes the following:

**H6:** There is a positive relationship between ownership and salesperson product attachment.

As mentioned earlier, the hypotheses just outlined are tested in Study 1. The hypotheses outlined below regard the role of attachment, specifically how attachment impacts relationships between quota systems and effort, as well as how other constructs affect this impact. These hypotheses are empirically tested in Study 2, which is outlined in Chapter IV.

#### Quota Systems and Effort

Effort is essentially controllable by individual salespeople, meaning they are able to regulate the intensity of their performance (Srivastava et al. 2001). Sales managers can attempt to control this level of effort by influencing salesperson motivation (Srivastava et al. 2001). Such motivation consists of the willingness to invest energy into key behaviors. Quotas provide motivation for salespeople to increase effort, as can be seen by their extensive use by managers. Ross (1991) established that salespeople are quota achievers rather than dollar maximizers, meaning that salespeople will act in a way that allows them the best opportunity to reach their quota. Davis and Farley (1971) found that quota systems do affect allocation of time and effort. Chowdhury (1993) determined that there is a direct relationship between assigned quota and level of expended effort. This link between quota and effort is often explained by expectancy theory, which, as stated previously, states that individuals will behave in a manner perceived by them as most likely to lead to their desired rewards (Vroom 1964). Although a direct positive

impact has been found between quota systems and effort level, this research seeks to replicate this well-established finding through the following hypothesis:

**H7:** If the quota system places greater emphasis on the focal product, this results in greater effort by the salesperson toward the focal product.

### Attachment and Effort

Hughes and Ahearne (2010) found that brand identification can increase salesperson effort behind a certain brand<sup>2</sup>. Salesperson effort has been defined as “the force, energy, or activity expended by the salesperson against the focal brand relative to that expended against all other brands” (Hughes and Ahearne 2010, p 92). Since, as noted previously, identification has been noted as a precursor to attachment, attachment theory says that product attachment will lead to increased effort. Also, according to attachment theory, an individual will perform behaviors that are seen as increasing proximity to the attached object; thus, this also points to product attachment leading to increased effort.

The relationship between salesperson product attachment and effort can also be demonstrated through the in-depth interviews. The following quote illustrates this relationship:

*“Because it’s been something I’ve been really close to [attached due to ownership], you do work extra hard and look for as many opportunities for that product...”*

*---John, canned goods salesperson*

As Hughes and Ahearne (2010) note, given the assortment of products in a salesperson’s portfolio, the finite number of working hours in a day, and a limited amount of time in front of a customer, the salesperson is forced to make choices regarding where he or she places his or her

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<sup>2</sup> As a direct link has been found between identification and effort (Hughes and Ahearne 2010), this link will be controlled for in this study.

effort. By placing more time selling one brand, the salesperson is necessarily spending less time selling another brand. This can be seen through the following quote:

*“I guess I felt a bit nostalgic...I put it [the attached product] first ahead of anything else and then of course the other products in my portfolio were suffering ...you’re only allowed so many minutes in a sales call....” ---Marty, canned goods salesperson*

Thus the following relationship is hypothesized:

**H8:** Salesperson product attachment results in greater effort by the salesperson toward the focal product.

#### Interaction of Attachment and Quota System

Product attachment is expected to impact the previously mentioned relationship between quota system and level of effort (H7). As attachment theory suggests, when an attachment exists, the individual will seek proximity to the target of the attachment. In the sales context, this suggests that salespeople will want to focus more on their targeted product than others, in an effort to have proximity to the product. Expectancy theory, as aforementioned, suggests that salespeople will act in a way in order to achieve the most highly valued reward. When the attached product aligns with the quota system (i.e., the attached product is the most heavily weighted), the attachment will enhance the effect of the quota system on effort. This can be seen through the following quote:

*“Well, to start out with, this drug was my top product, you know, my highest weighted [in compensation structure]. So, I really focused my attention and babied that product... even though, later, it became like my third product [weighted 3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 products]...I still baby it! ” ---Bobbie, pharmaceutical sales representative*

It is important to note that while expectancy theory helps explain the reasoning behind salespeople becoming attached to their mostly highly weighted product in their goal structure,

this theory does not explain why the salesperson remains attached when the product no longer is the most highly weighted. As the sales representative notes above, she maintained her attachment to her product even when it became her lowest ranked product. Attachment theory does help explain this in that the product becomes a source of comfort and familiarity to the salesperson; thus, even when product weightings change, the heightened effort on that favored product remains.

It is also important to note that as the attachment can enhance the relationship between the quota system and effort, it can also attenuate it if the attached product does not align with the quota system. The following quote demonstrates this:

*“My team always joked about having other clients that pay five times as much in revenue [thus weighted more heavily in the quota system] but instead of focusing on that product, we’re all out there selling lip care products because they were more fun to sell.”*

*---David, food broker*

Thus, the above quotes, along with attachment theory, lead to the following hypothesis:

**H9:** Salesperson product attachment moderates the relationship between the quota system and effort level such that the effect of the quota system on effort level is stronger when attachment is greater.

#### Moderator--Career Stage

As mentioned in Chapter II., career stage is very influential over motivation and effort. Salespeople relatively new to a company have been found to be particularly concerned with supervisory evaluations (Johnston et al. 1990). Other research has shown that compensation seeking was found to be higher during the exploration and establishment stages than during maintenance. For people in the maintenance stage, they typically have proven themselves at

selling and are experiencing high levels of financial income and therefore compensation is no longer as salient a concern (Flaherty and Pappas 2002). Flaherty and Pappas (2002) also found that in the exploration stage, task enjoyment and compensation seeking dominate challenge seeking and recognition seeking; in the establishment stage, task enjoyment dominates challenge seeking and recognition seeking; in the maintenance stage, no significant differences were found; in the disengagement stage, compensation seeking dominates challenge seeking.

Based on these findings, when in the exploration stage, salespeople may be less likely to act on an attachment, thus reducing the impact of attachment on the quota to effort link. This may be due to being more concerned over managerial evaluations and having a greater emphasis on compensation-seeking.

In the establishment stage, there is a strong focus on compensation-seeking, and this stage is often marked by high levels of competitiveness. Based on these prior findings and similar to the exploration stage, salespeople will be less likely to act on an attachment.

In the maintenance stage, competitiveness is often markedly less than in the establishment stage, and there is less emphasis on compensation. Similarly, in the disengagement stage, compensation seeking is less salient. Thus, in these two stages a salesperson's attachment will have a stronger impact on the quota to effort link.

More formally,

**H10:** Career stage moderates the impact of salesperson product attachment on the relationship between quota and effort such that **(a)** when in the exploration and expansion stages, the impact is attenuated whereas **(b)** when in the maintenance and disengagement stages, the impact is strengthened.

## Moderator—Market Share

The in-depth interviews uncovered a variable that would interact with the relationship proposed in H8 (the relationship between salesperson attachment and effort level). The sales representatives noted that market share also plays a factor into how the role of attachment impacts level of effort. One representative suggested that sales representatives for his company have more discretion over how much time they spend on the smaller products (i.e., there is more autonomy), whereas the larger products are more closely monitored (i.e., there is less autonomy). Therefore, he thought that smaller market share products often led to an increased impact of attachments. Specifically, the following related quotes demonstrate this relationship:

*“See, for the big products [meaning market share giants like a Coca-Cola] we really have to track our time. But, for the smaller products, we have more discretion...if we want to put a little extra time into a certain product because of an attachment, we can, it’s up to us.....” ---Brian, food broker*

*“We do put in extra effort in order to service our major clients that have higher market shares anyway, so whether you like it or not you’re kind of forced to do that. I think attachment is more of an issue as you get further down the food chain with clients we represent...you know where we start, it becomes more discretionary as to how much time you spend against their business. ---David, food broker*

*“It’s a little bit of a smaller market [low market share]. It’s a little more expensive for us to play up there, you know to sell this product in Canada too, but because it’s been something I’ve been really close to [attached due to ownership], you do work a little extra hard and look for as many opportunities for that product...you might fail to prioritize effectively based on what your quota system says you should be doing.” ---John, canned goods salesperson*

These quotes can be supported through theory of human needs. As mentioned earlier, autonomy is one of the three key needs of individuals (La Guardia et al. 2000; Ryan and Deci 2000). Autonomy refers to a person’s need to feel that his or her activities are self-chosen and self-endorsed. Working in sales provides much autonomy as salespeople often work unsupervised and are able to have freedom in planning their work days. However, this autonomy



often differs for higher versus lower market share products. Specifically, sales representatives' behaviors are often more highly restricted in higher market share products because behaviors are more monitored for these products, thus reducing autonomy. With lower market share products, salespeople are often able to experience more autonomy in that they are able to decide how much effort to allocate to those products since their behaviors are not monitored as much for these products. If an attachment exists for these lower market share products, salespeople are freer to act on this attachment than with higher market share products. Thus, the impact of attachment on effort level will be stronger for lower market share products than higher market share products.

**H11:** The impact of product attachment on salesperson effort level (towards the attached product) is stronger in low market share products compared to higher market share products.

### Effort and Performance

As Chapter II. pointed out, the direct link between effort and performance has been well established (e.g., Brown and Peterson 1994). Thus, this relationship is tested through a replication hypothesis. Salesperson performance has been conceptualized in many ways; in this research, salesperson performance is based on a three-item scale. As past research has shown, increases in effort have led to increases in performance. Thus, the following replication is hypothesized:

**H12:** There is a positive relationship between effort and performance.

### Moderator--Congruency

It is proposed in this research that the relationship between effort and performance is moderated by the construct of congruency. This congruency construct represents whether the quota system and attachment are in alignment or not. If congruent, this means either that the salesperson has a strong attachment to the product that is rated high in the quota system or that the salesperson does not have an attachment to the product and the product is rated low in the quota system. If incongruent, this can mean one of two things—either the product is rated high and little to no attachment is present or the product is not rated high in the quota system yet the salesperson has a strong attachment to it. The latter seems most problematic to managers in that the salesperson is attached to, and thus is placing more effort on, a product that is not as highly rated in the quota system, thus making attempts to direct effort through use of the quota system impotent. This case can be termed an “unhealthy attachment” as was discussed in Chapter I. In such as case, this lack of congruency will impact the relationship between effort and performance. The salesperson will place more effort on the attached product and consequently less on other products. As this does not align with the quota ratings of product, the performance on the other products in the portfolio will suffer. This leads to the following hypothesis:

**H13:** Congruency impacts the relationship between effort and performance such that when a lack of congruency occurs through a low quota rating of a product and high attachment of that product, the relationship between effort and performance is attenuated.

These hypotheses are empirically tested in two studies, which are described in detail in the next chapter. The first study tests the relationship between the proposed antecedents and salesperson product attachment, whereas the second study tests the proposed relationships regarding the impact of product attachment on the quota to effort link.

## CHAPTER IV.

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodologies for two empirical studies are discussed. The design of the studies and the measurements of the constructs are outlined in detail.

#### Overview

Study 1 (marked by the dotted lines in the model) uses quantitative procedures to test the impact of the proposed antecedents on formation of product attachment. Using qualitative procedures (the preliminary study) in conjunction with quantitative methods (Studies 1 and 2) may be especially well suited to research on attachments (Belk 1992). Having both types of methods allows the researcher to describe the focal variable (salesperson product attachment) more richly while statistically establishing linkages among the other variables in the model (Belk 1992; Thomson 2006).

Study 2 empirically tests the rest of the model, including the impact of the salesperson product attachment construct. This study seeks to find empirical support for hypotheses 7 through 13.

#### Refinement of Scales

While some previously existing scales were adapted for use in measuring the constructs of interest, several variables that were suggested during the exploratory phase had not received

previous empirical attention. Appendix D contains the constructs, the definitions, the original scale items and source, and the items used in this research. The scales developed were based on the preliminary interviews and previous research; these scales include challenge and ownership. Thus, extensive scale development was necessary following the suggestions of Churchill (1979). After the thorough literature search conducted, the next step was to have knowledgeable individuals read over the items. Before beginning data collection, the survey was refined among members of the proposed sample group to ensure readability of the survey and provide clarity around the content of the questions. These knowledgeable individuals represented various sales contexts ranging widely from pharmaceutical sales to water filtration system sales.

#### Study1: Antecedents to Salesperson Product Attachment

After the survey items for Study 1 were refined, the surveys were sent via email to salespeople of various industries. Although the in-depth interviews suggested that salesperson product attachment can be found across industries, this study allowed for empirical testing of this generalizability. Qualtrics, which is a company that provides panel data, was used to identify participants. The target demographic was sent to Qualtrics, and the company secured a quality sample. Each panel is pre-screened to identify and eliminate any potential issues (e.g., duplicate IP addresses). The survey was designed by the researcher in Qualtrics, and then the company located the respondents and distributed the survey. The survey began with two filter questions in order to weed out unsuitable respondents. The first question ensured that the person sold at least two products, while the second one ensured that the salesperson worked on a quota-type system in which at least part of his or her compensation was a result of how much he or she sold. If the participant answered “no” to either of these questions, he or she was forced to exit the survey. Qualtrics monitored the collection daily, checking for quality and sending new invitations to

participants as needed. The survey sought to obtain approximately 100 to 150 usable responses from salespeople and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Qualtrics obtained 229 responses, of which 210 were retained.

Demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey, including age and gender. In addition, response bias was assessed by splitting the sample into early and late respondents (Armstrong and Overton 1977), and then comparing the two in order to identify any significant differences on key constructs. Specifically, the first responders, defined as the first 25% of responders, were compared with the last responders, defined as the last 25% of responders. The results of this comparison show that there are no significant differences (at  $p < .05$ ) in demographic variables or the key constructs of interest. This indicates that non-response bias should not be an issue with this study.

Participants were instructed at the beginning of the survey to choose a product that they have sold or currently sell that falls into one of four categories to be randomized: 25% or less market share, 26% to 50% market share, 51% to 75% market share, or 76% or higher. Having participants self-report market share has been used in previous studies (e.g., Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Gruen 2005), and comparison between subjective and objective measures of market share have been found to be quite similar (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Gruen 2005). Participants were instructed to answer the questions according to their feelings for this specific product.

There are two possible approaches to having subjects answer a survey about a focal product. The first one is having the participant self-select the product in the beginning. The problems with this method in the context of the current study include the potential for priming

participants to answer in a certain manner and creating a lack of variance in the data (i.e., the participants will most likely choose a product they think about most frequently, which by definition is likely to be one to which they are strongly attached). The other method is to choose the product based on some other criteria, in this case based on market share. By not asking the respondents to list a product they are attached to or feel strongly about, the study avoids priming participants to answer in a certain manner by using this second method. As noted in Chapter II., a key indicator of brand attachment (Park et al. 2009) has been noted as the prominence of brand-relevant thoughts and feelings and ease of recall of the product; thus, it is likely that the product the salesperson lists will be a product that he or she is attached to as this easy recall would signal as an indicator of attachment. Thus, self-selection of a product would create a lack of variance in the data.

Respondents were assured that their responses would be anonymous as social desirability bias could be an issue otherwise. Next, respondents answered a series of questions that reflect the variables of interest (please see Appendix D for examples of questions).

### Construct Measures

Constructs were assessed using a combination of proven and new scales. The new scales (e.g., challenge and ownership) were developed in accordance with Churchill's (1979) outlined procedures. An initial pool of items was developed for each new scale using the exploratory research. As mentioned earlier, the items were then refined using expert feedback from a small sample of sales personnel in the preliminary phase.

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the convergent and discriminant validity of the measures. Byrne (2001) has suggested that factor analysis is the most widely used

statistical procedure for studying relationships between observed and latent variables. Tests for convergent and discriminant validity were performed using the procedure outlined by Gerbing and Anderson (1988). Items were examined to ensure that all loaded well and that there was no evidence of cross-loadings; items that did not meet these two requirements were removed. Discriminant validity was tested using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) test, which indicates discriminant validity is supported if the average variance extracted exceeds the squared correlations between all pairs of constructs. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which is a measure of internal consistency based on the inter-item correlation. The typical "rule-of-thumb" is that an alpha above .7 is considered reliable (Nunnally 1978). The results of these tests and as well as the final loadings are discussed in the next chapter, and a table can be found in Appendix F that lists final scale items.

The attachment scale was adapted from the work of Ball and Tasaki (1992). The participants answered this scale based on the product that was chosen in the beginning of the survey based on market share, which is further explained below. Using a Likert-type scale, respondents rated their agreement or disagreement on a 5-point scale (anchored by 1 as "strongly disagree" and 5 as "strongly agree"). Examples of this scale include items such as asking the respondents how much they agree with the statement "I don't really have too many feelings about my product (reverse coded)" and asking the respondents to imagine for a moment that they were removed from selling this product and then reporting their agreement with the statement, "If I didn't sell this product, I would feel a little bit less like myself." As there could have been some face validity issues with the wording of the some of these items, several interviews with sales representatives were conducted to determine if any items should be altered or replaced. In



addition, several questions were added. (Please see Appendix F for the final list of items used). The coefficient alpha of this scale was .854.

The scale for challenge was also developed based on the information obtained in the exploratory phase. Again using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents rated their agreement with the statements. Two examples are “I feel that this product is an underdog” and “I feel challenged to prove my product is as good as or better than the others in the marketplace.” The coefficient alpha of this scale was .718.

Length of time selling was answered by asking the participant to fill in how long (in years) he or she has sold that particular product. Thus, this is a continuous variable. Tenure has been measured frequently in a similar fashion (Marshall, Laask, and Moncrief 2004).

The scale measuring novelty was adapted from the scale developed by Moorman (1995). Sample items used a 5-point Likert-scale and include the following: “I feel this is a very unique product” and “I feel that the uniqueness of this product makes it fun to sell.” The coefficient alpha for this scale was .78.

To measure identification, the 5-point Likert-type scale was adapted from the work of Sivadas and Machleit (1994). Sample items include “This product is part of who I am” and “This product is central to my identity.” The coefficient alpha for this scale was .84.

The scale for nostalgia was adapted from that used by Sierra and McQuitty (2007). Again using a 5-point Likert scale, the respondents noted their agreement with the statements. Two of the examples are “This product reminds me of my childhood” and “This product reminds me of my past.” The coefficient alpha for this scale was .74.

To measure ownership, a scale was created based on the feedback received in the exploratory phase. A sample item includes “I feel I helped launch this product.” Again, agreement was rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The coefficient alpha for this scale was .75.

### Covariate

Previous research has suggested that controlling for gender when examining attachment is essential to ensuring that the results are not accounted for by gender differences (Collins 1996; Kirkpatrick and Davis 1994; Swaminathan, Stilley, and Ahluwalia 2008). This is a common practice in the attachment research (Swaminatham, Stilley, and Ahluwalia 2008; Collins 1996; Kirkpatrick and Davis 1994). This variable was regressed on attachment.

### Sample Characteristics

In regards to the sample’s demographics, 67.6% were male. The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 66 years old, with a mean age of 31 (standard deviation = 10.7). The average number of years that respondents had been salespeople was 7 years (standard deviation = 6.819), with the minimum being less than a year and the maximum being 40 years. The industries varied widely and included alcohol, paper goods, toys, and many others.

### Analytic Approach

In order to determine whether or not the hypotheses were supported, structural equation modeling was used. Fit characteristics are discussed (e.g., goodness-of-fit index and Bentler’s comparative fit index) in the next chapter. Significance of the individual model paths (that represent the hypothesized relationships) was assessed by examining the standardized path coefficients and their associated p-values.

## Study 2: Salesperson Product Attachment

The purpose of Study 2 was to empirically test the hypothesized model, which can be seen in Figure II. Study 2 tested the role of attachment and includes the area outside of the dotted lines. A large food brokerage company was used as the sample. This company employs many sales representatives who are responsible for selling many various brands of food products.

Given problems created from common method bias, this research used multi-source data (i.e., using data from sales representatives and managers), which should have greatly reduced the risk of common method bias. This is important because common method variance threatens validity by inflating or deflating observed relationships between constructs. By collecting data from the sales representatives and from the managers the risk of common method variance should be greatly reduced. Sales representatives chose a product based on market share and answered the survey questions based on that product including quota, career stage, attachment, effort towards focal product, gender, age, number of products sold, and salesperson mood. Managers provided performance data using the same 3-point scale as the salespeople, effort level of the salesperson using the same items, and market share. These measures are further outlined below.

For this study, 152 usable matched responses from sales representatives and managers were obtained through an emailed survey. In order to ensure a high completion rate of the surveys, a senior vice-president in the company sent emails to the salespeople that communicated the support of the company as well as provided encouragement for completion of the surveys. In addition, as in Study 1, response bias was assessed by splitting the sample into early and late respondents (Armstrong and Overton 1977), and then comparing the two in order to identify any

significant differences on key constructs. Specifically, the first responders, defined as the first 25% of responders, were compared with the last responders, defined as the last 25% of responders. The results of this comparison show that there are no significant differences (at  $p < .05$ ) in demographic variables or the key constructs of interest. This indicates that non-response bias should not be an issue with this study.

As in Study 1, participants were instructed at the beginning of the survey to choose a product that they currently sell that falls into one of four categories to be randomized: 25% or less market share, 26% to 50% market share, 51% to 75% market share, or 76% or higher. As noted earlier, having participants self-report market share has been used in previous studies (e.g., Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Gruen 2005), and comparison between subjective and objective measures of market share have been found to be quite similar. The participants answered the questions regarding this specific product.

A confirmatory factor analysis was again used to determine the discriminant and convergent validity of the Study 2 constructs, establishing the validity and reliability. Results of this analysis are provided in the next chapter.

### Constructs

In addition to the survey data obtained from sales representatives, managers completed information (for each salesperson for whom they are responsible) regarding perceived effort of each salesperson on each of the product lines he or she sells (per the procedure followed by Hughes and Ahearne 2010) (example questions can be found in Appendix D). Managers also reported market share for the products and salesperson performance. Salesperson performance was measured using a three-item scale that can be found in the Appendix F. Correlation

between salesperson-report performance and manager-report performance was significant; thus, only manager-report performance was used.

Gender was again controlled for because, as mentioned, controlling for gender is consistent with previous research in the attachment literature (Swaminatham, Stilley, and Ahluwalia 2008; Collins 1996; Kirkpatrick and Davis 1994). In addition, age and mood were also controlled for. Age is a common control variable in sales research. Mood of the respondent has also been controlled for in previous attachment research. Finally, as noted earlier, both challenge and identification have been linked to effort; thus, to ensure the results are not due to these relationships, these links were also controlled.

Product attachment was measured using the same scale as in Study 1. The coefficient alpha was .87. As mentioned earlier, managers answered questions regarding perceived effort for all of their sales representatives regarding the respective product discussed by each sales representative who reports to him or her. As used by Hughes and Ahearne (2010), brand effort refers to the energy or activity that is expended by the salesperson against the focal product (the attached product) versus that expended against all other products. This was assessed by the sales managers using a 5-point Likert scale adapted from Hughes and Ahearne (2010). See Appendix F for scale. Through this scale, each manager rated each of his or her sales representatives on the effort exerted against the focal product in performing specific selling activities that are part of the sales representative's responsibilities. The coefficient alpha was .86. Sales representatives were also asked to report their perceived level of effort towards the attached product, using a similar scale as to that of the managers but adapted for self-report. Correlation between the two measures were assessed and found to be significantly correlated.

Career stage has been measured in the past by adapting the Career Development Adult Form (Super, Zerkowitz, and Thompson 1981). This scale has been used to measure career stage in many past marketing studies (e.g., Cron and Slocum 1986). The CDAF includes sixty Likert items, with fifteen items allocated to each of the four career stages. However, due to the length of this scale, overall response rate could be impeded. In addition, it has shown poor empirical performance (Miao, Lund, and Evans 2009). Instead, other researchers have suggested using a self-selection technique with a categorical measure of career stage. As such, Flaherty and Pappas (2002) operationalized career stage in their research by having respondents read four brief passages that corresponded to each of the four career stages and then self-select which stage the salesperson feels best describes him or her. This procedure has been used in more recent sales research (e.g., Pappas and Flaherty 2006; Miao, Lund, and Evans 2009). This method allows salespeople the freedom to select a stage based on their current career concerns. Similarly, in this research, the salesperson was asked to read each scenario and rate each on a 5-point scale, with 1 being that the salesperson “strongly disagreed” that the passage described him/her and 5 being that the salesperson “strongly agreed” that the passage described him/her. Please see Appendix E for example passages.

In order to measure the quota system, participants were asked to rate the degree to which the focal product being discussed is aligned with the quota system (i.e., whether the focal product is very important according to the quota system or less important). This rating is based on quota goals set by the company. This was represented by a 5-point scale anchored by 1 (the product is not very important according to the quota system) and 5 (the product is highly important according to the quota system). Previous ways to measure quota systems were not applicable in

this context as they primarily examine various goal levels and different types of compensation systems (i.e., varying the percentage commission and percentage base salary).

To determine congruency, the salesperson was asked to rate on a 5-point scale how the level of effort he or she puts forth towards the focal product aligns with the company's emphasis according to the quota system, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree." Lower scores may represent unhealthy attachments if the salesperson has a high attachment to a product rated low on the quota system because in this case the salesperson is going against the company's wishes; this will in turn hurt performance of the other product in the portfolio if too much effort is being placed on a product. Higher ratings would indicate a healthy attachment in that the salesperson is closely following the company's guidelines. The link between effort and performance will not be affected significantly in this case. The coefficient alpha was .79.

### Sample Characteristics

In regards to the sample's demographics, 73% were male. The respondents ranged in age from the 18-25 group to the over 57 years old group, with a mean age of approximately 48 years old. The average number of years that respondents had been salespeople was 25 years (standard deviation = 11.7), with the minimum being less than a year and the maximum being 45 years. The average number of years that the respondents had been with the specific company was 14 (standard deviation = 9.96), with the minimum being less than a year and the maximum being 42 years. The number of products sold ranged from 2 to over 1,000.

## Analysis

Although the purpose of Study 2 is to test the relationship of attachment with the other variables of interest (e.g., effort and performance), data was still collected on the antecedents of attachment in order to test the robustness of Study 1's results. As in Study 1, structural equation modeling was used to test the hypothesized main effect relationships, while multiple regression was used to test the proposed interaction effects. Since the robustness of Study 1's results regarding antecedents is tested, Study 2 was analyzed in two parts. First, solely the antecedents were tested to determine their relationship with attachment; this was done separately in order to stay consistent with Study 1 in terms of variables included. Then, the rest of the model was tested while the antecedents were controlled for. Fit characteristics for both parts are discussed (e.g., goodness-of-fit index and Bentler's comparative fit index) in Chapter V. Significance of the individual model paths (that represent the hypothesized relationships) were assessed by examining the standardized path coefficients and their associated p-values.

In addition, a common method factor was included in the model to account for shared method variance. Paths were added from the common method factor to the indicator variables and one of the paths was constrained to equality.



## CHAPTER V.

### RESULTS

#### Study 1: Measurement Model Evaluation

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess measure validation, which as mentioned earlier, has been suggested to be the most widely used statistical procedure for studying the relationships between observed and latent variables. Only multi-dimensional items were included in the CFA. The fit of the model was assessed by examining factor loadings from the latent variables to the indicator variables and the fit indices. An item analysis was also conducted to select the best items, while at the same time balancing the need for validity and reliability. Tests for convergent and discriminant validity were performed using the procedure outlined by Gerbing and Anderson (1988). Items were examined to ensure that all loaded well and that there was no evidence of cross-loadings; items that did not meet these two requirements were removed. Discriminant validity was tested using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) test, which indicates discriminant validity is supported if the average variance extracted exceeds the squared correlations between all pairs of constructs.

Study 1's final model demonstrated goodness-of-fit, assessed with chi-square tests, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI), and the incremental fit index (IFI). Acceptable model fits are

demonstrated through RMSEA values  $\leq .08$  and the CFI, TLI, and IFI values  $\geq .90$

(Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann 2005; Bentler 1990; Bentler and Bonett 1980; Marsh and Hocever 1985).

The measurement model did demonstrate a good overall fit with goodness of fit statistics as follows:  $\chi^2 (122) = 221.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = .062, CFI = .940, TLI = .924, and IFI = .941.

Descriptive statistics of the constructs are provided in Table I.

**Table I.****Descriptive Statistics (Study 1)**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>	<b>Standardized Loadings</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
Attachment	3.66	0.84		0.86	0.60
Attach1			0.85		
Attach2			0.78		
Attach3			0.74		
Attach4			0.72		
Challenge	3.14	0.96		0.73	0.48
Chall1			0.81		
Chall2			0.62		
Chall3			0.63		
Novelty	3.83	0.95		0.79	0.55
Nov1			0.70		
Nov2			0.75		
Nov3			0.77		
Identification	3.54	0.98		0.83	0.62
Id1			0.77		
Id2			0.79		
Id3			0.80		
Nostalgia	3.41	1.04		0.75	0.60
Nost1			0.83		
Nost2			0.71		
Ownership	3.74	0.84		0.76	0.51
Own1			0.72		
Own2			0.77		
Own3			0.64		

### Internal Consistency

In order to assess the internal consistency of the constructs, two measures were used following Fornell and Larcker's (1981) procedures—the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE is used to assess the amount of variance that can be attributed to the construct's measure relative to measurement error. In order to demonstrate internal consistency, composite reliabilities should exceed .70 and the average variance extracted should exceed .50 (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrman 2005; Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Table I. shows that composite reliabilities range from .73 to .86 while AVEs ranged from .48 to .62. While one construct, challenge, did fall slightly short of the .5 cut-off at .48, overall this indicates good internal consistency and also lends support for the reliability of the scales.

### Discriminant Validity

As mentioned earlier, discriminant validity was assessed through the variance extracted test proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Shared variance between pairs of constructs (calculated as the squared correlation between the constructs in question) is determined and compared to the variance extracted by the individual constructs. If the shared variance between a pair of constructs is lower than the average variance extracted by the individual factors, discriminant validity is established. As shown in Table II., the shared variance is lower than the AVE, thus demonstrating discriminant validity.

**Table II.**

**Intercorrelations and Shared Variances (Study 1)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Attachment	<b>.86/.6</b>	0.06	0.52	0.32	0.30	0.11
2 Novelty	0.25**	<b>.79/.55</b>	0.07	0.03	0.15	0.00
3 Identify	0.72**	0.27**	<b>.83/.62</b>	0.44	0.27	0.18
4 Nostalgia	0.56**	0.17*	0.67**	<b>.75/.60</b>	0.14	0.17
5 Ownership	0.55**	0.39**	0.52**	0.38**	<b>.76/.51</b>	0.08
6 Challenge	0.33**	-0.03	0.43**	0.42**	0.29**	<b>.73/.48</b>

The correlations are in the lower triangle of the matrix and shared variances are included in the upper triangle of the matrix.

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Composite Reliabilities and Average Variance Extracted are shown on the diagonal in bold.

### Convergent Validity

In order to determine convergent validity, the goodness-of-fit indices and the p-values associated with individual scale items were used. Each indicator was examined to determine whether it loaded significantly on the construct it is to represent. The modification indices were inspected for evidence of large cross loadings. Upon examination, the values for all indicator loadings are significant at ( $p < .001$ ), which indicates minimal cross loadings and is evidence of convergent validity (Gerbing and Anderson 1988; Byrne 2001).

### Main Effects

In the SEM, attachment was modeled with the antecedents (i.e., challenge, ownership, length of time selling, novelty, nostalgia, and identification) used as predictors of attachment. The fit statistics of the base model shows a chi-square of 238.624 with 169 degrees of freedom. The model also demonstrates good fit through the following indices: CFI = .961, TLI = .952, IFI = .962. In addition, RMSEA is .044, indicating good fit.

The results show that identification has a strong and positive impact on attachment ( $\beta = .713, p < .01$ ), in support of H4. The results also showed that ownership has a strong, positive impact on attachment ( $\beta = .294, p < .01$ ), in support of H6. However, H1, H2, H3, and H5 were not supported. Specifically, with H1, it was expected that challenge would have a positive effect on attachment, but this was not supported ( $\beta = -.108, ns$ ). With H2, it was expected that length would have a positive effect on attachment, but this was not supported ( $\beta = .029, ns$ ). H3 was not supported in that novelty did not have a positive effect on attachment ( $\beta = -.063, ns$ ). H5 was also not supported in that nostalgia did not have a positive effect on attachment ( $\beta = .022, ns$ ). In sum, H4 and H6 were the only supported hypotheses. The amount of variance explained in

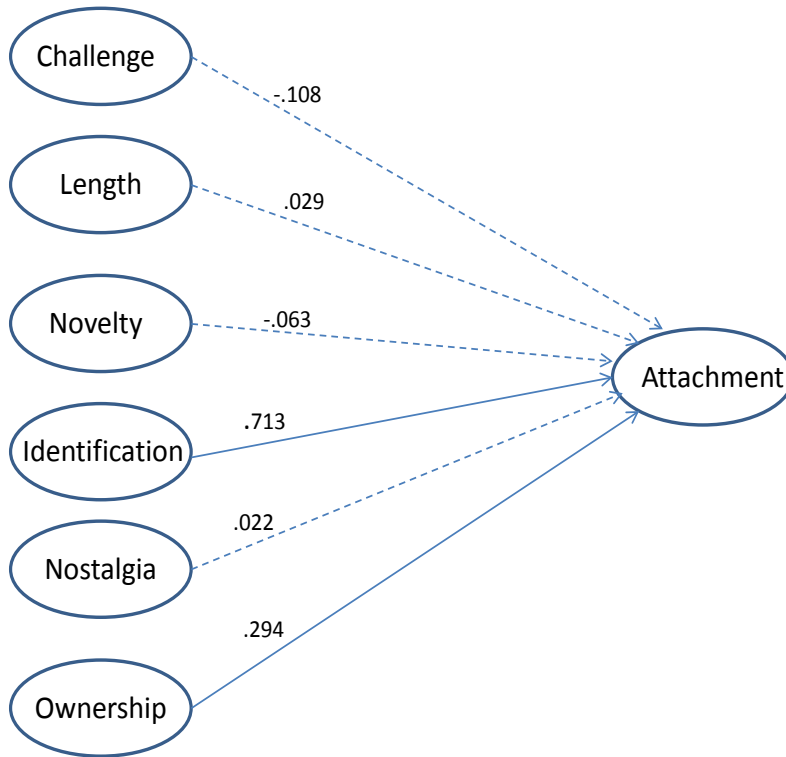
attachment by the antecedents was 75.3%. Please see Figure III. for the estimated model. The covariate of gender was not significant.

These results indicate that when a salesperson's identification with a product increases, attachment also increases. Similarly, when a salesperson's sense of ownership of a product increases, attachment also increases.

Study 1 demonstrates that attachment does exist in salespeople across industries and confirms two important antecedents of that attachment, identification and ownership. Study 2 now tests the relationship that attachment has on effort level and performance level. If Study 2 reveals that attachment increases effort level, then managers would be wise to increase their salespeople's identification with products and their sense of ownership of those products in order to form attachments.

**Figure III.**

**Estimated Model (Study 1)**



Continuous arrows represent significant paths (two-tailed test at  $p < .05$ ) and broken arrows represent non-significant paths.



## Study 2: Measurement Model Evaluation

As in Study 1, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess measure validation. Only multi-dimensional items were included in the CFA. The fit of the model was assessed by examining factor loadings from the latent variables to the indicator variables and the fit indices. An item analysis was also conducted to select the best items, while at the same time balancing the need for validity and reliability. Tests for convergent and discriminant validity were performed using the procedure outlined by Gerbing and Anderson (1988). Items were examined to ensure that all loaded well and that there was no evidence of cross-loadings; items that did not meet these two requirements were removed. Discriminant validity was tested using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) test, which indicates discriminant validity is supported if the average variance extracted exceeds the squared correlations between all pairs of constructs.

No further items were deleted since the items ran well in Study 1. The model's goodness-of-fit was assessed using chi-square tests, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and IFI. Again, as noted in Study 1 results, acceptable model fit is indicated by RMSEA values of less than .08, and CFI, TLI, and IFI values greater than .90.

The measurement model indicated good overall fit with the goodness-of-fit statistics for the model as follows:  $\chi^2(388) = 539.813$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = .051, CFI = .938, TLI = .926, and IFI = .940. Descriptive statistics of the constructs are provided in Table III.

**Table III.****Descriptive Statistics (Study 2)**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>	<b>Standardized</b>		
			<b>Loadings</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
Attachment	3.47	0.70		0.87	0.63
Attach1			0.75		
Attach2			0.82		
Attach3			0.84		
Attach4			0.77		
Challenge	2.307	0.93		0.80	0.57
Chall1			0.80		
Chall2			0.71		
Chall3			0.75		
Novelty	3.91	0.63		0.60	0.33
Nov1			0.61		
Nov2			0.48		
Nov3			0.63		
Identification	2.95	0.93		0.92	0.79
Id1			0.89		
Id2			0.84		
Id3			0.93		
Nostalgia	2.40	0.75		0.92	0.85
Nost1			0.98		
Nost2			0.86		
Ownership	4.01	0.583		0.78	0.55
Own1			0.77		
Own2			0.84		
Own3			0.59		
Quota	4.00	0.83		0.86	0.67
Quota1			0.86		
Quota2			0.75		
Quota3			0.85		

Table continued on the next page

Table III. Continued

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>	<b>Standardized</b>		<b>AVE</b>
			<b>Loadings</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	
Effort	4.04	0.86		0.89	0.59
Effort1			0.77		
Effort2			0.79		
Effort3			0.81		
Effort4			0.78		
Effort5			0.61		
Effort6			0.83		
Congruency	4.13	0.43		0.83	0.63
Cong1			0.77		
Cong2			0.99		
Cong3			0.57		
Performance	4.31	0.542	0.48	N/A	N/A

### Internal Consistency

Two measures were used to assess the internal consistency of the constructs—the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE), both calculated using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) procedures. As described in Study 1 results, composite reliabilities exceeding .7 and AVEs above .5 indicate internal consistency (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrman 2005; Bagozzi and Yi 1988). As Table III. shows, composite reliabilities ranged from .33 to .92 and AVEs ranged from .33 to .85. As the .33 reveals, novelty failed to show good internal consistency and reliability. However, the novelty items ran well in Study 1 and showed good internal consistency and reliability there; thus, they were retained in Study 2. The other constructs demonstrated good internal consistency and also provided support for the reliability of those scales.

### Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed in the same manner as that used in Study 1, through the variance extracted test proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Again, the shared variance between pairs of constructs was calculated and compared to the variance extracted by the individual constructs in question. Discriminant validity is demonstrated if the shared variance between a pair of constructs is lower than the AVE of the individual factors. Table IV. illustrates that the shared variances between all possible pairs of constructs are lower than the AVE of the factor pair, thus demonstrating discriminant validity.

**Table IV.**

**Intercorrelations and Shared Variances (Study 2)**

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Attachment	<b>.87/.63</b>	0.00	0.07	0.03	0.24	0.03	0.07	0.03	0.22	0.01
2	Challenge	-0.01	<b>.80/.57</b>	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.12	0.00	0.04	0.02
3	Novelty	0.27**	-0.26**	<b>.6/.33</b>	0.01	0.16	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.04
4	Congruency	0.17*	-0.16*	0.08	<b>.83/.63</b>	0.01	0.08	0.09	0.02	0.15	0.01
5	Identify	0.49**	-0.15	0.40**	0.11	<b>.92/.79</b>	0.00	0.09	0.14	0.12	0.00
6	Effort	0.18*	-0.21**	0.05	0.29**	0.07	<b>.89/.59</b>	0.13	0.01	0.10	0.02
7	Quota	0.27**	-0.35**	0.14	0.29**	0.31**	0.36**	<b>.86/.67</b>	0.00	0.08	0.03
8	Nostalgia	0.19*	0.00	0.10	-0.15	0.37**	-0.08	0.01	<b>.92/.85</b>	0.01	0.01
9	Ownership	0.47**	-0.19*	0.27**	0.39**	0.34**	0.32**	0.28**	-0.12	<b>.78/.55</b>	0.03
10	Performance	0.09	-0.15	0.21*	0.11	0.06	0.15	0.13	-0.10	0.17*	<b>.23/.23</b>

The correlations are in the lower triangle of the matrix and shared variances are included in the upper triangle of the matrix.

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Composite Reliabilities and Average Variance Extracted are shown in bold on the diagonal.

### Convergent Validity

The goodness-of-fit indices and the significance values associated with individual items of the scale were again used to measure convergent validity. Each indicator was examined to determine if it loaded significantly on the construct it was intended to represent. Modification indices were also inspected for evidence of large cross-loadings. As all indicator loadings are significant ( $p < .001$ ), there appears to be convergent validity.

### Main Effects

As noted in the methodology description, Study 2 was analyzed in two parts. The first model was examined using solely the antecedents and attachment in order to stay consistent with Study 1 so as to test the robustness of that study's results. Fit statistics showed that the model does have good fit. The chi-square is 174.810 ( $p=.114$ ) with 156 degrees of freedom. The goodness-of-fit indices are as follows: CFI = .985, TLI= .977, IFI = .985. RMSEA is .028. The second part of the analysis tested the relationship of attachment to the other constructs of interest (e.g., effort), while controlling for the antecedents. The fit here was also good. The chi-square is 516.422 ( $p<.001$ ) with 386 degrees of freedom. The goodness-of-fit indices are as follows: CFI=.940, TLI= .922, IFI=.943. In addition, RMSEA is .047.

Consistent with Study 1, and thus demonstrating the robustness of these results, Study 2's results show that both identification and ownership have strong and positive impacts on attachment ( $\beta=.301$ ,  $p<.05$ ;  $\beta=.478$ ,  $p<.01$ ), in support of H4 and H6, respectively. H1, regarding challenge, was not significant ( $\beta=-.002$ , ns). Length of time selling was not significant, failing to support H2 ( $\beta=.134$ , ns). H3, concerning novelty, was also not significant ( $\beta=-.150$ , ns). H5, regarding nostalgia, also failed to be supported ( $\beta=.065$ , ns). Thus, of the antecedents, two were

supported, identification and ownership. Thus, Study 2 replicates the results of Study 1, showing robustness of the results. The variance in attachment explained by the antecedents was 36.2%.

H7 represents the direct relationship between quota and effort towards the focal product and was supported ( $\beta=.333$ ,  $p<.01$ ). H8 represents the direct relationship hypothesized between attachment and effort. This was supported ( $\beta=.323$ ,  $p<.01$ ). The last main effect hypothesized was H12, representing the link between effort and performance. This was also supported ( $\beta=.259$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The amount of variance explained in effort and performance as explained by their antecedents were 30.2%, and 7.1%, respectively.

### Moderating Effects

Next, the results of the hypothesized moderating effects are presented. For this analysis, all variables, except for the dependent variable, were mean-centered. All main effects were included in the interaction analyses. In H9, it was hypothesized that product attachment would moderate the relationship between quota and effort such that the effect of the quota system on effort level would be stronger when attachment is greater. This interaction was tested using multiple regression. H9 failed to be supported ( $\beta=-.115$ ,  $t= -1.472$ , ns). Thus, although quota has a direct effect on effort, the relationship is not moderated by product attachment. Thus, it seems that expectancy theory still holds.

H10 hypothesized a three-way interaction in that career stage would moderate the impact of salesperson product attachment on the relationship between quota and effort such that **(a)** when in the exploration and expansion stages, the impact is attenuated whereas **(b)** when in the maintenance and disengagement stages, the impact is strengthened. The interaction between attachment and quota on effort was examined at each career stage (1-4). In this analysis, again

all main effects were included, as well as the pertinent two-way interactions. For all stages, 1-4, this three-way interaction was not significant, thus failing to support H10 (Career stage 1:  $\beta=.074$ ,  $t=.823$ , ns; stage 2:  $\beta=-.01$ ,  $t=-.104$ , ns; stage 3:  $\beta=.087$ ,  $t=.725$ , ns; stage 4:  $\beta=-.018$ ,  $t=-.199$ , ns). While the three-way interaction was not significant, it was found that stage 3 (maintenance) did significantly moderate the relationship between quota and effort such that when salespeople rate themselves highly as being in stage 3, the link between the quota system and effort is weakened ( $\beta=-.187$ ,  $-2.054$ ,  $p<.05$ ). While not hypothesized and not directly related to attachment, this does provide support for career stage theory as will be discussed in Chapter VI.

H11 represents the hypothesized relationship between market share and attachment on effort such that the impact of product attachment on salesperson effort level (towards the attached product) is stronger in low market share products compared to higher market share products. This relationship is marginally significant ( $\beta= -.153$ ,  $t=-1.907$ ,  $p=.058$ ). This result is quite interesting in that effort seems to benefit when products are of lower versus higher market share.

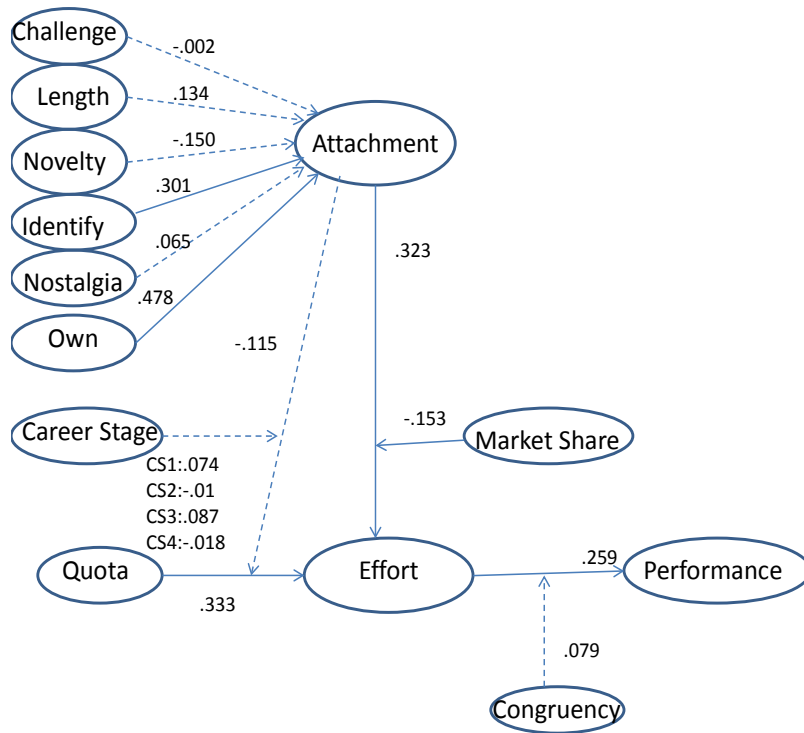
Finally, H13 represents the hypothesized relationship between congruency and effort on performance such that when a lack of congruency occurs through a low quota rating of a product and high attachment of that product, the relationship between effort and performance is attenuated. However, this hypothesis was not supported ( $\beta=.079$ ,  $t=.958$ , ns). The lack of significance here is surprising—high congruency does not seem to strengthen the relationship between effort and performance. The control variables (gender, age, and mood) were all found to be non-significant at  $p<.05$ . In addition, the links between identification and effort and between challenge and effort were controlled for and found to be non-significant at  $p<.05$ .



The results indicate that although attachment does not moderate the relationship between quota and effort, it does directly impact effort as shown in H8. As attachment increases, effort towards that product increases. As effort is also shown to directly impact performance, this relationship is very important. If managers want to increase effort level of a salesperson towards a particular product, he or she should encourage an attachment towards that product. Based on the results of Study 1 and Study 2, this can be done both by helping salespeople identify with the product and by creating a sense of ownership in the salesperson. Thus, managers can take steps to increase levels of ownership and identification, both of which should lead to attachments toward the focal product. Figure IV. shows the results for all the hypotheses tested. The next chapter provides a discussion of the results, limitations, and potential future research avenues.

Figure IV.

Estimated Model (Study 2)



Continuous arrows represent significant paths (two-tailed test at  $p < .1$ ) and broken arrows represent non-significant paths.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Discussion

The goals of this research were to investigate the hypothesized construct of salesperson product attachment and to determine its impact on the relationships between quota, effort, and performance. From the two studies, support was found for the attachment construct across industries, ranging widely from food brokerages to insurance companies to toy companies, among many others. More specifically, two antecedents to attachment, identification and ownership, were found in both studies, demonstrating robustness of results. As mentioned earlier, identification has been found to have a significant impact on level of salesperson effort (Hughes and Ahearne 2010). However, while identification is shown in the present research to indicate attachment, it is a separate construct. Brand identification involves a sense of shared fate and perceived similarity (Hughes and Ahearne 2010); however, brand attachment may occur without brand identification. A salesperson may not recognize any perceived similarities regarding himself and yet still feel an attachment towards the product. In addition, the constructs of identification and attachment demonstrated discriminant validity in this research, and when the link between identification and effort was controlled for, the link between attachment and effort was still significant. Thus, this research adds to the literature on salesperson identification by showing it as a predictor of attachment.

These antecedents support human needs theory, including two of the three components of relatedness and autonomy (the need of competence was not represented in the results). As discussed in Chapter III., human needs theory states that humans strive to fulfill three basic needs, which consist of the three components just named. In this research, the need for autonomy was a distinct need of the three in that ownership, which was considered in this research as being related to autonomy, was significant in both studies. In addition, identification, which was significant in both studies as well, confirms the need of relatedness among salespeople. The use of this theory to explain salesperson behavior was not found in the comprehensive literature search and may provide promising to future research.

This research also supports attachment theory, which states that people are born “with innate behaviors that function to attract and maintain proximity to attachment figures (supportive others) to protect against psychological or physical threats when the individuals are in distress” (Richards and Schat 2011, p 169). As mentioned earlier, attachment has been extensively studied in psychology (Bowlby 1979; Mikulincer and Arad 1999) but has received limited attention in marketing (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Thomson 2006). From an extensive literature research, it appears that salesperson product attachment has never been researched. There are several factors that make this sales context different from the context of an attachment in a personal relationship or of an attachment between a consumer and a brand. As noted earlier, the salesperson may not own or even use the product (e.g., perhaps a female representative is selling a male-oriented product). Further, salespeople often lack choice in which product they are to sell whereas consumers may choose which products to use and in personal relationships people are often able to choose with whom they are in close relationships. Further, as Hughes and Ahearne (2010) note, salespeople have a higher level of exposure to and

involvement with the brands (compared to consumers), and the product's success or failure has direct consequences for the salesperson's economic well-being, which differentiates this relationship from that in personal relationships. Thus, studying attachment in the salesperson context was clearly needed in order to understand how attachment translates to this different context.

In this research, attachments are shown to occur in salespeople in relation to the products they sell. These attachments give a sense of security to the salesperson. The salesperson seeks to maintain closeness to the object, which in the sales context means that the salesperson places more effort onto the product. Attachments have a strong emotional component, and the results of the research show that researchers and practitioners alike would be well advised to view salespeople holistically, instead of solely as rational beings.

This research also lends support to career stage theory in the un-hypothesized result that the third career stage of maintenance significantly impacted the relationship between quota and effort in a negative manner. This could potentially be explained by less emphasis on compensation that has been found in previous research (Flaherty and Pappas 2002). As noted earlier, career stage theory states that individuals progress through the four distinct career stages (exploration, expansion, maintenance, and disengagement), with each stage being unique in terms of motivation, work experiences, job attitudes, and relationships (e.g., Allen and Meyer 1993; Cron and Slocum 1986). Furthermore, the present results support the prior finding that compensation seeking was higher during exploration and establishment stages than during maintenance (Flaherty and Pappas 2002). For those salespeople in the maintenance stage, they have typically proven themselves at selling and are experiencing high levels of financial income, thus making compensation less of a salient concern (Flaherty and Pappas 2002).

Finally, the results regarding market share are quite interesting, especially considering the expressed need to further research market share due to prior mixed findings (Park and Holloway 2003). The finding that higher market share products versus lower market share products weaken the relationship between attachment and effort is quite interesting. It was suggested in the qualitative phase that this is due to more autonomy being given to salespeople on lower market share products, whereas higher market share products are more closely monitored. This is particularly interesting for managers. Having a higher market share product reduces the likelihood that the attachment leads to increased effort, whereas the lower market share products may benefit more from having attachments, as the link between attachment and effort is strengthened.

### Research Contributions

This research makes several important contributions to sales research by uncovering a new construct that impacts the key construct of effort. The two studies show that such an attachment is prevalent among salespeople across industries. As understanding the factors that influence effort level among salespeople has been noted as being critical to sales research (Srivastava et al. 2001; Hughes and Ahearne 2010), the uncovering of this new construct that directly affects effort level is quite significant. In addition, antecedents of this new construct were determined. Ownership and identification were shown to be strong antecedents of attachment, which shows the need for more research on these constructs. As mentioned above, these results support using human needs theory in better understanding salesperson behavior. As this theory was not found to have been used in salesperson research before, this in itself is a significant research implication.

This research adds to the salesperson career stage research by revealing an un-hypothesized result. When salespeople are in the maintenance stage, the link between quota and effort is weaker. While this was not hypothesized and does not appear to relate directly to attachment, this finding does add support to prior research in career stage.

Finally, the link between market share and attachment on effort furthers the research implications of this piece. Higher market share products seem to weaken the link between attachment and effort, whereas effort level would be more impacted by attachment in lower market share products. Market share clearly plays a significant role in effort level, and quite interestingly, lower market share products are the ones that seem critical in attachments.

### Managerial Implications

In addition to the theoretical contributions just described, this research has several managerial implications as well. Effort and performance are of top concerns for managers, and this research has implications for these constructs. This research will allow companies to identify attachment and even encourage attachments to increase effort level. Managers also often search for ways to improve salesperson effort on those products that have low market shares; this research shows that managers should encourage attachments in those low market share products, particularly through creating feelings of identification and ownership in products. Feelings of identification can be encouraged by showing similarities between the salesperson in the product. A potential way to increase feelings of ownership that was revealed in the qualitative phase was to place “point persons” for these products in which the “point person” is in charge of calling meetings on the product, reporting performance changes in the product, and so on.

As noted earlier, salespeople are unique human resources that are less susceptible to imitation and more durable than other types of resources (Barney 1991). Thus, salesperson motivation is a critical aspect of organizational strategy. This research shows that while salesperson motivation is often thought of in a primarily rational manner, researchers and practitioners alike should recognize that emotions also play a powerful role in motivation, as is the case with attachment. Viewing salespeople more holistically could greatly improve our understanding of effort and performance issues.

### Limitations

While this research does have strong contributions, it is acknowledged that there are some limitations. Such limitations must be considered when viewing the results. One potential limitation is that there could be other antecedents to attachment that were not uncovered during the qualitative phase. Two antecedents were consistently significant across both studies, but others may exist, showing the need for more research. Second, while the performance measures were provided by managers, objective data may provide better data. Also, this research was cross-sectional in nature, and while attachments by definition should stay fairly stable across time, performance may change due to various factors. Finally, self-report may be an issue; while this was partly overcome by having managers rate salespeople on performance, other measures such as congruency may have been impacted by self-report bias.

### Directions for Future Research

Additional research could address the effect that attachment has on constructs beyond those examined in this study (i.e., effort and performance). For instance, customer loyalty to salespeople instead of to the company has been noted in research (Palmatier, Scheer, and



Steenkamp 2007). When salespeople leave for a different company, customers may move with them. Adding to this problem is the tendency for higher turnover in sales jobs. However, if salespeople form strong attachments to certain products, perhaps they are more likely to stay with the company. This could form a potentially fruitful avenue of research.

Another option would be to investigate how attachment affects other aspects of a salesperson's job. Perhaps salespeople with attachments have higher job satisfaction. As mentioned in attachment literature review earlier, when a person is stressed, he or she often turns to the object of their attachment for comfort. Perhaps having an attachment that provides stress relief allows salespeople to be more productive in times of stress compared to their counterparts who lack such an attachment. This would be particularly interesting to investigate during some type of company restructuring period.

Finally, further research on the antecedent ownership is needed. This proved to be a dominant factor in both studies. Ways to increase feelings of ownership among salespeople would prove particularly beneficial. This type of research may be best performed using field studies.

## Conclusion

This research investigated the proposed construct of attachment, including its impact on key constructs such as effort and performance. This research sought to answer the following research questions: 1) what antecedents lead to the formation of salesperson product attachment?, 2) does product attachment alter the relationship between the quota system and salesperson effort?, 3) what role does career stage play on the influence of product attachment

and the quota system on salesperson effort?, and 4) how does market share impact the relationship between salesperson product attachment and effort level?

In regards to the first question, the findings indicate that identification and ownership are both strong antecedents of product attachment. Thus, managers should enhance a salesperson's feelings of identification and feelings of ownership if they want a salesperson to form an attachment. These results were consistent across two studies, thus showing robustness of results.

For the second research question, while attachment was not found to alter the relationship between quota systems and effort, attachment was found to have a direct and positive impact on effort. As mentioned before, research on ways to increase effort among salespeople is prevalent. This research adds to this research stream by uncovering a new way to increase effort.

The third research question involved the role of career stage on the impact of attachment on the relationship between quota and effort. Again, while this 3-way interaction was not significant, it did point to an interesting finding that for those salespeople who are in the third career stage, maintenance, the impact of the quota system on effort is weaker. This supplements the research on career stages.

Finally, in determining the role of market share on the impact of attachment on effort, it was demonstrated in these results that higher market share products decrease the impact of attachment on effort. This can be especially helpful to managers trying to increase market share of those lower products through increased effort.

Thus, from this research it can be concluded that attachment is indeed an important construct that affects effort level of salespeople across industries. Such attachments can be

formed through identification and ownership. The formation of such attachments increases effort level towards those focal products, making this research of key interest to managers.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SALES LITERATURE REVIEW (EFFORT, PERFORMANCE, CAREER STAGE)

SALES LITERATURE REVIEW (EFFORT, PERFORMANCE, CAREER STAGE)

Study	Variables Studied	Subjects/Data Collection Method	Statistic-al Analyses	Context	Results	Contributions	Theory Used
LaForge, Cravens, and Young (1986)	Conceptual piece	N.A.	N.A.	Effort	N.A.	Provides 2-step procedure to determine the deployment analytical approach best suited for a firm's particular emphasis.	

Ingram, Lee, and Skinner (1989)	Effort, motivation, commitment, performance	Industrial salespeople	Factor analysis	Focus is on commitment construct	Effort mediates the relationship between job commitment and sales performance as well as extrinsic motivation and sales performance	Provides evidence concerning discriminant and convergent validity of measures of 2 types of work commitment, distinguishes expectancy and commitment, and investigates the relationships between motivation, commitment, and 2 important outcomes, effort, and performance	
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VandeWalle, Brown, Cron, and Slocum Jr (1999)	Learning goal orientation, sales performance, goal setting, performance goal orientation, effort, and planning	Salespeople of a medical sales distributor	Regression	Longitudinal field study	Found effort to performance link. A learning goal orientation had a positive relationship with sales performance; this relationship was mediated by goal setting, effort, and planning	Strong positive influence of learning goal orientation on the level of goal setting	Theory of planned behavior
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Srivastava, Strutton, & Pelton (2001)	Salesperson Effort, Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, Work Involvement, Job Challenge, Job Satisfaction, Positive Feedback, Negative Feedback	230 car and truck salespeople	Regression	Self-administered questionnaire regarding their job	Found that individual (i.e., self-efficacy, locus of control), organizational (i.e., involvement, challenge, and satisfaction), and supervisory factors (i.e., positive and negative feedback) were each significantly and positively associated with salesperson effort	Identified factors that influenced salesperson effort. Developed recommendations regarding what types of candidates should be hired, and what should be done with those persons after hiring.	Expectancy framework
Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles (2002)	Effort, Performance, Self-Efficacy, and Competitiveness	Salespeople from cellular phone company	SEM	Self-administered survey	Confirm the direct positive link between effort and performance.	Found that self-efficacy not only directly impacts performance but indirectly through effort as well. Effort also mediates the relationship between competitiveness and performance	
Dubinsky and Skinner (2002)	Conceptual Piece	N.A.	N.A.	Overview of discretionary effort	N.A.	Develops propositions regarding antecedents of salesperson discretionary effort.	

Jaramillo and Mulki (2008)	Effort, Job Performance, Self-Efficacy, Intrinsic Motivation, Supportive Leadership	Salespeople from a large multinational pharmaceutical company operating in North America	SEM	Questionnaire	Shows that supportive leadership leads to higher salesperson effort directly and through a mediating process that involves intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy	Shows that lack of support may be the underlying force behind low motivation and self-efficacy.	Attribution Theory, Expectancy Theory
Fu, Bolander, and Jones (2009)	Effort, Commitment, Job Satisfaction	Salespeople responsible for selling HR services	SEM	Online survey	Found only one component of organizational commitment (affective commitment) has a positive direct effect on sales effort	Examines the value of decomposing commitment into its 3 components in a sales context	Social Identity Theory

Hughes and Ahearne (2010)	Brand identification, effort, sales performance, control system alignment	Salespeople, route supervisors, and sales managers from large distributor sales organizations	SEM	Survey, salesperson brand identification	Brand identification can increase salesperson effort behind a specific brand and ultimately improved brand performance, even in the face of control systems to the contrary	Shows that there are other psychological forces a company could leverage to positively influence salesperson effort	
Badrinarayanan and Laverie (2011)	Brand identification, sales effort, brand advocacy, manufacturer characteristics, manufacturer representative characteristics	Retail salespeople in the consumer durables divisions of a major national retailer	SEM	Questionnaire posted on the retailer's intranet	Factors related to the manufacturer as well as the manufacturer's representatives were found to influence brand identification. Brand identification is found to influence both brand advocacy and sales effort.	Forms a framework integrating the antecedents and outcomes of brand identification and tests it	Motivation Theory, self-efficacy theory, leadership theory



Mehta, Anderson, and Dubinsky 2000	Career stage, rewards	Sales managers from data bases representing 15 industries	MANOVA, ANCOVA	Questionnaire	Career stage was found to have an influence on the importance of 2 or 3 intrinsic rewards (achievement of market goals and retaining respect of salespeople) and 4 of 6 extrinsic rewards (salary and commission, opportunities for promotion, fringe benefits, and retirement plan).	Determines impact of career stage on intrinsic and extrinsic rewards	
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Flaherty and Pappas (2002)	Career stage, turnover intentions	Automobile salespeople	MANCOVA	Questionnaire	The notion of career stages continues to play a role in today's sales organizations; the career stage scale and occupational tenure are significant predictors of turnover intentions	Suggests that traditional psychometric measures of career stage have more explanatory power than demographic measures such as age or tenure when predicting turnover intentions	
Pappas and Flaherty (2006)	Career stage, risk attitudes, pay mix	Business-to-business salespeople operating in service organizations	Regression	Questionnaire	Career stage and risk preferences impact the relationship between compensation and the three components of motivation	Suggests that characteristics of the individual salesperson are important when determining compensation	

Miao, Lund, and Evans 2009	Career stage, challenge seeking, task enjoyment, compensation seeking, and recognition seeking	Industrial salespeople	MANOVA, ANOVA	Questionnaire	Results indicate that salespeople's intrinsic/extrinsic motivation differs along the cognitive but not affective dimensions across career stages; salespeople in the establishment stage were found to have higher levels of challenge seeking, and compensation seeking was higher among exploration and establishment stages than maintenance	Helps fill the gap in career stage research, consisting of supporting the relationship between career stage and higher-order motivation	Social exchange theory
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APPENDIX B  
ATTACHMENT LITERATURE REVIEW (CONCEPTUAL)

ATTACHMENT LITERATURE REVIEW (CONCEPTUAL)

Author/Year	Overview	Contribution
Bretherton (1992)	Attachment theory is based on the joint work of John Bowlby and Mary Salter Ainsworth. This paper seeks to summarize the separate and joint contributions to attachment theory made by Bowlby and Ainsworth, as well as noting other theorists and researchers whose work influenced them or was influenced by them.	The origins of ideas that later became central to attachment theory are documented. New directions are discussed.
Sable (2008)	Explores the concept of adult attachment. Propose that there is an attachment behavioral system that operates throughout the lives of adults.	Updates Bowlby's distinctive ethological-evolutionary framework with findings from neurobiology and attachment research.
Park, MacInnis, and Priester (2006)	The nomological network of brand attachment has not been fully delineated. This paper seeks to develop this network.	Clearly delineates brand attachment from potentially related constructs; provides a nomological network for brand attachment.
Park, MacInnis, & Priester (2009)	Much remains to be learned about the impact of myriad meaning makers on the meaning consumers attach to brands, the processes and motivators that link the brand with the self, the stability of these connections, and their impact on the nature and type of relationships consumers develop with brands.	Suggest future empirical research need to understand the conceptual properties of brand attachment relative to other brand relationship-oriented constructs, understand when brand attachment would be most likely to develop, how it affects customers' processing of brand information, brand-oriented behaviors, and the brand's market performance, why it is desirable from the perspective of customers as well as a firm, and what fosters its evolution, habitual processes, and termination.

		Suggests that the attachment construct may serve as a useful higher order construct that discriminates among the relationships identified by Fournier (1998).
Park, MacInnis, and Priester 2009	Differentiates brand attachment from other constructs, discusses brand attachment and brand-related behaviors, discusses possible reasons for development of attachment, and discusses importance of attachment to marketing	Lists the potential antecedents to brand attachment as brands that entertain, enable, and/or enrich.

APPENDIX C

ATTACHMENT LITERATURE REVIEW (EMPIRICAL)

ATTACHMENT LITERATURE REVIEW (EMPIRICAL)

Study	Variables Studied	Subjects/Data Collection Method	Statistical Analyses	Context	Results	Contributions	Theory Used
Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005	Brand attachment	68 students (S1), 120 students (S2), 65 students (S3), 184 students (S4), 179 nonstudent responders (S5)	EFA, CFA, SEM	Asked to think about a brand to which they were attached and complete survey	Scale is developed in Studies 1 and 2, validated in Study 3; convergent validity is examined in Study 4; Study 5 demonstrates discriminant validity and predictive validity	Propose a reliable and valid scale that reflects consumers' emotional attachments to brands	Attachment theory
Thomson (2006)	Autonomy, relatedness, competence, attachment strength, satisfaction, commitment, and trust	164 students (S1), 25 students (S2), 107 adult respondents	SEM (S1), Qualitative (S2), hierarchical regression (S3)	Celebrity Brands	When a human brand enhances a person's feelings of autonomy and relatedness and doesn't suppress feelings of	Addresses why consumers form strong attachments to human brands	Attachment Theory, Human Needs Theory



					competence, the person is likely to become more attached to it		
Esch, Langner, Schmitt, and Geus 2006	Brand attachment, current purchase, future purchase, brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand awareness, and brand image	400 business students from large European university	SEM	2 brands with high strength (a chocolate and an athletic shoe) and 2 with low strength (same categories)	Brand attachment is found to have a direct positive relationship with current purchase behavior and future purchase intentions	Provided a comprehensive model that combined brand knowledge and brand relationship perspectives, and showing how these influence consumer behavior	Esch, Langner, Schmitt, and Geus 2006
Swaminathan, Stilley, & Ahluwalia (2008)	Relationship anxiety, relationship avoidance, brand personality, consumption situation, purchase likelihood, ideal self-concept connection, relationship expectation, brand choice	200 participants (S1), 179 participants (S2), 124 participants (S3)	ANOVA	Athletic shoes (S1), fictitious brand of clock (S2), 2 brands of jeans (S3)	Anxiously attached individuals are more likely to be differentially influenced by brand personalities; level of avoidance predicts the types of brand personality that are most relevant to anxious individuals	Examines the moderating role of consumer's attachment style in the impact of brand personality	Attachment Theory, brand personality

Fedorikhin, Park, and Thomson (2008)	Attachment (elevated vs. low), level of fit (low, moderate, high), purchase intentions (DV), willingness to pay (DV), word of mouth (DV)	155 students (S1), 182 students (S2)	GLM	Brand extension from brand of sneakers to shorts, sunglasses, or grills (S1), used Authorware software in which respondents chose 1 brand from the product category	Results show that brand attachment goes beyond attitude and fit in determining consumers' behavioral reactions to brand extensions such as purchase intentions, willingness to pay, word-of-mouth, and forgiveness. The effect is pronounced at high and moderate but not low levels of fit. Attachment is also shown to have an impact on the extent to which the extension is categorized as a member of the parent brand family, which partially mediates attachment's effects.	Demonstrates effects of attachment on consumer purchasing intentions towards and willingness to pay for extensions. Determines factors that drive the effects in the context of real brands.	Attachment theory, categorization theory
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Lin (2010)	Work engagement, organizational trust, perceived economic citizenship,, perceived legal citizenship,	428 personnel from 20 large industrial firms	SEM	Industrial firm	Confirms positive influences of 4 dimensions of corporate citizenship on organizational trust and work engagement	Proposes research model based on attachment theory that examines the role of corporate citizenship in the formation of organizational trust and work engagement	Attachment theory
Park, Priester, MacInnis, & Wan (2009)	Brand self connection, prominence of thoughts and feelings, commitmentResponse latency	191 students (S1), 121 participants (S2), 280 participants (S3)	EFA (S1), regression (S2), LISREL (S3)	3 brands, iPod (S3)	Supports validity of the 2-element CPAM (connection prominence attachment model) measure (brand self connection and prominence of thoughts and feelings) as predictor of commitment	Develop valid brand attachment scale that reflects core properties of brand attachment concept	Attachment theory, self-expansion theory
Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci (2010)	Brand attachment, Brand attitude strength	Consumers (S1), 108 students (S2), 141 students (S3), 2000 customers at	EFA (S1), CFA & SEM (S2), CFA (S3), SEM (S4)	Responded to scale using 3 different brands (S1), Apple iPod	Developed scale (S1), find that brand-self connection and prominence both contribute to the	Define brand attachment (the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the	Self-expansion theory

		retail bank (S4)		(S2), Nike shoes (S3), retail bank (S4)	measurement of attachment; supports distinct constructs of attachment and brand attitude strength (S2), find that brand attachment better predicts consumers' intentions to enact difficult behaviors than brand attitude strength (S3); demonstrated that brand-self connection and brand prominence both indicate attachment; brand attachment outperformed brand attitude strength as predictor of key behaviors (S4)	self), develop and validate measure of attachment, demonstrate that brand attachment offers value over brand attitude strength in predicting key consumer behaviors	
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Lambert-Pandraud & Laurent 2010	Brand attachment, innovativeness, age, brand choice	Data obtained from large-scale mail survey of men and women (S1); female perfume consumers	Factor analyses, SEM	Perfume	Younger consumers have a greater propensity to change their preferred brand whereas older consumers exhibit a propensity to remain attached for longer duration to same brand.	Compares role of attachment, innovativeness, and nostalgia in purchasing behavior	Theory of nostalgia, attachment
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Malar, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger (2011)	Emotional brand attachment (DV), perceived actual self congruence, perceived ideal congruence, product involvement, self-esteem, and public self-consciousness	1329 consumers (S1), 980 consumers (S2)	AMOS	167 brands	Implications of self-congruence for consumers' emotional brand attachment are complex and differ by consumers' product involvement, consumers' individual difference variables, and the type of self-congruence; actual self-congruence had the greatest impact on emotional brand attachment	Addresses whether the brand's personality should match the consumer's actual self or the consumer's ideal self in order to create brand attachment	Attachment Theory, Self-expansion theory, cognitive-consistency theory, self-verification theory
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Richards and Schat 2011	Attachment, trait affectivity, the Big Five, emotion regulation behaviors, turnover intentions, reports of counterproductive work behavior and OCB	Convenience sample (S1), participants recruited through nonprofit service (S2)	CFA, hierarchical regression	Survey	Results showed that anxiety and avoidance represent 2 higher order dimensions of attachment that predicted these criteria (except for counterproductive work behavior) after controlling for individual difference variables and organizational commitment	Extends attachment theory to explain individual behavior in organizations	Attachment theory
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APPENDIX D  
CONSTRUCT MEASUREMENTS



## CONSTRUCT MEASUREMENTS

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Conceptual Definition</u>	<u>Original Scale Items</u>	<u>Operational Definition</u>	<u>Sources</u>
Challenge	Refers to the feeling that a product is an “underdog,” which creates sense of challenge for salesperson		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel (or have felt) that this product is an underdog.</li> <li>• I feel challenged to prove my product is as good as or better than the others in the marketplace.</li> <li>• I enjoy a sense of challenge selling this product.</li> <li>• Many customers view my competitors as having a better product than the one I sell.</li> </ul>	Developed based on preliminary interviews
Length of Time Selling	Refers to the amount of time the salesperson has been selling the product		I have been selling this product ___years.	Similar to length of time selling with company (e.g., Marshall, Laask, Moncrief 2004)

Novelty	Represents a product that is unique or different in some manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very novel for this category/Very ordinary for this category (r)</li> <li>• Challenged existing ideas for this category/ Did not challenge existing ideas for this category (r)</li> <li>• Offered new ideas to the category/Did not offer new ideas to this category (r)</li> <li>• Creative/Not creative (r)</li> <li>• Interesting/Uninteresting (r)</li> <li>• Spawned ideas for other products/Did not generate ideas for other products (r)</li> <li>• Encouraged fresh thinking/Did not encourage fresh thinking (r)</li> </ul>	<p>This product...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is very ordinary for this category/ is very novel for this category</li> <li>• Did not challenge existing ideas for this category/challenged existing ideas for this category</li> <li>• Did not offer new ideas to this category/offered new ideas to the category</li> <li>• Is not creative/is creative</li> <li>• Is uninteresting/is interesting</li> <li>• Did not generate ideas for other products/spawned ideas for other products</li> <li>• Did not encourage fresh thinking/ offered new ideas to the category</li> <li>• Is not unique/is unique</li> <li>• Is not fun to sell/is fun to sell</li> <li>• Is the same as other products/ is very different from other products.</li> <li>• Is boring/is exciting.</li> </ul>	Moorman (1995)
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Identification	<p>The degree to which an individual defines himself/herself by the same attributes that s(he) believes defines a product. Identification involves a sense of shared fate and perceived similarity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The things I own help me achieve the identity I would like to have.</li> <li>• What I buy helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I would like to be.</li> <li>• My possessions are part of what I am.</li> <li>• When something is stolen from me, I feel as if my identity has been snatched from me.</li> <li>• I derive some of my identity from the things I own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This product helps me achieve the identity I would like to have.</li> <li>• This product I sell helps me narrow the gap between what I am and what I would like to be.</li> <li>• This product is part of who I am.</li> <li>• If this product was no longer my selling responsibility, I would feel as if my identity had been snatched from me.</li> <li>• I derive some of my identity from selling this product.</li> <li>• This product is central to my identity.</li> <li>• This product communicates to others who I am.</li> </ul>	Sivadas and Machleit (1994)
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Nostalgia	A fondness for objects associated with days of yore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I am reminded of the time period from which the product came, I long to revisit that era.</li> <li>• Because I hold the time period from which the product came in high regard, I want to be part of that time period once again.</li> <li>• I would like to relive the time period from which the product came because those times are better than present times.</li> <li>• I wish I could return to the time period from which the product came.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I am reminded of the time period from which the product came, I long to revisit that era.</li> <li>• Because I hold the time period from which the product came in high regard, I want to be part of that time period once again.</li> <li>• I would like to relive the time period from which the product came because those times are better than present times.</li> <li>• I wish I could return to the time period from which the product came.</li> <li>• This product reminds me of my childhood.</li> <li>• This product reminds me of my past.</li> <li>• I have fond memories of using this product.</li> <li>• This product reminds me of a happy time.</li> </ul>	Sierra and McQuitty (2007)
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Ownership	Refers to feeling that the salesperson has a “stake in the game.” Not necessarily a financial stake.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel like I have a stake in the game concerning this product.</li> <li>• I feel a sense of responsibility for this product.</li> <li>• I feel I helped launch this product.</li> <li>• I feel that my product represents my own “small business.”</li> </ul>	Developed based on preliminary interviews
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Salesperson Product Attachment	Refers to the strength of the bond connecting the salesperson with the product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagine for a moment someone making fun of your car. How much would you agree with the statement, “If someone ridiculed my car, I would feel irritated.”</li> <li>• How much do you agree with the statement, “My car reminds me who I am.”</li> <li>• Picture yourself encountering someone who would like to get to know you. How much do you think you would agree with the statement, “If I were describing myself, my car would likely be something I would mention.”</li> <li>• Suppose someone managed to destroy your car. Think how you would feel. How much do you agree with the statement, “If someone destroyed my car, I would feel a little bit personally attacked.”</li> <li>• Imagine for a moment you lost your car. How much do you agree with the statement, “If I lost my car, I would feel a little bit less like myself.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagine for a moment someone degrading your product. How much would you agree with this statement, “If someone degraded my product, I would feel irritated.”</li> <li>• How much do you agree with the statement, “My product reminds who I am.”</li> <li>• Picture yourself encountering someone who would like to get to know you. How much do you think you would agree with the statement, “If I were describing myself, my product would likely be something I would mention.”</li> <li>• How much do you agree with the statement, “I don’t really have too many feelings about my product.”</li> <li>• Imagine for a moment someone admiring your product. How much would you agree with the statement, “If someone praised my product, I would feel somewhat praised myself.”</li> </ul>	Adapted from Ball and Tasaki’s (1992) brand attachment scale
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much do you agree with the statement, “I don’t really have too many feelings about my car.”</li> <li>• Imagine for a moment someone admiring your car. How much do you agree with the statement, “If someone praised my car, I would feel somewhat praised myself.”</li> <li>• Think for a moment about whether or not people who know you might think of your car when they think of you. How much do you agree with this statement, “Probably people who know me might sometimes think of my car when they think of me.”</li> <li>• Imagine for a moment that you have lost your car. Think about going through your daily activities knowing that it is gone. How much do you agree with the statement, “If I didn’t have my car, I would feel a little bit less like myself.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think for a moment about whether or not people who know you might think of your product when they think of you. How much do you agree with this statement, “Probably people who know me might sometimes think of my product when they think of me.”</li> <li>• Imagine for a moment that you were removed from selling this product. Think about going through your daily activities knowing that you no longer sell it. How much do you agree with the statement, “If I didn’t sell this product, I would feel a little bit less like myself.”</li> <li>• I think about this product often, more so than my other products.</li> <li>• When someone asks me what I sell, this is the first product I mention.</li> <li>• When I am in a stressful situation, I turn to this product.</li> </ul>	
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<p>Quota (alignment with focal product)</p>	<p>A quota plan pays a fixed salary which is supplemented by commission income that is a pre-specified fraction of the dollar sales that exceed the performance target</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compared to my other products, my company places the following importance on this product, with regard to achieving my quota [on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being least important and 7 being most important]</li> </ul>	<p>Sales representatives will answer the following:  According to my quota system and goals, when compared to other products in my portfolio, this product is ____ (with 1 representing not very important and 7 representing highly important).  My quota system rates this focal product as ____% of my portfolio.</p>	<p>Sales representatives will complete.</p>
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Effort Towards Attached Product	Refers to the force, energy, or activity expended by the salesperson against the focal product relative to that expended against all other products	<p>Supervisors were asked to rate effort that each salesperson expended on four brand names relative to other brand names, specific to the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling in promotions</li> <li>• Selling/building displays</li> <li>• Expanding shelf space</li> <li>• Increasing distribution</li> <li>• Placing point of sale material</li> <li>• Overall</li> </ul>	<p>Managers (as well as salespeople) will be asked to rate the effort (on a 7-point Likert scale with 1 being “no effort” and 7 being “very strong effort”) that each of their salespeople expended on the focal product relative to other products that the salesperson carries, specific to the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling in promotions</li> <li>• Selling/building displays</li> <li>• Expanding shelf space</li> <li>• Increasing distribution</li> <li>• Placing point-of-sale material</li> <li>• Overall</li> </ul> <p>Salespeople will also be asked to compare their effort level to a baseline product, which is their highest weighted product. If your highest weighted product is at a 100% effort level, this focal product would be in comparison ___%.</p>	Hughes and Ahearne (2010)
Career Stage	Refers to the distinct phases a salesperson passes through that are characterized by different developmental tasks, attitudes, and behaviors		Participants will rate each of four passages describing each of the four stages (see following page for examples) as to how similar the scenario is to him/herself, then the participant will be asked to select which of the four fits the salesperson best.	Pappas and Flaherty (2002)

Market Share	Represents the percentage of the market that the product captures versus the product's competitors		<p>Salespeople will select a product based on the level of market share: Please select a product that you sell that has [0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, or 76-100%] market share.</p> <p>Managers will answer the following: Please indicate approximately the amount of market share (in percentage) this product (product name filled in based on product selected by salesperson) possesses.</p>	Similar subjective measures have been used for performance including market share (e.g., Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Gruen 2005)
Percent Attainment of Goal	Operationalizes salesperson performance; refers to a strong measure of performance that expresses the percentage of the quota (goal) the salesperson achieved		Managers will report the percentage of goal that the salesperson achieved for all products in the salesperson's portfolio.	e.g., Ahearne, Srinivasan, and Weinstein (2004)
Congruency	Refers to whether the rating of the product's quota matches up with the level of attachment (i.e., high quota, high attachment is congruent; low quota, high attachment is incongruent)		Participants will be asked to what degree their attachment towards the focal product aligns with the company's guidelines for that product.	

APPENDIX E  
SAMPLE PASSAGES FOR CAREER STAGE

### SAMPLE PASSAGES FOR CAREER STAGE

Salespeople are asked to choose the passage from among the following that best describes their current career concerns (adapted from Pappas and Flaherty 2006).

- 1) You are most concerned with finding an occupation in which you can succeed and grow as an individual. A fundamental question that you are dealing with is: “What do I want to do for the rest of my life?”
- 2) You are most concerned with earning stability within your occupation. You want to secure a place in the working world. Achieving professional success is of utmost importance to you. You strongly desire promotion.
- 3) You are most concerned with retaining your current position and status level in your career. You are less concerned with future promotion opportunities and more concerned with keeping current with the new developments in your field.
- 4) You are most concerned with reducing your workload. You are looking to cut down on your working hours and are more concerned with developing hobbies to replace work interests and planning for your retirement.

APPENDIX F  
FINAL ITEMS

FINAL ITEMS

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Final Items</u>
Challenge	1) I feel or have felt that this product is an underdog. 2) I feel or have felt challenged to prove my brand is as good as or better than the others in the marketplace. 3) Many customers view (or have viewed) my competitors as having a better brand than the one I sell.
Length of Time Selling	How long have you sold this brand?
Novelty	I would describe this product in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not unique/Unique</li> <li>• Not fun to sell/Fun to sell</li> <li>• Did not encourage fresh thinking/Encouraged fresh thinking</li> </ul>
Identification	1) This brand is central to my identity. 2) This brand communicates to others who I am. 3) The brand is part of who I am.
Nostalgia	1) When I am reminded of the time period from which the product came, I long to revisit that era. 2) I wish I could return to the time period from which this product came.
Ownership	1) I feel like I have a stake in the game concerning the product. 2) I feel a sense of responsibility for this product. 3) I feel that my product represents my own “small business.”
Attachment	1) I have a strong emotional bond with this product. 2) I feel an emotional investment in this brand. 3) I feel very affectionate towards this brand. 4) I feel very passionate about this brand.
Quota	1) According to my quota system and company goals, when compared to the other products in my portfolio, this product is : Not very important/Very important 2) Of all the brands in my portfolio, my company’s goals for this brand are: Low/High 3) Of all the brands in my portfolio, my quota system places the most emphasis on this one.
Effort	Please rate your level of effort towards this brand on the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling in promotions</li> <li>• Selling/building displays</li> <li>• Expanding shelf space</li> <li>• Increasing distribution</li> <li>• Placing point of sale material</li> <li>• Overall</li> </ul>

Career Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I am most concerned with finding an occupation in which I can succeed and grown as an individual. A fundamental question that I am dealing with is: “What do I want to do for the rest of my life?”</li> <li>2) I am most concerned with stability within my occupation. I want to secure a place in the working world. Achieving professional success is of utmost importance to me. I strongly desire promotion.</li> <li>3) I am most concerned with retaining my current position and status level in my career. I am less concerned with future promotion opportunities and more concerned with keeping current with new developments in my field.</li> <li>4) I am most concerned with reducing my workload. I am looking to cut down on my working hours and am more concerned with developing hobbies to replace work interests and planning for my retirement.</li> </ol>
Market Share	Please enter the approximate market share of this brand.
Performance (Manager)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How would you rate your sales representative’s performance on this brand?</li> <li>2) How well did your sales representative perform on this brand in the most recent sales figures?</li> </ol>
Congruency	<p>Think about the level of effort you put into this brand and then answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) My boss would fully support this level of effort.</li> <li>2) This level of effort is appropriate given my company’s goals.</li> <li>3) I feel there is a match between how much effort I’m putting towards this brand and how much effort my company thinks I should put in.</li> </ol>

## **VITA**

### **ERIN ADAMSON GILLESPIE**

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#### **EDUCATION**

Auburn University, Auburn, AL

Master of Business Administration, 2005

Bachelor of Science in Marketing, 2002

#### **RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Sales, Sales Effort, Team-Selling, Relationship Selling

#### **HONORS AND AWARDS**

- Society of Marketing Advances Doctoral Consortium Fellow, Memphis, 2011
- 2011 Vice-Chair of Networking, AMA Doctoral Special Interest Group
- Received “Random Acts of Kindness Award”—nominated by student
- Graduate of Sales Educators’ Academy 2012
- Graduate Assistantship 2009-2013
- University Fellowship 2009-2013

#### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

**Gillespie, Erin**, Katie Hybnerova, and Stephanie Noble, “A Tangled Web: Views of Deception from the Customer’s Perspective,” presented at the 2011 AMA Summer Marketing Educators’ Conference, San Francisco, CA.



**Gillespie, Erin**, Katie Hybnerova, and Stephanie Noble, “A Tangled Web: Views of Deception from the Customer’s Perspective,” presented at the 2011 Southeast Marketing Symposium, Oxford, MS.

**Gillespie, Erin** and Stephanie Noble, “Denominations of Accrual in Fee-Based Frequency Programs,” presented at the 2010 AMA Summer Marketing Educators’ Conference, Boston, MA.

**Gillespie, Erin** and Stephanie Noble, “Denominations of Accrual in Fee-Based Frequency Programs,” presented at the 2010 Southeast Marketing Symposium, Memphis, TN.

#### **RESEARCH PROJECTS—UNDER REVIEW AND IN PROGRESS**

**Gillespie, Erin**, Katerina Hybnerova, Stephanie M. Noble, and Carol Esmark, “A Tangled Web: Views of Deception from the Customer’s Perspective,” currently under review at *Business Ethics: European Review*.

Noble, Stephanie M., Christy Ashley, and **Erin Gillespie**, “Understanding How Program Structure Affects Consumer Responses to Free and Fee-Based Loyalty Programs,” currently under invited revision at *Journal of Service Research*.

Sarah Al-houti, Lenita Davis, and **Erin Gillespie**, “Customer Receptiveness to Attention: A Thin Line between Love and Hate,” draft in progress, data collection and analysis in progress, target journal: *Journal of Retailing*.

#### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Professional Selling and Relationship Marketing

This course is an overview of professional selling with an emphasis on the planning, communication, and interpersonal skills required to successfully implement the selling process. The course emphasizes relationship marketing approaches to consultative selling with special

attention devoted to communication styles, listening skills, understanding buyer behavior, developing account and product strategies, and developing a customer-oriented sales presentation.

- Summer 2010 (received student evaluation rating of 4.25\* out of 5)
- Fall 2011 (received student evaluation rating of 4.28\* out of 5)
- Spring 2012 (received student evaluation rating of 4.24\* out of 5)
- Summer 2012\*
- Fall 2012 \*
- Spring 2013 \*

### Advertising and Promotion

This course provides students with an understanding of the principles and practices of the advertising and promotion industry. It is designed to provide students with a solid foundation from which they will be able to draw upon in planning and evaluating a marketing communications program.

- Fall 2012\*
- Fall 2013\*

### Consumer Behavior

- Guest Lecturer for Dr. Nitika Garg (Fall 2011 and Spring 2011)

\*Copies of student evaluations available upon request

### **TEACHING INTERESTS**

- Sales
- Services Marketing
- Advertising and Promotion
- Retailing

### **SERVICE**

- Reviewer for the 2013 National Conference in Sales Management, San Diego, CA
- Vice-Chair of Networking, Doctoral Special Interest Group (DocSIG), 2011-2012
- Reviewer for the 2012 AMA Summer Marketing Educators' Conference, Chicago, IL
- Reviewer for the 2012 National Conference in Sales Management, Indianapolis, IN

- Session Chair at 2011 AMA Summer Marketing Educators' Conference, San Francisco, CA
- Reviewer for the 2011 AMA Summer Marketing Educators' Conference, San Francisco, CA
- Reviewer for the 2010 AMA Summer Marketing Educators' Conference, Boston, MA

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- American Marketing Association
  - Member of Sales Special Interest Group
  - Member of Doctoral Special Interest Group
  - Vice-Chair of Networking, DocSIG
- Society for Marketing Advances
- Sales Educators' Academy

## **INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE**

GlaxoSmithKline

*Pharmaceutical Sales Representative, (01/06-06/09), Northwest Alabama Territory*

- Responsible for sales growth of three pharmaceutical brands among physicians, spanning 9 counties
- Team Leader for 2 out of 3 products, which included tracking key customers' activity, identifying trends in the market, and leading team product meetings
- Developed business plans for each product, including targeting strategies and promotional ideas
- Planned programs for physicians in order to build strong relationships
- Recognized as Top 10 in the Diamond Coast Region in 2006
- Received Torch Award for leadership in growing product volume
- Ranked #16 in country out of approximately 1000 representatives on one brand
- Received Ruby Award—top percentage of sales force teams 2008

OMD Atlanta

*Assistant Media Strategist (06/03-07/04), Atlanta, GA*

- Contributed to the development of the 2004 strategic media plans, which included assessing client goals and delivering effective media solutions
- Managed print efforts on behalf of Cingular Wireless, including negotiating 2004 newspaper contracts for over 75 newspapers
- Responsible for continuously building and maintaining positive relationships with the client through daily communication and conducting weekly status meetings

- Actively participated in presentation of regional recommendations for print, radio, television, interactive, and out-of-home, as well as provided estimated values for local sport sponsorship opportunities
- Responsible for maintenance of the Cingular Wireless southern regional advertising budget

### **DOCTORAL COURSEWORK**

Customer Relationship Management	Dr. Stephanie M. Noble Marketing
Marketing Management	Dr. Charles Noble Marketing
Theoretical Foundations of Marketing	Dr. Scott Vitell Marketing
Advanced Studies in Consumer Behavior	Dr. Nitika Garg Marketing
Seminar in Research and Experimental Design	Dr. Douglas Vorhies Marketing
Structural Equation Modeling	Dr. Douglas Vorhies Marketing
Advanced Pharmaceutical Marketing and Patient Behavior	Dr. Donna West Strum, Pharmacy Administration
General Linear Models	Dr. John Bentley Pharmacy Administration
Applied Multivariate Analysis	Dr. John Bentley
Research Methods	Dr. Walter Davis, Management
Quantitative Methods in Psychology I	Dr. Nicolaas Prins, Psychology

Quantitative Methods in Psychology II

Dr. Erin Buchanan

Psychology

Theories of Personality

Dr. Carol Gohm

Psychology

## **REFERENCES**

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