

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISM OF AGENDA SETTING:  
DEVELOPING A COGNITIVE-PROCESS MODEL TO TEST CONSUMER  
PERCEPTION OF CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

by  
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## ABSTRACT

JASON JUSHENG YU: The Psychological Mechanism of Agenda Setting:  
Developing a Cognitive-Process Model to Test Consumer Perceptions of Cause-Related  
Marketing  
(Under the direction of Donald L. Shaw)

Over the past few decades, media-effects research has been persistently criticized for its lack of explanatory mechanisms, as has the theory of agenda setting. Scholars have been attempting to redevelop the theory of agenda setting by using various psychological concepts, such as priming and accessibility, to explain the mechanism of agenda setting. These challenges are not tenable because they lack explanations of the integral and detailed structure of the agenda-setting process and because they fail to provide convincing empirical evidence. They underscore the need for systematic development of new causal models to clarify the integral psychological mechanisms of the agenda-setting process and its consequences.

This dissertation hypothesizes a cognitive-process model of agenda setting and provides empirical evidence through an experimental study of consumer perception of cause-related marketing (CRM). It was found that when the motivation for CRM was manipulated as public-serving in message stimuli (i.e., public-serving was the salient attribute), participants rated public-serving as the purpose to employ CRM more important than firm-serving and responded to the public-serving statement faster than to

the firm-serving statement, and vice versa when firm-serving was manipulated as the salience attribute. This finding indicates that the agenda-setting process has two parallel outcomes, temporary attribute accessibility and attribute importance. The study also suggests that attribute importance is a stable outcome and predicted the consequences of agenda setting while temporary attribute accessibility is not reliable and has no association with agenda-setting consequences. While it did not matter whether participants responded to one attribute faster than to the other, those who rated public-serving more important than firm-serving were more likely to infer public-serving as the motive for CRM and consequently had more favorable attitudes toward the firm that uses CRM and were more intended to buy its brand. These mechanisms distinguish agenda setting from priming and accessibility because priming is part of the cognitive process of agenda setting and accessibility is part of the outcome in the cognitive process of agenda setting. The consequence mechanism revealed in this dissertation implies that other psychological processes such as causal attribution might mediate agenda-setting effects, in that the results indicated that causal attribution was the direct consequence of the agenda-setting process, while the attitudinal consequence was indirectly related to attribute importance.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiv
LIST OF TABLES.....	xv
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
A Cognitive-Process Model of Agenda Setting.....	1
Literature Review of CRM Research.....	4
Introducing Agenda Setting to CRM Research.....	10
2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL MODEL.....	12
Defining Information Salience.....	14
Vague Definitions of Salience in Literature.....	15
Distinguishing Information Salience from Perceived Salience.....	17
Operationalizing Information Salience.....	19
Stable Cognitive Effects of Agenda Setting: Perceived Salience Conceptualized as Importance.....	22
Temporary Priming Effects of Agenda Setting: Perceived Salience Conceptualized as Temporary Accessibility.....	24
Accessibility.....	25

Attitude Accessibility.....	28
Recent Priming and Media-Effects Research.....	29
Chronic Accessibility and the Mass-Communication Model of Agenda Setting.....	31
Chronic Accessibility and Temporary Accessibility in the Cognitive-Process Model.....	33
Measuring Accessibility.....	35
Direct Agenda-Setting Effect: Importance or Temporary Accessibility?.....	37
Relationship Between Importance and Accessibility.....	39
Causal Attribution as a Consequence of Agenda Setting.....	43
Causal Attribution as a Perceptual Consequence of Agenda Setting.....	44
Causal Attribution as a Cognitive Consequence of Agenda Setting.....	45
Causal Attribution as a mediator of the Agenda-setting Effects.....	47
Prior Attitude Toward CRM in General and CRM Sponsor Evaluation.....	48
Correlation Between Brand Evaluation and Purchase Intention.....	49
Model Summary: Variables, Hypotheses and Research Questions.....	51
Key Variables Involved in Salience Transference and its Consequences.....	51
Hypothesized Relationships Among the Key Variables.....	53



	Attribute Salience and Attribute Importance.....	53
	Chronic Attribute Accessibility and Temporary Attribute Accessibility.....	54
	Attribute Salience and Attribute Accessibility.....	55
	The Moderating Role of Chronic Attribute Accessibility.....	55
	Attribute Importance and Temporary Attribute Accessibility.....	56
	The Nature of the Relationship.....	56
	Temporary Attribute Accessibility and Causal Attribution.....	57
	Attribute Salience, Attribute Importance and CRM Motive Inference.....	58
	Attribute Importance, Temporary Attribute Accessibility, Motive Inference, and Brand Evaluation.....	58
	Correlation Between Brand Evaluation and Purchase Intention.....	60
3	METHODS.....	62
	Pilot Study.....	62
	Pretest.....	62
	Step one.....	63
	Step two.....	64
	Step three.....	64
	Chronic attribute accessibility index (CAI).....	65
	Pre-Exposure Attitude Toward CRM in General.....	66

Experiment – Session I.....	67
Stimulus Materials.....	67
Attribute Salience Manipulation and Procedure.....	68
Procedure and Measures of Temporary Accessibility and Importance .....	69
Temporary Attribute Accessibility Index (TAI).....	71
Attribute Importance Index (AII).....	72
Manipulation Check.....	72
Experiment – Session II.....	73
Stimulus Material.....	74
Measure of CRM Motive Inference.....	74
Attribution Response Coding Scheme.....	74
Measures of Brand Evaluation .....	75
Measures of Purchase Intention .....	75
Results.....	76
Manipulation Check.....	76
Chronic Attribute Accessibility.....	77
Gender.....	78
Pre-exposure Attitude Toward CRM in General .....	79
CRM Motive Inference.....	80
Brand Evaluation.....	80

	Purchase Intention.....	80
	Discussion.....	81
	Main Study.....	83
	Design Changes From Pilot Study.....	83
	Pretest.....	85
	Participants.....	85
	Measure of Chronic Attribute Accessibility.....	86
	Measure of Pre-exposure Attitude Toward CRM in General.....	86
	Experiment – Session I.....	87
	Procedure.....	87
	Attribute Importance.....	88
	Temporary Attribute Accessibility.....	89
	Experiment – Session II.....	89
	Measure of CRM Motive Inference.....	90
	Measures of Brand Evaluation.....	90
	Measures of Purchase Intention.....	90
4	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	92
	Manipulation Check.....	92
	Attribute Salience and Attribute Importance.....	93
	Separate ANOVAs on Public-serving and Firm-serving Attribute Importance.....	93

	Regression Analysis of Attribute Importance Index (AII).....	95
	Attribute Salience and Temporary Attribute Accessibility.....	98
	Separate ANOVAs on Temporary Public-Serving Attribute Accessibility and Temporary Firm-serving Attribute Accessibility.....	98
	Regression Analysis of Temporary Attribute Accessibility (TAI).....	100
	Attribute Salience, Chronic Attribute Accessibility, and Temporary Attribute Accessibility.....	102
	Temporary Attribute Accessibility and Attribute Importance.....	105
	Temporary Attribute Accessibility Causal Attribution, and Brand Evaluation.....	106
	Attribute Importance and Causal Attribution.....	107
	Attribute Salience, Attribute Importance, and Causal Attribution.....	108
	Attribute Importance, Causal Attribution, and Brand Evaluation.....	109
	Correlation Between Brand Evaluation and Purchase Intention.....	112
	Testing the Model.....	113
5	CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS.....	116
	The Core of the Cognitive-Process Model.....	116
	Attribute Salience.....	116
	Temporary Attribute Accessibility: The Temporary Outcome of Agenda Setting.....	118

Attribute Importance: The Stable Outcome of Agenda setting.....	122
Independence of Attribute Importance and Temporary Attribute Accessibility.....	123
Consequences of Agenda Setting: Predicted by Attribute Importance.....	127
Attitudinal Consequence.....	128
Causal Attribution as the Direct Consequence and a Mediator.....	130
Behavioral Consequence.....	131
Agenda Setting and CRM Research.....	131
Study Limitations.....	132
Internal Validity Issues.....	132
External Validity Issues.....	134
APPENDICES.....	137
REFERENCES.....	188

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. A Hypothesized Cognitive-Process Model of Agenda Setting and Consequences (From Informational Input to Behavioral Output).....	61
2 Causal Paths in the Cognitive-Process Model of Agenda Setting and Consequences.....	115

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Means and Standard Deviations for Public-Serving Importance & Firm-Serving Importance.....	94
2. Summary of ANOVA on Public-Serving Attribute Importance.....	94
3. Summary of ANOVA on Firm-Serving Attribute Importance.....	95
4. Hierarchical MMR of Attribute Importance.....	97
5. Means and Standard Deviations for Temporary Public-Serving & Firm-Serving Accessibility.....	98
6. Summary of ANOVA on Temporary Public-Serving Attribute Accessibility.....	99
7. Summary of ANOVA on Temporary Firm-Serving Attribute Accessibility.....	99
8. Hierarchical MMR of Temporary Attribute Accessibility (I).....	101
9. Hierarchical MMR of Temporary Attribute Accessibility (II).....	103
10. Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Brand Evaluation.....	110

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### A Cognitive-Process Model of Agenda Setting

Cause-related marketing (CRM) has been a prominent topic in marketing and organizational behavior research. Researchers do not rest content with the great quantity of research findings that verify the effects of marketing strategies. Instead, scholars are trying to explain the theoretical mechanism of CRM effectiveness by identifying relative factors and applying appropriate theories. Causal attribution has served as a framework for analysis of how consumers perceive a sponsoring company's motives for CRM campaigns. Research has found that consumers attribute CRM campaigns to either a public-serving motive or a firm-serving motive (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Causal attribution theory addresses the processes by which individuals infer the motives of others and explains how these perceived motives influence subsequent attitudes and behavior (Forehand & Grier, 2003).

The question is why consumers attribute a CRM campaign to one motive rather than the other. What factors influence consumers' inference of the CRM motive? Because CRM campaigns are implemented through marketing communication such as advertising and public relations, such questions should be scrutinized in the scenario of



communication. That is, in the communication model, information serves as a primary antecedent of causal attribution, and causal attribution is a reaction to information properties that are manipulated by the CRM communicators. This is where agenda setting plays its role as a framework for CRM effectiveness research.

In the time since the agenda-setting function of mass media was clearly explained with empirical evidence in the Chapel Hill study by McCombs and Shaw(1972), significant progress has been made in agenda-setting theory. Over 350 empirical verifications supporting the agenda-setting hypothesis have been provided during the past decades (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). Although such a huge amount of empirical evidence embodies the predictive power of agenda setting, mere accumulation of empirical evidence is not sufficient to determine the progressiveness of the theory. Popper argued that “an empirical generalization with an indefinite or potentially infinite domain can never be conclusively verified because we can never observe all its instances (Finocchiaro, 2005, p. 151).” According to Lakatos’ (1978) ideas about science evolution, evaluating a research program’s progressiveness should be based on both its theoretical and empirical progress, and what determines such progress is not trivial verifications but dramatic, unexpected, stunning predictions. Indeed, “It is no success for Newtonian theory that stones, when dropped, fall towards the earth, no matter how often this is repeated” (Lakatos, 1978, p. 6).

Stunning progress has been made since the second level of agenda-setting (attribute) was introduced to the theory to explain “the world outside and the pictures in

our heads” phenomena at a more specific level. The first level of agenda setting emphasizes that the media can tell the public what to think about (issues); the second level of agenda setting explains how media coverage affects public thinking. Although these two levels of agenda setting help to explain the different functions of the media, they share the same theoretical core, which is the salience transference from the media to the public, whether that transference occurs at the issue level or at the attribute level. Both levels of agenda setting are correlational mass communication models at the societal level. That is, agenda-setting research examines the correlation between the issue or attribute salience in the media (media agenda) and the issue or attribute salience among the public (public agenda). Therefore, methodologically, agenda setting does not deal with the causal relationship between the media coverage and public opinion, although hypothetically it does.

This makes the theory vulnerable to challenges for its lack of explanatory mechanism, because the cognitive processes that might mediate the relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda are not considered (Kosicki, 1993; Maher, 2001; Shrum, 2002). Departing from the traditional correlational mass-communication model, this dissertation develops a cognitive-process model of agenda setting to explain the psychological mechanism of the theory. That is, the cognitive processes that mediate the informational input variables (information salience in this study) and the audience output variables (behavioral intention) were examined. This examination focused on the core of the theory (i.e., the salience transference from the media to audience) as well as on the

consequences of the core of the theory. To clarify the structure of the cognitive-process model of agenda setting, the key variables involved in the core of the theoretical model were defined and operationalized.

### Literature Review of CRM Research

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is often used as a key criterion when gauging corporate reputation, such as assessing the corporate reputations of *Fortune 500* companies (Caruana, 1997). Today, as many as 90 percent of the *Fortune 500* companies have explicit CSR initiatives (Kotler & Lee, 2004; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004; Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). CSR in the form of corporate philanthropy, or donating to charities, has been practiced for over a century in the United States (Brønn & Vrioni, 2001; Sethi, 1977). Business literature has identified three rationales for corporate philanthropy: through-the-firm giving, corporate statesmanship, and profit-motivated giving (Fry, Keim, & Meiners, 1982; Rajan P. Varadarajan & Menon, 1988).

Cause-related marketing, a common practice of corporate philanthropy nowadays, is based on the rationale of profit-motivated giving (Rajan P. Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). Cause-related marketing (CRM) is defined as “the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives” (R. P. Varadarajan & Rajaratnam, 1988, p. 60). The earliest application of this marketing

strategy might be the 1983 partnership of American Express with the Statue of Liberty restoration project. American Express contributed a penny to the restoration each time someone used an American Express credit card. Use of those credit cards rose 28%, and as a result American Express donated \$1.7 million to the restoration of the Statue of Liberty.

Since then, as an important marketing strategy that aims to manifest corporate social responsibility in marketing communication activities, CRM has been adopted widely by many companies to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to build brand image by enhancing their corporate reputations. The popularity of CRM is really “about sales, not philanthropy” (Ptacek & Salazar, 1997, p. 9). Basically it is a marketing program because donations to charities, in most cases, are not from the corporation’s regular philanthropic foundation budget, but from its marketing budget (Rajan P. Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). CRM operates at the junction of corporate philanthropy and enlightened business interest (Rajan P. Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). The corporation can incrementally increase sales and corporate image, with contributions to a charity as a side advantage (Ptacek & Salazar, 1997).

Research on CRM in both the marketing industry and academia has provided substantial and convincing evidence that highlights the increasing strategic importance and consumer relevance of such socially responsible marketing initiatives. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) found that a company that demonstrates responsiveness to social

concerns and gives proportionately more to charity than other firms receives higher reputation ratings by its customers and other audiences. Perhaps most importantly to corporations, the improvement in a firm's reputation can increase its sales (Shapiro, 1982). CRM programs were found to have great potential for helping marketers to stay in tune with the mood of the public and maintain a trustworthy and relevant image (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997). CRM programs also improve corporate images and generate favorable customer attitudes towards the sponsoring corporation (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Creyer & Ross, 1996; J. K. Ross, L. T. Patterson, & M. A. Stutts, 1992; J. K. Ross, Stutts, & Patterson, 1990-1991), while differentiating the brand from its competitors (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Murphy, 1997). Consequently, cause-related marketing can lead to favorable purchasing decisions or product choice among customers (Lawrence, 1993; Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001; Sen & Morwitz, 1996; Shell, 1989). A more recent marketing report – Cone Inc., 2004 – showed that approximately 80 percent of consumers surveyed said that corporate support of causes wins their trust in the sponsoring company, a 21 percent increase since 1997. Eighty-six percent of consumers said they would switch brands to a cause-related product when facing a choice of equal product price and quality (Cone, 2004). This result is congruent with earlier reports issued by *Roper Starch Worldwide*, a New York-based market research and consulting firm (RSW, 1993; 1996).

The notion that CRM influences consumers' evaluation of the corporation that operates CRM programs, and consequently their attitudes toward its products or services,

has been widely accepted and applied in marketing. Research on CRM in marketing academia has moved from the study of CRM effects, which focuses on how CRM effects occur, to the study of CRM effectiveness, which investigates what factors influence CRM effects. CRM effectiveness studies assume that the relationship between corporation CRM operations and their effects is not simply linear, but also depends upon the circumstances in which corporations run their CRM programs.

Marketing researchers use associative-learning principles to understand CRM effects on consumers. People's long-term memory is considered as a network of nodes that are connected via associative links (Martindale, 1991). In a CRM environment, these nodes can be facts, information, and/or knowledge regarding companies, products or services, brands, and various social causes. Associative learning has been described as the way through which consumers learn about the relationships among events in the environment (Shimp, Stuart, & Engle, 1991). Such relationships can be the association of a sponsoring company or brand and a social cause when consumers are exposed to CRM programs. Classical conditioning theory has been used to explain how an association with one stimulus can benefit another stimulus (McSweeney & Bierley, 1984; Shimp, 1991). A number of empirical studies have illustrated the importance of conditioning in facilitating the transfer of positive attitude to a brand (e.g. Shimp et al., 1991; Stuart, Shimp, & Engle, 1987) and in modifying consumer beliefs about a brand (e.g. J. Kim, Allen, & Kardes, 1996; J. Kim, Lim, & Bhargava, 1998). The value of conditioning in positively influencing brand attitude and cognition is particularly salient given evidence that such

effects persist over time (Grossman & Till, 1998; for review, see Till & Nowak, 2000).

Much marketing research in associative learning and classical conditioning has examined the general notion that attitude toward the brand can be improved based upon what is associated with the brand (Till & Nowak, 2000). However, it is not always the case that a company will be rewarded with positive consumer attitudes by associating with a popular social cause. On the contrary, CRM programs can “backfire and result in a loss of goodwill toward the company” (Dean, 2004, p. 91). Indeed, in his study Dean (2004) found that a scrupulous firm suffered a loss of consumer favor by pursuing CRM. Obviously, associative learning principles or classical conditioning cannot explain such cases. New theoretical models or explanations are needed.

Attribution theory refers to the linking of an event to its causes (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; for an extensive review, see M. Ross & Fletcher, 1985). It has served as a framework for analysis of how consumers perceive the sponsoring company’s motives for CRM campaigns. Attribution theory also addresses the processes by which individuals evaluate the motives of others and explains how these perceived motives influence subsequent attitudes and behavior (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Given that CRM is a marketing strategy for promotion on one hand, with charitable donations on the other hand (Dean, 2004; Ptacek & Salazar, 1997), the message in CRM communication contains two constructs or attributes. Researchers have found that consumers attribute two types of motives to firms: motives that focus on social interest and motives that focus on self-interest. These two basic attributes have been assigned

various labels in research, such as altruistic versus egoistic (Bendapudi, Singh, & Bendapudi, 1996), exogenous versus endogenous (Kruglanski, 1975), other versus self-centered (Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000), and public-serving versus firm-serving (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Forehand and Grier's labels are used in this dissertation.

On the other hand, consumer skepticism is a key concept involved in any motivation attribution process. Consumers are skeptical of all kinds of advertising claims, even those that are easily verifiable (Ford, Smith, & Swasy, 1990). Consumers may be skeptical not only of the literal truth of advertising claims, but also of the motives of the advertisers (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998). Thus, although marketers wish their customers would perceive their CRM campaigns as goodwill, consumers may be skeptical of the sponsoring company's motives and attribute their behavior to firm-serving motives instead of public-serving motives. The relationship between the promotion budget allocated for the campaign and the final donation may suggest a lack of sincere interest in the cause on the part of the company. In fact, even among nonprofit organizations, CRM is controversial because of its potential for emphasizing self-interest and because it threatens to commercialize nonprofits (Dean, 2004; File & Prince, 1998).

Such consumer skepticism influences CRM effects in terms of consumer attitude toward the CRM sponsor. Research has found that consumers with a high level of skepticism will be less likely to respond positively to CRM campaigns than those with a low level of skepticism towards CRM (Webb & Mohr, 1998). Indeed, half of the respondents in Webb and Mohr's study (1998) expressed negative attitudes toward CRM.



These attitudes were attributed mostly to skepticism toward implementation and the sponsoring company's motives. Thus, a firm's simple support of social causes is not enough; marketers must take into account how consumers perceive the firm's motives (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000).

Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) define skepticism toward advertising in general as the tendency toward disbelief of advertising claims. Webb and Mohr (1998) assume that skepticism toward CRM derives mainly from customers' distrust and cynicism toward advertising, which is a component of the marketing mix used in CRM campaigns. Forehand and Grier (2003) argue that consumer skepticism is produced by situational variables that direct consumer attention to the motives of the sponsoring company and thereby induce a state of skepticism. Thus, as Mohr et al. (1998) suggest, skepticism can be decreased as knowledge increases. Communication can play a significant role in influencing consumers' perceptions of cause-related marketing.

#### *Introducing Agenda Setting to CRM Research*

Specifically, in the language of attribute agenda setting, communicators can influence the way consumers think about cause-related marketing by making a certain attribute (altruism or self-interest) more salient in the message that is transmitted to the audience. The salient attribute in turn, according to the concept of the perceptual and cognitive attribution processes (Harvey & Weary, 1984), may draw causal attribution.

The general research question of this dissertation is this: What is the mechanism

of the agenda-setting process as the mediator of the relationship between information salience and causal attribution, and of subsequent influences on audience attitude and behavior? By investigating the cognitive processes of the core of agenda setting and its consequences, this dissertation makes an effort to switch the agenda-setting research paradigm from agenda-setting verification (i.e., determining whether agenda setting exists) to agenda-setting mechanism investigation (i.e., how agenda setting occurs) and to enrich the research paradigm by developing a causal model at the cognitive process level.

This dissertation focuses on attribute agenda setting, involving attitude research in social psychology, including salience, attitude importance, attitude accessibility, attribution, and evaluation. Three rationales in literature are behind the investigation of the psychological mechanisms of agenda-setting in CRM communication in this study: (a) There is a persistent criticism of media-effects research, including the theory of agenda setting, that it has lacked for the most part any focus on explanatory mechanisms (Shrum, 2002); (b) these key psychological concepts involved in agenda-setting theory have been widely investigated and examined in social psychology; and (c) although attribution theory has been applied to CRM effectiveness research, the mechanism of attribution processes from the perspective of communication has not been examined in the literature.

This dissertation research has two theoretical and operational goals. One is to investigate the psychological mechanism of attribute agenda setting and conceptualize the key definitions involved in the agenda-setting process. The other goal is to apply attribute agenda setting as a new theoretical framework for CRM effectiveness research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL MODEL

As Shrum (2002) argued, one of the two persistent criticisms of media effects research over the past few decades has been that it has for the most part lacked any focus on explanatory mechanisms. More specifically, “media effects research has been primarily concerned with relations between input variables (e.g., media information and its characteristics) and output variables (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, and behavior), with little consideration of the cognitive processes that might mediate these relations” (Shrum, 2002, pp. 69-70). Most traditional media effects research focuses on verifying that news media have some effects on their audiences without revealing the psychological mechanisms of how these effects occur. As an important member in the family of media-effects research, the theory of agenda setting has been challenged; some recent criticisms call into question of the value of the agenda-setting theory. Takeshita (2006) sorted the current criticisms into three categories: process, identity, and environment. The criticisms in the first category are the most essential ones as they concern the nature of the agenda-setting process itself. These criticisms argue that agenda setting does not initially provide a psychological explanation of how its effects occur (Maher, 2001) and deals with a correlational construct instead of examining the causal relationship between the media and the public (Kosicki, 1993).

Two basic concepts are often applied in social cognition research on the

likelihood that some stored knowledge will be activated and used to judge an attitude object. They are (a) accessibility of the stored knowledge or attitude prior to stimulus presentation and (b) its applicability, referring to “the relation between the features of some stored knowledge and the attended features of a stimulus” (Bruner, 1957; Higgins, 1996, p. 135). Some scholars recently have started to use these two cognitive concepts to explain the mechanisms of agenda setting. It is argued that the distinction between agenda setting and framing is that agenda setting is an accessibility-based model, whereas framing is based on applicability (S.-H. Kim, Sheufele, & Shanahan, 2002; Sheufele, 2000; Sheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

This theorizing about agenda-setting processes has been criticized by some scholars. Takeshita (2006) argued that “agenda-setting processes are not composed of mechanistic responses based on accessibility but are likely to include deliberate judgments and inferences” (p. 290). According to Takeshita (2006), issue importance rather than accessibility is the correct measure of issue salience among the public. Vagueness in the agenda-setting process because of the controversy over the identification of public salience, is exacerbated by the various definitions of information salience that are used in the literature of both communication and social psychology.

Traditionally, the agenda-setting process is regarded as the transference of salience from media to public opinion. To investigate the psychological mechanism of agenda setting and examine the accompanying cognitive agenda-setting process model when applied to CRM research, four key questions regarding the process must

be addressed. They are (a) What is information salience and what determines salience? (b) what are the distinctions among accessibility, salience, and importance? (c) what roles do salience, accessibility, and importance play in the agenda-setting process? and (d) what is the possible mechanism by which accessibility and importance play their roles together in the agenda-setting process in the case of CRM communication?

### Defining Information Salience

Scholars of agenda setting define media agendas as objects or attributes that are accorded saliency in the media content; they define public agenda as objects or attributes accorded saliency in people's consciousness (Takeshita, 1997). As Dearing and Rogers (1992) stated, salience is the pivot of agenda-setting theory. The agenda-setting process reflects one aspect of the manner in which people form judgments and evaluations. That is, the "cognitive miser" (Taylor, 1981) selectively processes a subset of the information available in order to structure his or her social environment (van der Pligt & Eiser, 1984). Higgins (1996) based the concept of salience on the notion that not all features of a stimulus receive equal attention at any point in time in the development of salience. The tendency of the perceiver to attend selectively has been studied in a wide variety of research areas under the heading of salience (van der Pligt & Eiser, 1984). Further, the term salience is complicated by the many definitions and interpretations that have been produced by scholars across several disciplines, including psychology, political science, and mass communication. A review of salience by Evatt (1998) identified 30 definitions or interpretations of salience used by researchers in different disciplines over thirty years. Basically, these

definitions and interpretations of salience can be classified into two general categories:

(a) salience is determined by properties of stimuli or media information, and (b) salience is determined by properties of the perceivers.

#### *Vague Definitions of Salience in Literature*

From the perspective of stimuli properties, “salience refers to the extent to which a stimulus, or referent object in the surrounding situation, stands out from other stimuli, or from other aspects of the situation” (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995, p. 86). This definition of salience reflects the everyday meaning of salient as “standing out conspicuously; prominent; striking” (Merriam-Webster, 1989, p. 1038). In most early agenda-setting research, salience was believed to be based on the properties of media information itself; the general proposition of agenda-setting theory is that “elements prominent in the mass media’s presentation of the vast world of public affairs become prominent elements in our individual pictures of that world” (McCombs, 2004, p. 84). McCombs (1994) conceptualized salience as the signifier of importance that newspapers communicate, including story placement, size of headline, length, and topic repetition—all of which give powerful cues about the importance of any issue.

Some scholars contend that properties of perceivers should be included in the definition of salience. In Taylor and Fiske’s (1978) review of salience, they maintain that salient information is the information that is most easily brought to mind and produces “top-of-the-head phenomena.” The determinants of salience include properties of stimuli, such as brightness and contrast; properties of situations, including instructional sets; and properties of perceivers, including both temporary

need states and enduring cognitive and motivational differences. McArthur (1981) also includes both properties of stimuli and properties of perceivers (including expectations and arousal level) as determinants of salience.

The definition of salience in communication research is complicated. In his well-known model of psychological reference, Carter (1965) described salience as “the closeness of an object to the individual” (p. 203). Such “closeness” is psychological according to Carter. He explained, “...the salience relation indicates the ‘psychological distance’ between the individual and a given object” (p. 204). This seems to contradict what he claimed earlier in the article: that salience is “consistent with the historical definition of salience as protuberance, that is, physical location with respect to another object” (p. 203). The concept that information salience is determined by the audience’s personal properties has been advocated by many other communication scholars who equated salience with personal relevance, or an individual’s everyday life (Sear & Whitney, 1973). “How individuals feel about an object” (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994), “how mentally accessible a given opinion is” (Price, 1992), and “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to the audience” are how a number of scholars addressed the definition dilemma (Entman, 1993, p. 53). The degree to which an individual holds an issue in awareness” (Fox & Schofield, 1989, p. 807) is another perspective.

These different definitions of salience may cause salience to lose relevance as a distinct variable for communication research. The inclusion of psychological dependent variables, such as attention, memory (Entman’s definition), and even

feeling (Cutlip, Center, & Broom's definition), in their definitions of salience, an independent variable, make it impossible for researchers to scientifically identify salience as a distinct variable, not to mention the difficulties of building a precise scientific theory.

### *Distinguishing Information Salience from Perceived Salience*

Scientific theories usually attempt to solve specific empirical problems about the natural world (Laudan, 1977). To understand the origin of the dualistic view about salience in social psychology, it is necessary to look back to the original empirical problem: When people respond to a stimulus, what knowledge will be activated and used in their response? Media agenda setting and media framing share the same original empirical problem, that is, whether and how media messages influence public opinion and behavior. (How the media agenda and media frame are built is another empirical problem beyond the scope of this study.)

For half a century, the two concepts of salience and accessibility have been used by social psychologists, with considerable overlap, to address this empirical problem (Higgins, 1996). Bruner (1957) defined the accessibility of stored categorical knowledge in terms of the likelihood that the knowledge would be used to categorize stimulus information. In Higgins and King's (1981) review of accessibility, accessible constructs are stored constructs that are readily used in information processing. Determinants of such construct accessibility include "momentary and chronic expectations, goals, and needs, recent and frequent prior activation of the construct, and the construct's interconnectedness with other stored constructs" (Higgins, 1996, p.



133). Based on such understanding, Higgins (1996) defined accessibility as “the activation potential of available knowledge.”

The perspective of perceiver properties as determinants of salience is another expression of accessibility in Higgins’ view. However, perceived salience is not just accessibility. Other attitude properties have also been used to determine perceived salience. For example, attitude importance has been used to measure perceived salience for decades (e.g., Holster, 1985; Jackson & Marcus, 1975; N. F. Lemon, 1968; J. L. Powell, 1977; Tedin, 1980) in social psychology and the two terms often have been used interchangeably (e.g., Krosnick, 1988b; Scott, 1968, pp. 206-207; Sherif, 1980).

Higgins (1996) argued that using the term salience and other attitude properties to express the same concept may lose the distinct contribution of salience to knowledge activation. With such a concern, he argued that the concept of salience should be restricted only to properties of the stimulus event, independent of any prior set for a particular kind of stimulus, and that properties of the perceiver, whether goals, expectancies, or accessibility, must be excluded. He parsimoniously conceptualizes information salience as “something about a stimulus event that occurs on exposure, without a prior set for a particular kind of stimulus, that draws attention selectively to a specific aspect of the event (p. 135).” Because the extent to which an object or an attribute is prominent or stands out is always influenced by its relation to the immediate surroundings, object or attribute salience is never absolute and prominence is never fully independent of comparative distinctiveness (Higgins, 1996).

Defining information salience only in terms of information properties sheds light on how to deal with the discursive and overcomplicated definitions of salience in communication research. Based on this approach, my dissertation argues that, the operational definition of information salience must go back to its everyday meaning, although the personal properties of the audience should be considered as other psychological variables such as accessibility of stored knowledge or perceived importance of a construct. Moreover, its historical definition as protuberance, which means an object or attribute's physical location with respect to other objects or attributes, must also be adopted. Generally speaking, the term salience refers to "how much an object stands out from the scene in which it appears" (Huang & Pashler, 2005, p. 1909).

### Operationalizing Information Salience

The definition of object or attribute salience based on information properties has been used in a variety of research fields, including social psychology, political communication, and marketing communication. Different measurements or manipulations of information salience have been applied in research across these disciplines, although the term salience was not used specifically in some of those studies. In advertising effects research, for instance, salience of an ad or some specific attributes of an ad is often treated as an independent variable that may influence consumers' recall, liking of the advertised brand, or purchase intention. Various measurements of input information salience, have been identified as the relative salient location of a TV commercial in an ad cluster (e. g., Zhao, 1997), animated Web

ads vs. static Web ads (e. g., Lang, Borse, Wise, & David, 2002), fast animation vs. slow animation (e.g., Sunder & Kalyanaraman, 2004), the amount of time participants were exposed to and thought about the brand prior to recall (Alba & Chattopadhyay, 1986), attribute presentation vs. nonpresentation, or presentation of attribute A vs. presentation of attribute B (e. g., Yi, 1990).

Content analysis is a prominent technique for measuring issue or attribute salience in many agenda-setting studies. Applying this method, researchers usually count the number of news reports about an object or an attribute pertaining to an object without considering the exact content of the news coverage. The unit for content analysis of sample newspapers can be a single news story (e. g., McCombs & Shaw, 1972), each line of news articles (e. g., Takeshita, 1993), or even assertions in each sentence of news stories that cover a specific issue or mention a certain attribute (e. g., McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, & Llamas, 2000). For TV, media indices as measures of the media agenda usually include identification of the topic of each television news story, the order in which it appeared in a particular program, and its length in minutes and seconds (Dearing & Rogers, 1992). In addition, the position of news stories in sample news media is also taken into account. In typical agenda-setting research, front-page news stories are often collected as samples because “front-page stories in the newspaper have about twice the readership of stories that appear inside the newspaper (McCombs, 2004, p. 52).” Some researchers have measured the online media agenda through content analyses of all home-page stories or leading stories on home pages on the Web (e.g., Yu & Aikat, 2005).

In a few experimental agenda-setting studies, salience was manipulated by researchers. A certain object or attribute was presented to a group of participants, and was not presented to another group of participants. Compared to the second group, the object or attribute is more salient to the first group of people. For example, Iyengar and Kinder (1987) manipulated the salience of the issues of inadequacies in American defense preparedness by letting the participants in the treatment condition be exposed to four stories that described this issue, while those in the control group watched broadcasts containing no defense-related stories at all.

Such dichotomous-condition design is popular in experimental marketing research as a way of manipulating the salience of a certain attribute of a product, especially when advertising information that is presented to participants is ambiguous in that at least two alternative constructs are equally applicable to the advertising information (Higgins, 1996). In Yi's (1993) study of contextual priming effects in print advertisements, two alternative attributes pertaining to the size of a car and fuel economy were presented to the participants in the negative priming condition, whereas safety was presented to those who were in the positive priming condition. In this case, the attribute of fuel economy was manipulated as salient for the first group of participants, while the attribute of safety was manipulated as salient for the second group.

This way of attribute-salience manipulation could be applied to the cause-related marketing research on the effects of agenda-setting processes on the transference of information salience to consumer perceived salience, and in turn,

consumer perception of CRM programs. That is, the independent variable – attribute salience – can be manipulated by presenting a certain attribute pertaining to an attitude toward a certain CRM program (or a construct related to this attribute) to one group of people while the other group of participants are not exposed to this attribute or the related construct, or are exposed to another attribute or construct related to that attribute.

Stable Cognitive Effects of Agenda Setting:  
Perceived Salience Conceptualized as Importance

Early attitude researchers have distinguished between attitudes in terms of their importance (e.g., L. Festinger, 1954, 1957) and perceived salience (e.g., N. Lemon, 1973; M. B. Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956). These two attitude properties are closely related conceptually and have often been used interchangeably (e.g., Scott, 1968, pp. 206-207; Sherif, 1980) (see Krosnick, 1988b, p. 196). In fact, indices of importance have been used to measure the construct of perceived salience in social psychology and political science (e.g., Holster, 1985; Jackson & Marcus, 1975; N. F. Lemon, 1968; J. L. Powell, 1977; Tedin, 1980).

Attitude importance is defined as “an individual’s subjective sense of the concern, caring, and significance he or she attaches to an attitude” (Boninger, Krosnick, Berent, & Fabrigar, 1995, p. 160). Thus, attitude importance is about the cognitive structure of attitude: “Attaching personal importance to an attitude represents a substantial commitment” (p. 167). That is, when a person attaches importance to an attitude, he or she must weigh the attitude object consciously with some level of cognitive effort. Boninger and his associates (1995) gave more details

in their definition of attitude importance:

To attach great personal importance to an attitude is to care tremendously about it and to be deeply concerned about it. There is nothing subtle about attitude importance, particularly at its highest levels: People know very well when they are deeply concerned about an attitude, and they know just as well when they have no special concern about one. In short, attitude importance is a belief (see M. Fishbein & Icek Ajzen, 1975), linking an attitude to an attribute (i.e., high, moderate, or low psychological significance) (Boninger et al., 1995, p. 160)

Attitudinal researchers have found that the more importance that a person attaches to an attitude, the more stable that attitude is (e.g., Converse, 1964; Feldman, 1989; Hahn, 1970; Kendall, 1954; Krosnick, 1988a; Pelham, 1991; Schuman & Presser, 1981). For example, in Krosnick's (1988a) study, people's attitudes toward social issues were significantly more stable over several months if they rated these attitudes as important (see Erber, Hodges, & Wilson, 1995). Pelham (1991) later found the same result: that the importance people attached to self-views regarding the traits or features they believed they possessed was positively associated with their correlational consistency (see Boninger et al., 1995).

Consistently, scholars describe the process of agenda setting as the transference of salience (object salience as the first level and attribute salience as the second level) from the media to the public (McCombs, 2004). Such salience of the issues or attributes among concerns of the public is equal to perceived importance. Dearing and Rogers (Dearing & Rogers, 1992) defined salience as "the degree to which an issue on the agenda is perceived as relatively important" (p. 8). The consistency of attitude importance is also believed to exist in the agenda-setting

process. McCombs (2004) states that “the central assertion of agenda-setting theory is that those issues emphasized in the news come to be regarded over time as important by the public” (p. 5).

Methodologically, in first-level agenda-setting research, the public agenda is usually measured by public opinion surveys in which a sample of individuals is asked the famous Gallup most important problem (MIP) question: “What is the most important problem facing this country today?” The aggregated responses indicate the relative salience of an issue on the public agenda (Dearing & Rogers, 1992). A recent study by agenda-setting researchers found the terms MIP and issue importance to be interchangeable (Min, Ghanem, & Evatt, 2007). In contrast to the MIP question, Iyengar and Kinder’s (1987) used multiple-item questions to measure their participants’ beliefs about the importance of national problems.

The first hypothesis of this dissertation (see H1 in the model summary section) concerns perceived importance as a cognitive outcome of agenda setting.

#### Temporary Priming Effects of Agenda Setting:

##### Perceived Salience Conceptualized as Temporary Accessibility

The concept of public salience in terms of perceived importance has been challenged by some media-framing scholars. In an attempt to differentiate framing from attribute agenda-setting, those scholars suggest that the agenda-setting process is an accessibility-based model (S.-H. Kim et al., 2002; Sheufole, 2000; Sheufole & Tewksbury, 2007). According to Sheufole’s (2000) argument, “mass media can influence the salience of certain issues as perceived by the audience; that is, the ease with which these issues can be retrieved from memory” (p. 300). Perceived salience

refers to attitude accessibility and, in turn, as the process of priming, such attitude accessibility influences an individual's perceptions of political actors. Based on this theorizing, Sheufole (2000) criticized the use of perceived importance to measure public salience, saying that measures "do not capture the ease with which considerations can be retrieved from memory" (p. 305). Sheufole (2000) argued that public salience should be measured indirectly through response latency, which is a common measure of construct accessibility and has been operationalized as response time in social psychology. The assumption is that more accessible constructs (attitudes) are associated with faster reaction times (Arpan, Rhodes, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007; M. C. Powell & Fazio, 1984; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1992).

### *Accessibility*

Such theorizing of the agenda-setting process is based on the concept of accessibility, which has been studied frequently as an important knowledge and attitude activation rule in social cognition research. In social psychology, many studies have provided a rich body of evidence that people's interpretation of information often depends on the current accessible knowledge constructs (Higgins & King, 1981; R. S. Wyer & Srull, 1981). Knowledge is broadly defined as the totality of a person's beliefs on various topics (Bar-Tal & Kruglanski, 1988); knowledge structures refers to cognitive representations of generic concepts, the attributes that constitute the concept and the relationships among the attributes (Yi, 1993). Thus, the social cognition concept may be applicable to an examination of a cognitive agenda-setting process. Accessibility is defined as "the activation potential of



available knowledge” (Higgins, 1996). Generally, the knowledge accessibility concept holds that “the information that comes most readily to mind will be the information that comprises the ‘small subset’ of available information that is retrieved and, in turn, is the information that is most likely to be used in constructing a judgment” (Shrum, 2002, p. 72).

Schwarz and his colleagues (2003) divided the accessibility concept into three propositions. First, when forming a judgment, individuals rarely retrieve all information that may be relevant. Rather, they truncate the search process as soon as “enough” information has come to mind to form a judgment with sufficient subjective certainty. Accordingly, the judgment is primarily based upon the subset of information that is most accessible at the time. In the language of attribute agenda setting, audiences who have read news stories about different attributes pertaining to a political candidate such as the public figure’s issue positions, biographical details, perceived qualifications, integrity, or personality and image (McCombs et al., 2000), when evaluating the candidate, would not search all the attributes in their memory to draw a conclusion, but rather those that most easily come to their minds. For example, a scandal damaging the candidate’s reputation for honesty may lead to total negative evaluations among the public, no matter how positive other attributes are in other news stories. This is consistent with McGuire’s (McGuire, 1985) construction-by-aspects principle, which suggests that people may often consider just one salient attribute of an attitude, presumably but not necessarily the most important attribute, and form an attitude based on this single attribute, if the result of this

streamlined process is sufficient to allow them to make a judgment (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

The second of the propositions of Schwarz et al. concerning the accessibility concept is that, when individuals encounter new information, they usually do not entertain multiple possible interpretations. Instead, they interpret the information in terms of the most accessible and applicable concept at hand. Accordingly, accessible concepts of differential valence can give rise to differential interpretations, which in turn result in differential evaluative judgments. Stimulus information that is subject to multiple interpretations is usually regarded as ambiguous (see Higgins, 1996). That is, at least two interpretations are applicable to the given information, such as the ambiguous “persistent”/“stubborn” description used by Higgins et al. (1977). In marketing research, ambiguous product information is often used to examine the priming effect on customers’ interpretation of product features and, in turn, their brand evaluations. For example, the stimulus ad for a notebook with a fictitious brand – “BigBook” used in Shen and Chen’s (2007) study – focused on two sets of concepts applicable to its advertised feature, big size. One was visual superiority and superior functionality, when positively related to the feature, and the other was mobility and convenience, when negatively related to the feature. But when participants evaluated the brand, given the situation where the advertising context was applicable to the brand, those who were exposed to the positive concept prime give higher evaluation scores to the brand than those who were negatively primed.

The third proposition of Schwarz et al. holds that accessibility effects on

behavior are mediated by the influence of accessible concepts on the interpretation of the situation. This is the consequence of the accessibility effects on attitude and also has received ample support (for a review, see Higgins, 1996).

### *Attitude Accessibility*

As an extension of knowledge construct accessibility, another type of accessibility, attitude accessibility, has been a research focus in attitude and social-behavior psychology. According to Sheufole's (2000) accessibility-based theorizing of the agenda-setting process, a memory-based model of information processing should be the foundation for the mechanisms of both agenda-setting and priming. However, his article only mentions the term and the use of the general-knowledge accessibility concept to explain accessibility as the cognitive theoretical base of agenda setting. The specific role of attitude accessibility in the agenda-setting process has not been theoretically clarified.

Fazio (1986) has proposed that, like other knowledge constructs, object-evaluation linkages can vary in accessibility; that is, attitudes are viewed as specific associations between attitude objects and the evaluations of those objects that are stored in memory (Arpan et al., 2007; Fazio, 1986, 1989), and such associations can vary in strength. When the strength of the connection reaches a certain level, the attitude becomes automatically accessible from memory. That is, a highly accessible attitude is an evaluation, which is strongly associated with the object. When the node for the attitude object is activated, the strength of the association will ensure, due to spreading activation, that the node containing the evaluation of the object is also

activated.

### *Recent Priming and Media-Effects Research*

A wide variety of priming methods have been used to increase knowledge construct or attitude accessibility in many studies. These methods seek to activate stored knowledge or attitude to increase the likelihood that this knowledge or attitude will influence subsequent responses to stimulus information. Two general types of priming play an important role. One of these is recent priming, which holds that the more recently a construct has been activated, the easier it is to recall (Higgins et al., 1977; R. S. Wyer & Srull, 1980). According to Wyer and Srull's (1980, 1981) storage-bin model, long-term memory consists of a set of content-addressable storage bins. A construct in a given bin is more likely to be retrieved or activated and used if it has been retrieved and used recently. Accessibility effects of recent priming have also been interpreted in terms of a variety of excitation transmission models (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Higgins & King, 1981; Marcel & Forrin, 1974; Reder, 1983; Warren, 1972; R. S. Wyer & Carlston, 1979). Excitation transmission models postulate that recent stimulation of a knowledge unit increases that unit's excitation level, and that the excitation level must reach a minimal threshold for the knowledge unit to be activated and used to judge a subsequent stimulus. This implies that when several stored constructs are potentially applicable to subsequent judgment of a stimulus, the most recently activated construct is likely to have the highest excitation level and to reach activation threshold most easily in presence of the stimulus (for a review, see Higgins, 1996). In network models of memory, recently activated nodes will be more

accessible temporarily.

The theory that the accessibility of a knowledge construct can be increased by priming that construct has been applied to various explanations of the mechanisms of media priming (for a review, see Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Carpentier, 2002). These include political priming effects on Americans' judgments of the president (e.g. Iyengar & Simon, 1993) in political communication research and contextual priming effects on consumers' evaluations of an advertised brand (e.g., Yi, 1993) in marketing communication. Scholars argue that agenda setting and priming share the same theoretical foundation (Price & Tewksbury, 1995; Sheufole, 2000; Willnat, 1997). In Price and Tewksbury's (1995) words, "agenda setting—commonly thought to be a kind of basic media effect upon which priming depends—is actually but one particular variant of priming, which is itself a far more general effect" (pp. 7-8).

According to Price and Tewksbury's (1997) political priming model, constructs that are activated by the media and judged as applicable to the current situation are brought into working memory, which is a subset of short-term memory. There, the information is consciously available and subsequently influences how the message is interpreted when that message is present. However, the term media priming as used in mass communication research is very different from the sense of priming that is used by cognitive and social psychologists. Taking any delay from priming to stimulus exposure into account, social cognition research suggests that the effect of recent activation of a construct on the accessibility of that construct is

relatively transitory. That is, a primed increase in the accessibility of a construct dissipates relatively quickly. But in many media-priming studies, the prime is presented at least 24 hours prior to the measure of the prime's effect (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). In some instances, the media coverage in question may have occurred weeks earlier (Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Krosnick & Brannon, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1997; see Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002). Citizens' responses to opinion polls about the most important problems typically reflect the media lessons of the past four-to-eight weeks (McCombs, 2004). Thus, the time frame involved in the mass communication model of agenda-setting research (or agenda setting at the societal level in McCombs' term) makes it unlikely that recent priming, in the sense used in experimental social cognition research, influences public opinion about social issues or political figures.

#### *Chronic Accessibility and the Mass-Communication Model of Agenda Setting*

Besides recent priming, another source of accessibility in the mass-communication model of agenda setting is chronic accessibility. Chronic accessibility refers to concepts that are always highly accessible or habitually accessible from memory. These concepts are considered to be the result of highly frequent priming, based upon the notion that the more frequently a construct is primed, the more likely it is that the construct will be used in judging a subsequent stimulus (Higgins, 1996). Although the effect of recent activation of a construct on the accessibility of that construct is relatively transitory, frequency effects tend to

dominate after a short period of time (Higgins, Bargh, & Lombardi, 1985; R. S. Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). This is consistent with Wyer and Srull's (1980, 1981) storage-bin model: if a construct is primed frequently over time, at any point it is more likely to have been the most recent construct used and thus be back on top of the bin. In the language of excitation transmission models, the more frequently a construct is stimulated, the more likely that an excitation level near the threshold for activation will be maintained (see Higgins, 1996). Constructs can be chronically accessible because they are valued, important, and frequently employed; constructs can be temporarily accessible because they are perceptually salient (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

The research suggests that chronically accessible concepts have more persistent effects on people's judgments and behavior over time than do other concepts that are not chronically accessible (see research by Higgins, King, & Mavin, 1982; Lau, 1989). The evidence provided by Lau's (1989) study shows that the chronic accessibility of political constructs remains quite stable even over a period of four years. In fact, chronic accessibility was defined as a "long-term bias to notice, process, and have available for recall certain types of information across a variety of different stimulus objects in a variety of different situations" (Lau, 1989, p. 5). So far, the definition of chronic accessibility has been somewhat overlapping with another psychological concept, schema. According to Augoustinos and Walker (1995), "A schema is conceptualized as a mental structure which contains general expectations and knowledge of the world" (p. 32). Schemas are viewed as memory traces. That is,

“Schemas influence and guide what social information will be encoded and retrieved from memory” (p. 44). In Lau’s (1989) words, “Chronics have cognitive structures (or schemas) that make certain types of information chronically more accessible to them” (p. 6).

*Chronic Accessibility and Temporary Accessibility in the Cognitive-Process Model*

The proposed cognitive process model of agenda setting is a causal model in which information salience serves as the cause and audience-perceived salience serves as the effect. Information salience in the mass communication model of agenda-setting research is usually measured by the frequency of news coverage of a particular object or attribute. In terms of frequent priming and chronic accessibility, frequent or repeated media coverage of a particular issue, political candidate, or attribute pertaining to that issue or candidate increases the chronic accessibility of the information about that issue, candidate, or attribute in the long-term memory of the audience. In turn, such information will be used in subsequent opinion polls for their judgments or evaluations. In this sense, the mass communication model of agenda setting is different from priming; it may not be suitable to equate these two concepts.

However, the chronic accessibility of a construct can be facilitated by the priming procedure so that the primed concepts are temporarily even more accessible from memory (Bargh, Bond, Lombardi, & Tota, 1986; Roskos-Ewoldsen, Arpan-Ralstin, & Pierre, 2002), or can be suppressed or discounted by counterattitudinal advocacy according to the cognitive dissonance theory (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; L Festinger, 1957). Such temporary accessibility is also called



“situational accessibility” by some social psychologists (e.g., Blanz, 1999; Maddox & Chase, 2004). According to the literature, situational accessibility of a knowledge construct or attitude is influenced by preexisting knowledge or preexisting attitudes and environmental factors. Indeed, in Blanz’s (1999) model, situational accessibility is determined by two factors: the chronic (or habitual) accessibility of a construct and the contextual factors.

Thus, the roles of chronic accessibility and temporary accessibility in the theory of agenda setting should be distinguished. This dissertation argues that chronic accessibility should be treated as a dependent variable in the mass communication model of agenda setting at societal level, but in the hypothesized cognitive-process model of agenda setting, chronic attribute accessibility should be an independent variable that is related to temporary attribute accessibility. The mass communication model and the cognitive-process model of agenda setting differ with respect to accessibility. The former involves chronic accessibility as a function of frequent exposure over time, while the latter involves temporary accessibility as a function of chronic accessibility and recent priming.

Thus, in addition to the cognitive effects measured by perceived importance, the present study argues that agenda setting also has temporary effects. That is, using agenda setting to make an attribute salient in information may increase the temporary accessibility of that attribute, but temporarily increased accessibility may disappear quickly.

To establish the cognitive-process model of agenda setting that involves the

constructs of chronic accessibility and temporary accessibility, I developed three hypotheses regarding the possible moderating role that chronic attribute accessibility plays in the effect of attribute salience on temporary attribute accessibility. (see H2a, H2b, and H2c in the model summary section).

### *Measuring Accessibility*

Chronic accessibility is usually measured through responses elicited from open-ended questions. Higgins and his colleagues (1982) conducted two studies to examine the role of individual differences in construct accessibility in subjective impressions and in recall of traits of other people. Chronic accessibility was defined in terms of output frequency in one study and of output primacy in the other. In the first study, subjects were asked to write down the characteristics or traits of their friends and themselves. Using output frequency to operationalize chronic accessibility, the researchers considered a trait accessible for a subject if it appeared in the participants' description of both himself or herself and that of at least one of his or her friends, or if it appeared in the participants' descriptions of three or more friends (Higgins et al., 1982, p. 38)

Output primacy to different questions rather than the frequency of output was used to measure construct accessibility in the second study of Higgins et al. (1982). Participants' chronically accessible constructs were measured by asking them to list the traits of a type of person they liked, disliked, sought out, avoided, and frequently encountered. A trait was considered accessible for a subject if he or her listed it first in response to the questions in the first session, whereas any trait that did not appear

among the participant's responses to the question in the first session was considered inaccessible (Higgins et al., 1982, p. 40). These criteria for measuring construct accessibility have been used in later research (e.g., Bargh & Pratto, 1986; Bargh & Thein, 1985; see Higgins, 1996).

Lau used a similar approach in his study of the relationship between the chronic accessibility of political constructs and evaluative responses to political candidates. Lau (1989) measured participants' different construct accessibilities through an "inversely weighted proportion method," in which both the frequency and recall order of the responses to two open-ended questions (like and dislike) about two major parties and their candidates were considered (p. 10). This inversely weighted proportion method was adopted in a recent study of the effects of chronic accessibility in political advertising (Shen, 2004).

As first proposed by Fazio and his associates (Fazio, 1986; Fazio, Chen, McDonel, & Sherman, 1982), latencies of responses to attitudinal questions can be used to assess an attitude's accessibility in memory (Ajzen, Nichols, & Driver, 1995). That is, attitude accessibility is measured by participant reaction times to attitude probes. Through a software program, the elapsed time between presentation of a probe and the participant's pressing of keys to respond to the probe was captured by a computer to provide a measure of response latency (Arpan et al., 2007). The assumption behind this measure is that more accessible attitudes are associated with faster reaction times (see Arpan et al., 2007, p. 363; M. C. Powell & Fazio, 1984; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1992).

## Direct Agenda-Setting Effect: Importance or Temporary Accessibility?

As discussed earlier, salience and temporary accessibility are two distinct concepts in agenda setting. On the side of public opinion or attitude, from the perspective of the cognitive process, there is another controversy over the outcome in agenda setting: Do salient objects or attributes on the media agenda directly cause the temporary accessibility or perceived importance of these objects or attributes among the public? This controversy arose when some media-framing scholars (Sheufole, 2000; Sheufole & Tewksbury, 2007) challenged the accuracy of public-salience measurement by using importance indices in traditional agenda-setting research, arguing that accessibility or response latency rather than importance should be used to measure public salience. Agenda-setting scholars sought to defend the role of importance in measuring public salience. They argued that deliberate judgments and inferences rather than mechanistic responses based on accessibility should be included in agenda-setting processes. Accordingly, they maintained, issue salience as dependent variable in agenda-setting research should be operationalized as issue importance (Takeshita, 2006).

This challenge ignores the attitude research literature that emphasizes the role of importance in the structure of attitude strength and its consequentiality. It underscores, however, the drawback in traditional agenda-setting research where the concept of accessibility was not considered. Attitude scholars sometimes use attitude or belief strength and attitude or belief salience interchangeably (e.g., Ajzen et al., 1995). Importance has been used to measure salience for decades in attitude research.

Attitudes with importance have been shown to be more powerful determinants of perceptions of others' attitudes (Brent & Granberg, 1982; Granberg & Brent, 1974), of liking of others (Byrne, London, & Griffitt, 1968; Clore & Baldrige, 1968; Krosnick, 1988b; Schuman & Presser, 1981, p. 267), of attitudinal judgment (van der Pligt, de Vries, Manstead, & van Harreveld, 2000), of knowledge accumulation (Holbrook, Berent, Krosnick, & Visser, 2005), and of social behavior (Krosnick, 1988b, 1989; Robin, Reidenbach, & Forrest, 1996).

Both attitude importance and accessibility have been thought to be dimensions of the structure of strength-related attitude attributes (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). The former is "the subjective sense of concern about an attitude and the psychological significance that an individual attaches to it" (Boninger et al., 1995); the latter refers to "the strength of the object-evaluation link in memory" (see Bizer & Krosnick, 2001, p. 566; Fazio, 1995). It is commonly believed that importance and accessibility represent independent constructs. This is the basis of the controversy that is taking place between some media-framing and agenda-setting scholars about whether importance or accessibility should be used to measure public salience. Based upon the literature regarding attitude or attribute importance and temporary accessibility, it is plausible to include both attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility in the cognitive-process model of agenda setting, the former as a cognitive outcome of agenda setting and the latter as a temporary outcome. Then, because importance and accessibility serve as different independent strength-related attributes, the decisive issue is the relation between these two attitude properties.

### *Relationship Between Importance and Accessibility*

A number of studies have shown importance and accessibility to be positively correlated with one another (Krosnick, 1989; Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, & Carnot, 1993; Lavine, Sullivan, Borgida, & Thompson, 1996). This correlation only provides a general view of the relationship between importance and accessibility; that is, an attitude that is more important is also more accessible in memory. Research has gone further to investigate the possibility that one of these strength-related attributes might cause the other. Two contrasting hypotheses have been proposed and tested. One is that attitude accessibility may cause attitude importance (Roese & Olson, 1994). Roese and Olson (1994) argued that attitude accessibility subsumes attitude importance, such that attitude importance is a judgment completely derivative of attitude accessibility. An explanation could be, “When people are asked to report the amount of personal importance they attach to an attitude, they may do so in part by noting how quickly the attitude comes to mind” (Bizer & Krosnick, 2001, p. 567). According to a number of studies, “This perspective presumes that people sometimes have relatively weak senses of the importance they attach to attitudes and objects (e.g., Bassili, 1996) and therefore engage in self-perception-like processes (Bem, 1967, 1972) to resolve these ambiguities (Bizer & Krosnick, 2001, p. 567).”

Roese and Olson (1994) found that repeated expression manipulation significantly increased accessibility when controlling for importance, whereas repeated expression had no significant effect on importance when controlling for accessibility. These findings helped the researchers build a mediation model where

frequency of expression was the independent variable, importance was the dependent variable, and accessibility served as the mediator. That is, repeated expression manipulation increased accessibility, which in turn increased importance.

Unfortunately, the mediational analyses were conducted improperly, in that only between-subject differences were controlled for. The partial correlation analysis using within-subject repeated measures was not computed. Thus, the causal relation between accessibility and importance as proposed actually was not found; the only significant finding was that repeated expression can increase both accessibility and importance (for a review, see Bizer & Krosnick, 2001).

The reverse hypothesis is that attitude importance may be a cause of attitude accessibility (Krosnick, 1989). This mechanism was explained as follows:

Once a person decides to attach personal importance to an attitude, he or she is likely to selectively seek out information relevant to it, think frequently about the attitude and relevant information, and focus that thinking on the attitude's relation to relevant knowledge and other attitudes. Thus, importance would cause information gathering, attitude activation, and elaborative thinking about the attitude, which in turn would make it more accessible later (Bizer & Krosnick, 2001, p. 567).

Some empirical evidence supporting this hypothesis has been provided in a number of recent studies. In Krosnick's (1989) two studies that investigated the relationship between attitude importance and attitude accessibility, it was found that attitudes that participants considered personally important were reported more quickly than unimportant (to the participants) attitudes. Although these findings suggested that attitude importance may be a determinant of accessibility measured by response

latency, the researcher acknowledged that they were correlational rather than causal. Therefore, the observed relationship between attitude importance and accessibility could be spurious. This means that any such relationship could have occurred because both attitude importance and response latency are determined by a common variable rather than one being caused by the other (see Krosnick, 1989, pp. 305-306). Thus, any causal relationship between attitude importance and accessibility was still not clear.

This research stream was extended to the relationship between attribute importance and accessibility by van Harreveld and colleagues (2000). In one of their studies, the importance of 15 attribute statements about smoking was assessed; attitude response times were recorded in the first session. A week later, the response times to these 15 attributes were recorded again in a different format as a lexical decision task. The results from both sessions showed decreased response latencies for ratings of important attributes compared to ratings pertaining to the remaining attributes (van Harreveld et al., 2000). Thus, the researchers concluded, “Accessibility is closely related to (attribute) importance; however, we do not necessarily see accessibility as a predictor of importance (van Harreveld et al., 2000, p. 378).” The time involved in the study (a week) was not designed specifically to examine the causal relationship between attribute importance and accessibility in that both importance and response latencies were measured in the first session. Thus, the only thing that can be inferred from their study is that the attribute importance-accessibility relationship or the accessibility of important attributes is stable over time.



A more recent study by Bizer and Krosnick (2001) investigated the relationship between accessibility and importance in terms of the effect of repeated attitude expression. In this study, some randomly selected participants reported their attitudes on ten issues, including the four target issues, and their response times were recorded by computer. Then they reported the personal importance of each issue. The remaining participants reported the importance of each issue first and then reported their attitudes. Researchers hoped that this time-order design could reveal the causal relationship between attitude importance and accessibility. They found that when accessibility was measured before importance, repeated expression had a strong impact on accessibility, whereas when accessibility was measured after importance, repeated expression still affected accessibility, but more weakly (Bizer & Krosnick, 2001). In their ANOVA test model, the researchers did not control the importance rating when they looked at the effect of repeated expression on accessibility with the time-order in control. Thus, this study revealed only the interaction of repeated expression and the order of dependent variable measures; the causal relationship of importance and accessibility was not revealed.

In sum, it can be inferred from previous studies that in the agenda-setting process the relationship between attribute importance and attribute accessibility can be either (a) Attribute salience manipulation has a direct effect on attribute importance rating, which in turn influences accessibility, or (b) attribute salience manipulation has a direct effect on attribute accessibility, which in turn influences the importance rating, if there is correlation between these two constructs. Such a dual process model does

not help to specify the relationship between attribute importance and accessibility, if such a relationship does exist. Thus, as an effort to clarify the relationship of attribute importance and attribute accessibility as key factors in the agenda-setting process, I designed my study to verify the relationship between attribute importance and accessibility before specifying the possible causal relationship between these two constructs.

Thus, a hypothesis with regard to the correlation between attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility is proposed before testing the possible mediating model, which is still in question (see H3 and RQ1 in the model summary section).

#### Causal Attribution as a Consequence of Agenda Setting

Perceived causation is a central theme in attribution work, although the attribution conceptions have also included a variety of perceptions, such as perception of responsibility and freedom (Harvey & Weary, 1984). Attribution theory approaches to understanding persuasion emphasize the mediational role of people's causal explanations for why communicators take particular positions on particular issues (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The focus of this dissertation is not attribution theory itself, but instead, the possible agenda-setting effects on individuals' evaluations of a CRM sponsor that may be mediated by causal attribution (in this case, the individual's inference of CRM motive), although attribution is not always necessarily the consequence of agenda setting. It is assumed that through agenda setting, communicators for a CRM sponsor may be able to influence how a person interprets the motive for launching the CRM campaign, which in turn affects that person's

evaluation of the sponsor's brand. According to the general notion of attitude-behavior correspondence, it is expected that "People's attitudes are positively correlated with the evaluative implications of their overt behaviors" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 155). That is, a person who holds a favorable attitude toward a certain object is expected to perform favorable behaviors, and not to perform unfavorable behaviors, with respect to the object. Thus, a person's evaluation of a sponsor's brand will affect that person's purchase intentions.

#### *Causal Attribution as a Perceptual Consequence of Agenda Setting*

A major explanation for causal attribution is its perceptual process that can be traced back to Heider and Simmel (1944), Michotte (1946), and Heider's first three chapters (Lowe & Kassin, 1980, p. 534). A prominent prediction in this area of attribution research is that the salience of stimuli influences the attribution of causality. Some evidence supporting this prediction has been provided (see Harvey & Weary, 1984, p. 434; Taylor & Fiske, 1975). Specifically, in many everyday situations, perceivers give little thought to issues of causation, making attributions to salient stimuli "off the top of the head" (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Salience was operationalized as "some factor that is literally prominent in the perceiver's field of view (Taylor & Fiske, 1975) or that is easily retrievable from memory (Pryor & Kriss, 1977)" (E. R. Smith & Miller, 1979, p. 2240). This dissertation argues that in the proposed cognitive-process model of agenda setting the former can be considered information salience and the latter equals the construct of accessibility. The effect of the accessibility of persuasion motives on sales motive inferences was reported in a study

by Campbell and Kirmani (2000). Their findings showed that “The salesperson was perceived as flattering the customer in order to make a sale more when the motive was accessible (flattery prior to purchase) than when the motive was less accessible (flattery after purchase)” (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000, p. 73).

Importing this perceptual-attribution process into the cognitive-process model of agenda setting, it is assumed that by manipulating information salience, communicators of cause-related marketing can make one of the multiple causes of an object’s behavior more salient, which in turn makes the salient cause more temporarily accessible in the perceiver’s short-term memory. Consequently, that cause will be used by the perceiver to infer the object’s behavior, and such motive inference in turn influences his or her evaluation of the object. In short, agenda setting can influence causal attribution through temporary attribute accessibility.

Based on such theorizing, and as a consequence of hypothesis H2b, I postulate two new hypotheses with regard to the causal relationship between temporary attribute accessibility and attribution of causality (see H4a and H4b in the model summary section).

#### *Causal Attribution as a Cognitive Consequence of Agenda Setting*

A mechanistic accessibility-based causal attribution model has been challenged by another theoretical position that argues against an interpretation of salience effects that are based simply upon recall (Harvey & Weary, 1984). In an examination of the processes of vividness effects, Taylor and Thompson (1982) found that, although “vivid communications have a moderate advantage in memory,”

vividness effects on judgments were not found in their sixteen studies collecting both recall and judgment data. They argued that recall is not related to judgments in general (Taylor & Thompson, 1982). Studies in social cognition have also failed to find evidence for a recall-judgment link (e.g., Anderson & Hubert, 1963; Dreben, Fiske, & Hastie, 1979; Taylor & Fiske, 1978; also see Taylor & Thompson, 1982). Smith and Miller (1979) argued that salience effects reflect the close relationships among the processes of comprehension, remembering, and attribution, but not simply a perceptual process by which people make attributions without giving much thought to them.

It can be inferred from these findings and arguments that when attributing an attitude object's behavior to an associated cause, a person does not passively use whatever is most accessible in his memory as the cause, but instead, makes a more or less cognitive effort. Thus, causal attribution has to be related to the person's belief system. This enables attribute importance to play a key role in explaining causal attribution. As mentioned earlier, a number of studies support the idea that attribute importance is a powerful determinant of a person's perceptions of others' attitudes (Brent & Granberg, 1982; Granberg & Brent, 1974), of their liking of others (Byrne et al., 1968; Clore & Baldridge, 1968; Krosnick, 1988b; Schuman & Presser, 1981, p. 267), of attitudinal judgment (van der Pligt et al., 2000), of knowledge accumulation (Holbrook et al., 2005), and of social behavior (Krosnick, 1988b, 1989; Robin et al., 1996). Although no study of the possible causal relationship between attribute importance and causal attribution has been reported in the literature, it is plausible that

when attributing an object's behavior to an associated cause, it is more likely for a person to choose a cause that he judges more important and to use that cause to explain the object's behavior. In other words, agenda setting can influence causal attribution through attribute importance. This theorizing is reflected in two hypotheses in my model (see H5a and H5b in the model summary section).

#### *Causal Attribution as a Mediator of the Agenda-Setting Effects*

So far, I have discussed the theoretical model in which causal attribution serves as a consequent process of agenda setting. But causal attribution is not the end of the cognitive process of agenda setting. As Shrum (2002) observed, research on media effects has been concerned primarily with relations between input variables and output variables. This dissertation seeks to explore the "black box" between the inputs and outputs. Audience attitude and behavior that communicators are most often interested in, when treated as consequences of causal attribution, are the ultimate outcomes of the agenda-setting function of information in the cognitive-process model.

The consequences of attributions have been studied for decades. Concerning the nature of the relation between attributions and subsequent behavior, Kelly (1973) argued, "The person ordinarily takes actions appropriate to the meaning his causal interpretation gives to his own or others' behavior." That is, "his causal explanations play an important role in providing his impetus to action and in his decisions among alternative courses of action." Thus, "The attribution process can be incorporated readily within a decision-making model of behavior" (pp. 126-127).

In marketing research, investigators are specifically interested in causal attribution effects on consumers' purchase decision-making process. It is argued that causal attribution processes are fundamental to many aspects of consumer cognition and behaviors, including perceived source credibility, promotional response, and beliefs about advertiser motives (Folkes, 1988). Research suggests that consumer skepticism of a firm's motives occurs when consumers attribute self-serving motives to the firm, and hence, consumers have unfavorable evaluations of the firm (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000; Ellen et al., 2000; for a review, see Forehand & Grier, 2003; Webb & Mohr, 1998). A more recent study (DeCarlo, 2005) in consumer psychology shows that the effects of a sales message on a consumer's attitude toward the salesperson is mediated by persuasive-motive attribution (suspicion attributions or customer-oriented attributions), and consumer attitude, in turn, directly influences consumers' purchase intention.

Thus, I hypothesized a structure consisting of mediational relationships among agenda setting, attitudinal outcome of agenda setting, and causal attribution. That is, I suggest that the causal relationship between attribute importance and brand evaluation is mediated by inferences about the CRM motive. I developed two hypotheses stating these mediational relationships (see H6a and H6b in the model summary section).

#### *Prior Attitude Toward CRM in General and CRM Sponsor Evaluation*

Of course, the hypothesized indirect agenda-setting effects of CRM motive inference are not the only factors that influence consumers' evaluation of a CRM sponsor's brand. According to information integration theory, prior attitudes are an

important factor in attitude formation or change. This theory presumes that people form and modify their attitudes and beliefs as they receive and interpret new information and integrate it with their prior attitudes and beliefs (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Chronic attitude accessibility can explain how prior attitudes have effects on an individual's attitude toward the brand of a CRM sponsor. Attitude accessibility suggests that a more chronically accessible attitude toward CRM in general will be more easily activated when the node for CRM is activated (e.g., when a CRM campaign is presented), and the activated attitude in turn will affect the attitude toward the CRM sponsor's brand. Thus, prior attitude must be considered in the cognitive process model of agenda setting with respect to CRM sponsor brand evaluation as the attitudinal consequence of the agenda-setting process. I proposed a hypothesis to reflect this theoretical consideration (see H7 in the model summary section).

#### *Correlation Between Brand Evaluation and Purchase Intention*

It is commonly expected that attitude predicts behavior as attitudes are ordinarily expressed in cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. The attitude-behavior correlation has been found in numerous studies in different areas (for a review, see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Kraus' (1995) meta-analysis of 88 studies involving attitude-behavior correlations indicated that attitudes significantly predict future behavior, although many studies have also identified various attitude-moderating variables that make attitudes more or less predictive of behavior. According to the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein, 1980;



Martin Fishbein & Icek Ajzen, 1975) and its extension, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1991), attitudes influence behavior by their influence on intentions, which represent the person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behavior.

Although the class of attitudes in these two theories is attitude toward behaviors, many investigators have maintained the traditional approach of predicting behavior from attitudes toward a target (see also Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; e.g., Fazio, 1989; Fazio & Zanna, 1981; Millar & Tesser, 1986). Consistently, marketing research has found that attitudes toward a specific brand at least partly determine consumers' intention to buy that brand (e.g., Laroche & Brisoux, 1989; Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). In a study of direct marketing attitudes, researchers found that respondents' intention to purchase as a consequence of direct marketing is significantly influenced by their attitudes toward direct marketing (Akaah, Korgaonkar, & Lund, 1995). Specifically, a number of studies of sports sponsorship have found a positive relationship between consumer attitudes toward a sponsor and intentions to purchase that sponsor's products (e.g., Cornwell and Coote, 2005; Speed and Thompson, 2000). In cause-related marketing, it has been found that a company's social responsibility demonstrations help enhance its reputation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), which in turn can increase its sales (Shapiro, 1982). Therefore, cause-related marketing eventually might lead to favorable purchasing decisions or product choices among customers (Lawrence, 1993; Mohr et al., 2001; Sen & Morwitz, 1996; Shell, 1989). On this basis, I posited a hypothesis with regard to the relationship between brand evaluation and

purchase intention (see H8 in the model summary section).

#### Model Summary: Variables, Hypotheses and Research Questions

To investigate the psychological mechanism of agenda setting, I proposed a cognitive process model of this theory – specifically attribute agenda setting –and examined the model in an investigation of consumer perceptions of cause-related marketing. The attributes in this study are the attributes of consumer inference of CRM motives, specifically (a) public-serving, (b) both public-serving and firm-serving, and (c) firm-serving. The model consists of two parts: The first is the mechanism of salience transference, which is the core of the model, and the second is the mechanism of the consequences of salience transfer. The key variables involved in the core of the model include attribute salience, attribute importance, chronic attribute accessibility, and temporary attribute accessibility, while CRM motive inference, pre-exposure attitude towards CRM in general, evaluation of the CRM sponsor, and consumer purchase intention are the key variables in the second part of the model.

#### *Key Variables Involved in Salience Transference and its Consequences*

These key variables were defined and their measures were clarified. *Attribute salience* in information uniquely relies on the information properties. That is, attribute salience in information refers to how much an attribute stands out from the scene in which it appears. Salience based on perceiver properties should be treated as perceived salience, which is expressed by other attitude properties such as accessibility and importance. Through such clarification, information salience is

distinguished from perceived salience. In fact, in some agenda-setting research the former has been treated as the input variable while the latter often served as the outcome. Attribute salience, a specific type of information salience, was the independent variable that was manipulated in this dissertation research.

Using the definition provided by Boninger et al. (1995), *attitude importance* is “the subjective sense of concern about an attitude and the psychological significance that an individual attaches to it.” Self-reporting is the common technique used to measure attitude importance. Specifically, survey respondents or experiment participants are asked to rate on a Likert scale the degree of importance that they attach to an attitude object or attitudinal statement. In addition, some researchers have used selection tasks to assess attribute importance. That is, participants were required to select a specific number of attributes from a larger number of attributes that they personally considered most important and then rank the selected attributes in order of importance. It was found that the predictive value of the measure based on individually selected important attributes is as good as that of a measure based on the larger set of all attributes (van Harreveld et al., 2000).

Adopting Lau’s (1989) definition, Higgins (1996) defined *chronic accessibility* as a “long-term bias to notice, process, and have available for recall certain types of information across variety of different stimulus objects in a variety of different situations” (p. 5). Chronic accessibility has been operationalized as output frequency or output primacy (Higgins, 1996). The technique of response elicitation from open-ended questions has been widely used to measure output frequency and primacy.

Specifically, in terms of output frequency, an attribute that participants list more often is considered to be more chronically accessible than an attribute that participants list less often. Measured by output primacy, an attribute that participants list earlier in their recall order is thought to be more chronically accessible than an attribute that participants list later in their recall order in a response elicitation task.

Distinct from the long-term trait of chronic accessibility, *temporary accessibility* focuses on attitude accessibility in short-term memory in specific situational contexts, such as recent priming. Response latency has been used to operationalize temporary accessibility. Response latency is the elapsed time between presentation of an attitude probe and the participant's pressing of keys to respond to the probe as captured by a computer.

The dependent variable in the causal attribution study in this dissertation is CRM motive inference, which has three values, (a) firm-serving motive only, (b) both firm-serving and public-serving motives, and (c) public-serving motive only. CRM sponsor brand evaluation was hypothesized to be the direct consequence of causal attribution and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, and purchase intention was hypothesized to be the direct consequence of brand evaluation.

#### *Hypothesized Relationships among the Key Variables*

Several research hypotheses and one research question with regard to the relationships among these variables were formulated as below:

*Attribute salience and attribute importance.* The literature of social psychology shows that attitude importance and perceived salience are closely related

conceptually and have often been used interchangeably (e.g., Scott, 1968, pp. 206-207; Sherif, 1980). Indices of importance have been used to measure the construct of perceived salience popularly in social psychology and political science (e.g., Holster, 1985; Jackson & Marcus, 1975; N. F. Lemon, 1968; J. L. Powell, 1977; Tedin, 1980). According to theorizing in the agenda-setting research tradition, the agenda-setting function of mass media is to transfer issue or attribute salience from the media to the public. In this salience-transference model, issue or attribute salience in the public is equal to issue or attribute importance (Dearing & Rogers, 1992; McCombs, 2004). Thus, I predicted that attribute salience causes attribute importance:

**H1:** A salient attribute pertaining to an attitude object in information is likely to be judged as more important than other nonsalient attributes pertaining to the same attitude object by a person who is exposed to the information.

*Chronic attribute accessibility and temporary attribute accessibility.*

Long-term chronic accessibility and temporary accessibility have been distinguished from each other. Previous research (e.g., Blanz, 1999) suggests that temporary accessibility (which is called “situational accessibility” by some social psychologists (e.g., Blanz, 1999; Maddox & Chase, 2004) is determined by two factors, the chronic (or habitual) accessibility of a construct and context factors. This theorizing is reflected in my hypothesis below:

**H2a:** An attribute that is more chronically accessible in general will be more accessible in the person’s short memory in specific situations.

*Attribute salience and attribute accessibility.* According to the literature, perceived salience has also been conceptualized as accessibility (see Higgins, 1996; McArthur, 1981; Price, 1992; Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Based on the accessibility concept, some media scholars have argued that the agenda-setting process is an accessibility-based model (S.-H. Kim et al., 2002; Sheufele, 2000; Sheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Sheufele (2000) further argued that conceptualizing public salience as perceived importance in agenda-setting research does not match the accessibility concept, and suggested that public perceived salience should be measured by response latency rather than by perceived importance. Based on this theorizing, I proposed the following hypothesis:

**H2b:** A salient attitude attribute in information will be more accessible in the short-term memory of a person who is exposed to the information than other nonsalient attributes pertaining to the same attitude.

*The moderating role of chronic attribute accessibility.* As Blanz (1999) argued, situational accessibility is determined by both chronic accessibility and context factors such as recent priming. It is assumed that what is accessible in a person's short-term memory is influenced by both the preexisting schemata in his mind and information to which he was exposed recently. I formulated the following hypothesis regarding the possible moderating role of chronic attribute accessibility in the relationship between attribute salience and temporary attribute accessibility:

**H2c:** The effect of attribute salience on temporary attribute accessibility in a person's short memory is moderated by the person's chronic accessibility

of the attribute.

*Attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility.* Based on the literature regarding attitude or attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility, I argued earlier in this dissertation that it is plausible to include both attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility in the cognitive process model of agenda setting, the former as a cognitive outcome, the latter as a perceptual outcome. Before examining the nature of the relationship between attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility, it must be proved that there is a relationship between these two independent constructs. Evidence supporting their positive relationship has been provided by a number of studies (Bizer & Krosnick, 2001; Krosnick, 1989; Krosnick et al., 1993; Lavine et al., 1996; Roese & Olson, 1994; van Harreveld et al., 2000). I formed the following hypothesis to test this relationship:

**H3:** Perceived importance of an attribute is correlated with temporary accessibility of that attribute.

*The nature of the relationship.* Finding the relationship between attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility is the precondition for further investigation of the nature of such a relationship. However, although mediational models involving these two constructs have been proposed in a few previous studies, the mediational relationship between them is still not clear. Thus, any findings that support H3 (if H3 is supported) lead to a research question concerning the possible mediational relationship between attribute importance and temporary attribute

accessibility as below:

**RQ1:** Does perceived attribute importance mediate the attribute salience effect on temporary attribute accessibility, or does attribute accessibility mediate the attribute salience effect on temporary attribute accessibility?

*Temporary attribute accessibility and causal attribution.* According to the perceptual-attribution process models, salient attributes may be relatively easy to recall and hence are more likely to be used for causal attribution. Salience effects are depicted as “top-of-the-head” phenomena because of their perceptual nature (see Harvey & Weary, 1984). Based on this theorizing, I hypothesized causal attribution as a consequence of temporary attribute accessibility, the perceptual outcome of agenda setting:

**H4a:** An attribute (public-serving or firm-serving) that is more accessible in a perceiver’s memory will be more likely to be used for CRM motive attribution.

If H4a is supported and combined with H2b, the general relationship between agenda setting and causal attribution can be described because the former serves as an antecedent of the latter and the latter serves as a perceptual consequence of the former. This general relationship can even be scrutinized in the context of the cognitive process of agenda setting. That is, attribute salience influences causal attribution through temporary attribute accessibility. Thus, supporting H4 (if H4 is supported) leads to another hypothesis as below:

**H4b:** Temporary attribute accessibility mediates the effect of attribute



salience on CRM motive inference.

*Attribute salience, attribute importance and CRM motive inference.* Some attribution scholars have argued that causal attribution is not merely a perceptual process without cognitive efforts (e.g., E. R. Smith & Miller, 1979). For my study, I assumed that a person will be more likely to link his attribution of CRM motives to his own belief system where the cause (motive) that he believes is more important will be more likely to be applied. That is

**H5a:** An attribute (public-serving or firm-serving) that is judged as more important will be more likely to be used for CRM motive attribution

If H5a is supported, then by combining it with H1, the relationship between agenda setting and causal attribution can also be established. But such influences are carried out through a cognitive path, rather than a perceptual one as stated in H4a and H4b. Thus, H5b was advanced as below:

**H5b:** Attribute salience affects motive inference and that effect is mediated by attribute importance.

*Attribute importance, temporary attribute accessibility, motive inference, and brand evaluation.* Attribution theorists have suggested that causal attribution has attitudinal and behavioral consequences (Kelley, 1973). Scholars have argued that causal attribution processes are fundamental to many aspects of consumer cognition and behaviors (Folkes, 1988). Empirical evidence has been provided that consumers hold unfavorable attitudes toward a firm when they attribute self-serving motives to the firm (e.g., Campbell & Kirmani, 2000; Ellen et al., 2000; Forehand & Grier, 2003;

Webb & Mohr, 1998).

**H6a:** Consumers who are more likely to attribute CRM motivation to a public-serving motive will be more likely to positively evaluate the CRM sponsor.

If the hypothesis that CRM motive inference has effects on brand evaluation is supported, then combining H6a with the supported H5a (that attribute importance has effects on CRM motive inference), I hypothesized that attribute importance has indirect effects on brand evaluation through CRM motive inference. That is, when a person believes that the public-serving attribute is more important than the firm-serving attribute, the person will be more likely to attribute CRM motivation to the public-serving motive, and in turn, that person will be more likely to positively evaluate the CRM sponsor. On the contrary, when the firm-serving attribute is believed to be more important than the public-serving attribute, a person will be more likely to attribute CRM motivation to the firm-serving attribute. This in turn, will make the person evaluate the CRM sponsor more negatively. If my hypothesis is correct, more specific relationships among agenda setting, attitudinal outcome, and causal attribution can be established. That is, the attitudinal outcome of agenda setting is mediated by the causal attribution process. This hypothesis is stated as below:

**H6b:** Attribute importance affects brand evaluation and that effect is mediated by CRM motive inference.

Combining H6a and H4a (that an attribute [public-serving or firm-serving] that is more accessible in a perceiver's memory will be more likely to be used for

CRM motive attribution), I proposed a relational model involving temporary accessibility, CRM motive inference, and brand evaluation as below:

**H6c:** Temporary attribute accessibility affects brand evaluation and that effect is mediated by CRM motive inference.

In addition to the agenda-setting effects, prior attitudes toward CRM in general also affect an individual's evaluation of a CRM sponsor's brand. The relationship between prior attitude and evaluation was hypothesized as below:

**H7:** Prior attitude toward CRM in general is positively correlated with attitude toward the brand of the CRM sponsor.

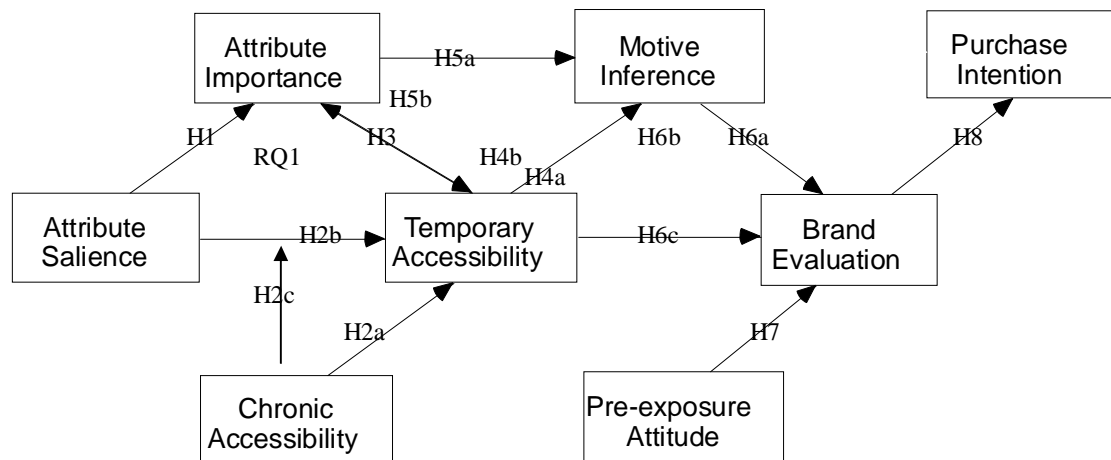
*Correlation between brand evaluation and purchase intention.* Attitude-behavior linkage has been widely investigated and the positive relationship between attitude and behavior or behavioral intention has been supported in many studies. As a consequence of the agenda-setting effects of cause-related marketing communication, brand purchase intention was also taken into account as the last stage (following brand evaluation) of the proposed cognitive-process model of agenda setting. This consideration is reflected in a hypothesis as follows:

**H8:** Consumers who evaluated the CRM sponsor brand more positively will be more likely to purchase the brand, all else being similar.

The cognitive process model of agenda setting involving all key variables and their relationships is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A hypothesized cognitive-process model of agenda setting and consequences (from informational input to behavioral output)

*Information* → *Agenda Setting* → *Causal Attribution* → *Evaluation* → *Behavior*



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Pilot Study

Attribute salience in information and chronic attribute accessibility are two initial independent variables involved in the hypothesized cognitive-process model of agenda setting. I sought to manipulate attribute salience while measuring chronic attribute accessibility. A pilot study was conducted to determine the efficacy of that manipulation and the measurement of the independent variables. The pilot study also helped to identify issues in study procedure and dependent variable measures so that refinements could be made for the ensuing main study.

#### *Pretest*

A pretest was conducted a week before the pilot study to elicit the attributes pertaining to participants' inferences of cause-related marketing motivation and measure the chronic accessibility of these attributes. Twenty-nine people were recruited on the campus of Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville as the participants for the pilot study. Among them, twenty-four people (13 females and 11 males) finished the whole pilot study including the pretest and the ensuing study. They were rewarded monetarily for their participation.

The pretest went through three steps to elicit participants' thoughts (attributes)

about cause-related marketing motivation and to measure the chronic accessibility of these attributes.

*Step one.* Applying the same elicitation method used by Lau (1989), in the first step, participants were asked for their opinions about CRM motivation. Specifically, they listed their top four thoughts about motives for companies to sponsor CRM campaigns in general. A neutral simple description of CRM was used to elicit participants' responses. The reason for this technique was twofold. First, it enabled the researcher to include those participants who know what CRM is, but have never heard the term CRM. Secondly, this technique can avoid participants' possible sensitivity to use of the word "marketing" included in the term. This could avoid the priming effect of the word "marketing." The specific question for response elicitation was, "Nowadays, many companies give a specific amount from their sales to designated social causes such as charities or other types of nonprofit organizations. The amount of donation is based on the amount of sales. What do you think of the motives for such corporate activity? Please list four specific possible motives by writing out one sentence for each motive." And then, participants were also asked to express their attitudes toward CRM in general in a four-item, five-point semantic differential scale. The four items are bad/good, unpleasant/pleasant, against/for and unfavorable/favorable. Cronbach's alpha test was calculated to assess the reliability of the measure. The question was

- ◆ *Please express your attitude toward such corporate activity described above by circling a number on each of the four 5-point scales below.*

*Step two.* All elicited responses were coded and categorized. According to the CRM attribution research literature, consumers attribute two types of motives to firms: motives that focus on social interest and motives that focus on self-interest. In Forehand and Grier's (2003) label, these motives are public-serving and firm-serving. Thus, each motive will be categorized into one of two schema categories – public-serving and firm-serving – according to whether it focused on benefits to individuals outside the firm or benefits to the firm itself (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Two coders blind to the research hypotheses were recruited to code all collected responses. The coders received a monetary reward.

*Step three.* Output primacy and output frequency were combined to measure chronic accessibility. Following Lau's (1989) inversely weighted proportion scoring procedure, the first thought (attribute) listed by a participant was given the weight 4, the second thought was weighted 3, the third was weighted 2, and the fourth was weighted 1. So each participant had a total weight of 10. Each schema category's score for one participant was obtained by dividing the total weight for that schema category by the sum of the total weight for all four responses, which is ten. For example, if among the four thoughts about CRM motivation that a participant listed, the first and the second were categorized into the public-serving schema, and the third and the fourth were categorized into the firm-serving schema, then, that participant had a score of .70  $[(4+3)/10]$  for the public-serving schema and .30  $[(2+1)/10]$  for the firm-serving schema. All scores were between zero and 1. In the extreme, a schema category would have a score of zero  $[0/10]$  if no response belonged to it and would

have a score of 1  $[(4+3+2+1)/10]$  if all four responses were categorized into it. Higher scores signify higher chronic attribute (schema) accessibility. Both schemas – public-serving and firm-serving – were used as the treatments in the first session of the experiment a week later.

*Chronic attribute accessibility index (CAI).* After all responses were coded, the independent variable chronic attribute accessibility was measured as continuous. In this scoring design, all scores fell between 0 and 1. There were two variables of chronic attribute accessibility, (a) chronic accessibility of the public-serving attribute and (b) chronic accessibility of the firm-serving attribute. These two variables were combined and an index was created to form a continuum, where the firm-serving attribute and the public-serving attribute served as two extremes. Most often, scores for responses would fall somewhere between firm-serving and public-serving extremes. The reason that a continuum was used for these two variables was that scoring them is not necessarily a zero-sum game. For each participant's responses, the sum of the public-serving score and the firm-serving score was not necessarily 1. Some participants would not be able to list four motives as asked. For example, if participant A listed only three motives and all were associated with to the firm-serving attribute, then, the firm-serving attribute has a score of .90 (.40+.30+.20) and the public-serving attribute has a score of 0. If participant B also had a score of .90 for the firm-serving attribute but .10 for the public-serving attribute, then it would be imprudent to compare the accessibility of the firm-serving attribute for these two participants (both have a score of .90), because their accessibilities to the



public-serving attribute are different. Therefore, considering either single attribute alone would be problematic, in that the accessibility of the public-serving attribute or of the firm-serving attribute would have no meaning until they were compared with each other.

A chronic attribute accessibility index (CAI) was calculated for each case by dividing the chronic accessibility score for the public-serving attribute by the chronic accessibility score for the firm-serving attribute. The following formula was developed for calculation of the index:

$$CAI = \frac{\text{chronic accessibility score for the public - serving attribute}}{\text{chronic accessibility score for the firm - serving attribute}} \times 100$$

A CAI score of 100 for a case means that the public-serving and the firm-serving attributes were equally chronically accessible theoretically in that case. A CAI score below 100 meant the public-serving attribute was less chronically accessible than the firm-serving attribute, and the lower the score, the less the accessibility. In the same logic, a CAI score above 100 means the public-serving attribute was more chronically accessible than the firm-serving attribute, and the higher the score, the more the accessibility.

*Pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general.* Participants' pre-exposure attitudes toward CRM in general were also measured. After the motive elicitation task, participants were asked to evaluate CRM in general on a four-item (bad/good, unpleasant/pleasant, against/for, and unfavorable/favorable) five-point semantic differential scale.

### *Experiment – Session I*

The experiment was a computer-based study. Each participant was assigned to a computer on which he or she completed all tasks involved in the experiment. The same twenty-four people (13 females and 11 males) from the pretest participated in this experiment.

*Stimulus materials.* Attribute salience was manipulated by presenting different scenarios of CRM campaign cases to participants. Four real CRM cases were selected from the Internet. They were (a) “TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think” (TUMS was sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI), (b) Briggs & Stratton and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF)’s “Mower Tune-Up Month” campaign, (c) Pedigree Adoption Drive (a pet adoption program of Pedigree pet food in cooperation with numerous dog shelters), and (d) PepsiCo’s partnership with the America on the Move (AOM) Foundation.

These four cases were edited so that each of three cases had two scenarios, one public-benefit-oriented and the other firm-benefit-oriented. The fourth case had only one scenario, which was both public-benefit-oriented and firm-benefit-oriented. In the public-benefit-oriented scenario, the outcome of the CRM campaign focused on the community that benefited from it; in the firm-benefit-oriented scenario the firm benefit was the focus of the outcome of the campaign. For example, in the public-benefit-oriented scenario for the TUMS case, the description of the campaign outcome was, “The campaign was successful. TUMS donated \$238,000 to the First Responder Institute, which in turn funded 60 fire departments throughout the United

States.” In the firm-benefit-oriented scenario, the campaign outcome was described as, “The campaign was successful. TUMS saw a 30% increase in the number of displays shipped to stores and 16% increase in sales volume.”

The fourth case with only one scenario was the PepsiCo example. That case included both both a public-benefit outcome (“AOM’s user success has reported that 71 percent of participants maintained or lost weight, and 36 percent increased daily steps by 2,000 or even more”) and a firm benefit (“By enhancing their reputation through such marketing program, PepsiCo’s image issues were solved. Its brand credibility is significantly enhanced because of its association with AOM...”).

*Attribute salience manipulation and procedure.* The attribute salience manipulation was accomplished by randomly assigning 24 participants to one of two conditions with different treatments. In one condition where the public-serving schema was manipulated as salient, participants were asked to read the public-benefit scenario of three cases plus the fourth case whose single scenario attempted to balance the public benefit and the firm benefit. In the other condition where the firm-serving schema was manipulated as salient, participants read the firm-benefit scenario of the same three same cases plus the fourth case. That is, each participant finished the 3+1 reading task in which three cases differed in two scenarios and one case was constant to all participants.

To control participants’ cognitive involvement in the reading task participants were required to write a brief one-sentence summary after reading each case. These summaries were not recorded and not used in later data analysis.

*Procedure and measures of temporary accessibility and importance.* The dependent variable measurement order was manipulated. All participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In one condition, participants completed the importance-rating task before performing the attitude-expression task (importance/attitude). Immediately after reading and summarizing the four cases, participants were asked to rate the importance of eight statements on a five-point scale that was adapted from the five-point scale (extremely important, very important, fairly important, somewhat important, not at all important) that was used by Bizer and Krosnick (2001) to measure attitude importance. The instruction for the importance-rating task was, “Next step, you will read several statements about corporate behavior. In your personal opinion, how important is each of the following statements for a person to learn about corporate behavior. Please indicate their importance by pressing one of five keys, from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (important).” The instruction also reminded the participants that these statements were not necessarily correct. Participants were also warned, “This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the statements that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all the statements.”

Among all eight statements, two statements directly reflected either public benefit or corporate benefit, while the other six statements were irrelevant to either attribute (see appendix B). The two attribute-reflecting statements were

- ◆ *The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the society.*

- ◆ *The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the firms themselves.*

The order of statement presentation was manipulated. Four attribute-irrelevant statements were presented before the other statements, including the two attribute-reflecting ones. The purpose of this design was to reduce the possible immediate priming effect. The two attribute-reflecting statements were the fifth and eighth (the last one), so that two other attribute-irrelevant statements served as buffers between them. The presentation order of the two attribute-reflecting statements was randomized so that the possible order effect would be eliminated. Only the importance ratings for the two attribute-reflecting statements were recorded. Immediately after completing the importance-rating task, participants completed an importance/attitude task. They were instructed to express their attitudes toward ten statements as quickly as possible, but not so quickly that they would make errors. Two response options were provided. One was pressing the “y” key on the keyboard to express an attitude of “agree,” the other was pressing the “n” key to express an attitude of “disagree.” Each participant’s reaction time was recorded as the measurement of temporary attribute accessibility. The instruction also warned the participants that the task was one-way and there was no way to go back to review the statements that they had finished; they were to keep going forward until they responded to all of the statements.

Of the ten statements in this task, two attribute-reflecting statements were exactly the same as those used in the importance-rating task; the other eight

statements were irrelevant to either attribute. Of the eight irrelevant statements, six were exactly the same as those used in the importance-rating task and two new irrelevant statements were created. The order of statement presentation in this stage was also manipulated. The first six statements served as fillers, designed to familiarize participants with the method before they reported their attitudes toward the two attribute-reflecting statements, which were presented in the seventh and tenth (the last one) places. Two attribute-irrelevant statements were presented between the two attribute-reflecting ones. The presentation order of two attribute-reflecting statements was randomized to eliminate the possible order effect.

Lastly, participants completed an attitude/importance task. Immediately after reading and summarizing the ten statements, participants expressed their attitudes toward each of them before they rated the importance of another set of statements (eight statements). All of the procedural details of the experiment were the same as those of the importance/attitude task except the order of rating importance and expressing attitude were reversed.

*Temporary attribute accessibility index (TAI).* To calculate TAI, I used the same rationale that was used for creating CAI, as well as the assumption that the less the reaction time for an attribute, the more accessible it is. The TAI was calculated for each case by dividing the reaction time for the firm-serving attribute (schema) by the reaction time for the public-serving attribute. A formula was developed for index calculation as follows:

$$TAI = \frac{\text{reaction time to the firm - serving attribute}}{\text{reaction time to the public - serving attribute}} \times 100$$

A score of 100 of TAI for a case indicated that the public-serving and the firm-serving attributes had an equal degree of temporary accessibility. A TAI score below 100 meant that the public-serving attribute was less temporarily accessible than the firm-serving attribute: the lower below 100 the score, the less temporarily accessible was the public-serving attribute. A TAI score above 100 meant that the public-serving attribute was more temporarily accessible than the firm-serving attribute; the higher above 100 the score, the more temporarily accessible was the public-serving attribute.

*Attribute importance index (AII).* Two variables, perceived importance of the public-serving attribute and perceived importance of the firm-serving attribute, were combined to form attribute importance indices (AII) that reflected the levels of relative perceived importance of the two attributes. A formula was developed for AII calculation as follows:

$$AII = \frac{\text{public - serving attribute importance}}{\text{firm - serving attribute importance}} \times 100$$

An AII score of for a case meant that the public-serving and the firm-serving attributes were rated as equally important by a participant in this case (e.g., both attributes were rated as 4). An AII score below 100 meant that the public-serving attribute was rated as less important than the firm-serving attribute: the lower below 100 the score, the less importance was assigned to the public-serving attribute.. An AII score above 100 meant that the public-serving attribute was rated as more important than the firm-serving attribute: the higher above 100 the score, the more importance was assigned to the public-serving attribute.

*Manipulation check.* A manipulation-check study was conducted to verify

salience. I wanted to verify that, for all three of the cases for which I had developed two separate schemas, a public-serving one and a firm-serving one, that one of the two schemas was more salient than the other, and that, in the fourth case, the two schemas were similar in salience for the fourth case. Twenty-eight students at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville were recruited to rate the scenarios of all of the cases. That is, each person rated seven scenarios (three cases in two scenarios plus the fourth case) using a seven-point unidimensional scale (from 1 = the campaign was strongly described as firm-benefit-oriented to 7 = the campaign was strongly described as public-benefit-oriented). The question for manipulation check was

- *What do you think of the description of the donation campaign above? Please circle one point in a seven-point scale below from 1 (the campaign is strongly described as firm-benefit-oriented) to 7 (the campaign is strongly described as public-benefit-oriented)."*

#### *Experiment – Session II*

After finishing the first session of the experiment, all 24 participants were instructed to read a fictitious CRM campaign case. After the reading task, participants were asked to infer the motivation of the CRM sponsor and express their attitudes toward the sponsor and their intentions to purchase the brand. The second session of the experiment tested the possible effects of temporary attribute accessibility and attribute importance on CRM motive inference and, in turn, on perceivers' evaluations of the CRM sponsor, as well as their product purchase intention. Effects of temporary accessibility and attribute importance are regarded as possible perceptual and



cognitive consequences of agenda setting.

*Stimulus material.* A fictitious CRM campaign case was created for the experiment. In this case, a fictitious fast-food restaurant chain, which was called Brand X, launched a campaign in which the company would donate five percent of its sales to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). The amount of the donation would be based on brand sales (see the case description from appendix B).

*Measure of CRM motive inference.* After read the fictitious CRM case, all participants answered a “why” open-ended question to assess their causal attribution of the motives of Brand X’s CRM program operation. This technique was used commonly in previous studies of causal attribution (e.g., Forehand & Grier, 2003; Harvey & Weary, 1984; Harvey, Yarkin, Lightner, & Town, 1980; Wong & Weiner, 1981). Specifically, the question that was used to measure the CRM motive inference in this study was exactly the same as the one used in the 2003 study of Forehand and Grier: “Why do you think the company started this program?” (p. 352). Participants were asked to type a brief one-sentence answer to this question.

*Attribution response coding scheme.* Guided by Forehand and Grier (2003), the same two coders who coded participants’ responses to the pretest questionnaire coded their inferences of the motives of Brand X in sponsoring the CRM program. Three coding categories were developed, (a) firm-serving motive only, (b) both public- and firm-serving motives, and (c) public-serving motive only. All responses were classified into one of these categories. The coding rule was that a response should be labeled as a firm-serving motive if it focused on the benefits of the firm

only, as a public-serving motive if it focused on the public benefits of the campaign, or as both public- and firm-serving motives if both public benefit and firm benefit could be inferred in the response.

*Measure of brand evaluation.* Immediately after the open-ended “why” question, participants evaluated Brand X in a three-item, five-point semantic differential scale in a questionnaire. These three items are (a) bad/good, (b) unfavorable/favorable, and (c) dislike/like (e.g., Kempf & Smith, 1998; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Shen & Chen, 2007; R. E. Smith, 1993). The three specific questions were structured as follows:

- ◆ *What do you think of Brand X? Press one of five keys, from 1 (bad) to 5 (good), to evaluate Brand X.*
- ◆ *What do you think of Brand X? Press one of five keys, from 1 (dislike) to 5 (like), to evaluate Brand X.*
- ◆ *What do you think of Brand X? Press one of five keys, from 1 (unfavorable) to 5 (favorable), to evaluate Brand X.*

*Measure of purchase intention.* The following task was designed to elicit participants’ purchase intention toward Brand X in a three-item, five-point scale anchored by unlikely/likely, impossible/possible, and improbable/probable. These three items were used in previous studies (e.g., Jeesun Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2005; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Shen & Chen, 2007; Yi, 1990). The three specific questions were the following:

- ◆ *Given that all other market factors of Brand X are similar to its competitors*

*such as price, taste, and store convenience, when you need to buy such a fast-food meal, would you choose Brand X? Press one of five keys, from 1 (unlikely) to 5 (likely).*

- ◆ *Given that all other market factors of Brand X are similar to its competitors such as price, taste, and store convenience, when you need to buy such a fast-food meal, would you choose Brand X? Press one of five keys, from 1 (impossible) to 5 (possible).*
- ◆ *Given that all other market factors of Brand X are similar to its competitors such as price, taste, and store convenience, when you need to buy such a fast-food meal, would you choose Brand X? Press one of five keys, from 1 (improbable) to 5 (probable).*

### *Results*

*Manipulation check.* Three paired-samples t tests were conducted to evaluate the difference between two scenarios of three cases. The result from the manipulation check test for the case “TUMS Sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI)” indicated that the mean campaign description in the public-serving scenario ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = .10$ ) was significantly greater than the mean campaign description in the firm-serving scenario ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $t(27) = 9.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .77$ . The result from the test for the case “Briggs & Stratton and National Wildlife Federation (NWF)’s “Mower Tune-Up Month” indicated that the mean campaign description in the public-serving scenario ( $M = 5.61$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) was significantly greater than its counterpart in the firm-serving scenario ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = .93$ ),  $t(27) = 10.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,

$\eta^2 = .80$ . A significant difference between the public-serving manipulation ( $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ) and the firm-serving manipulation ( $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ) was also found in the result from the test for the case “Pedigree Adoption Drive”:  $t(27) = 6.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .60$ . The findings in these three paired-samples  $t$  tests verified the effectiveness of the manipulation of attribute salience.

The fourth case had only one scenario, which included both public-serving and firm-serving attributes. The mean score of this case was not expected to be significantly different from the middle value in the scale, which is 4, if the manipulation was effective. Although a one-sample  $t$  test indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean campaign description ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ) and the middle value in the scale,  $t(27) = .12$ ,  $p = .90$ , it was found that there was greater variance ( $SD^2 = 2.42$ ) on this case than on all of the other cases that were presented in two scenarios. (“TUMS Sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI)” ( $SD^2 = .10$  on the public-serving scenario,  $SD^2 = 1.51$  on the firm-serving scenario), “Briggs & Stratton and National Wildlife Federation (NWF)’s “Mower Tune-Up Month” ( $SD^2 = 1.36$  on the public-serving scenario,  $SD^2 = .87$  on the firm-serving scenario) and “Pedigree Adoption Drive” ( $SD^2 = 1.88$  on the public-serving scenario,  $SD^2 = 1.44$  on the firm-serving scenario). As a matter of fact, the descriptive statistics showed that 18.5 percent of the raters ( $n = 5$ ) gave a score of 1 or 2 to the case while 22.2 percent ( $n = 6$ ) gave a score of 6 or 7 to the case. Such polarized interpretations of the same case could damage the attribute salience manipulation.

*Chronic attribute accessibility.* Twenty-four participants were asked to list

four possible motives that they attributed to CRM. Their responses were coded and categorized with one of two labels: public-serving motive or firm-serving motive. One participant listed only three motives because he stated that he could think of only three. Therefore, a total of 95 responses were coded by two coders (intercoder reliability, Cohen's  $\kappa = .66$ ). Each response was weighted with a score. A paired-samples t test was conducted to evaluate whether public-serving motive or firm-serving motive is more chronically accessible than the other. The result indicated that the mean firm-serving motive inference ( $M = .75, SD = .26$ ) is significantly greater than the mean public-serving motive inference ( $M = .25, SD = .26$ ),  $t(23) = -4.78, p < .001, \eta^2 = .50$ .

These two variables were combined to form an index for chronic attribute accessibility (CAI). The result indicated that the majority of the participants listed more firm-serving motives than public-serving motives. Almost 80 percent of the participants' CAI scores were less than 100. Of these participants, 42 percent did not list any public-serving motive (CAI = 0).

*Gender.* Five one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to examine whether gender was an effective factor in the research model in terms of its effects on dependent variables including AII, TAI, CRM motive inference, brand evaluation, and purchase intention. The results indicated that participants' gender had effects on AII,  $F(1, 22) = 4.39, p < .05, \eta^2 = .17$ , and CRM motive inference,  $F(1, 22) = 4.78, p < .05, \eta^2 = .19$ . No effect was found on TAI,  $F(1, 22) = .14, p = .72$ , brand evaluation,  $F(1, 22) = .46, p = .51$ , and purchase intention,  $F(1, 22) = .72, p = .41$ . This finding is

consistent with the literature that one of the basic elements of the female gender role in the United States is an emphasis on nurturance and life-preserving activities (Shaffer, 1981; P. A. Smith & Midlarsky, 1985), and it is suggested that women are more favorable toward self and other-oriented appeals than are men (Meyers-Levy, 1988). In Ross, Patterson, and Stutts' (1992) experimental study of consumer perceptions of cause-related marketing, female participants were found having a more favorable attitude toward both the firm and the cause than their male counterparts.

*Pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general.* Item statistics showed that participants' pre-exposure attitudes toward CRM for all four items inclined to being positive (bad/good (M = 3.92, SD = .88), unpleasant/pleasant (M = 3.62, SD = 1.01), against/for (M = 3.92, SD = 1.06), and unfavorable/favorable (M = 3.75, SD = 1.07). Scores for these four items were added to form a unidimensional scale. A reliability test was conducted and the result indicated that the reliability of the measure was acceptable (Cronbach  $\alpha = .78$ ).

To examine the effects of pre-exposure toward CRM in general in the research model, correlation coefficients were computed between this variable and dependent variables including AII, TAI, CRM motive inference, brand evaluation, and purchase intention. Out of these five correlations, three were found to be significant, including the one between pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general and CRM motive inference,  $r = .51, p < .05$ , the one between pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general and brand evaluation,  $r = .45, p < .05$ , and the one between pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general and purchase intention,  $r = .54, p < .01$ . The other

two were not significant, including the one between pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general and AII,  $r = .27$ ,  $p = .21$ , and the one between pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general and TAI,  $r = -.02$ ,  $p = .93$ .

*CRM motive inference.* Participants' responses to the open-ended "why" question were coded by two coders and classified into one of three coding categories, (a) firm-serving motive only, (b) both firm-serving and public-serving motives, and (c) public-serving motive only. These three categories were meaningful at three different levels. That is, from the perspective of public-serving motivation, the category of "firm-serving motive only" was at the lowest level, while the category of "both firm-serving and public-serving motives" was in the middle and the category of "public-serving motive only" was the highest. Thus, a three-point scale was applied to these three categories. The numbers assigned to them were 1, 2, and 3 respectively. The greater the number is, the stronger the attribution of the public-serving motive to the fictitious CRM campaign. An intercoder reliability test was conducted. The result indicated the reliability was liberally acceptable (Cohen's  $\kappa = .76$ ).

*Brand evaluation.* Adopting the brand evaluation measurement technique used in previous studies (e.g., Kempf & Smith, 1998; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Shen & Chen, 2007; R. E. Smith, 1993), a three-item (bad/good, unfavorable/favorable, and dislike/like), five-point semantic differential scale was used to measure participants' evaluations of Brand X. Scores for three items were added up to form a unidimensional scale, which was found to be reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ ).

*Purchase intention.* A three-item, five-point scale anchored by unlikely/likely,

impossible/possible, and improbable/probable used in previous studies (e.g., Shen & Chen, 2007; Yi, 1990) was adopted to measure participants' purchase intention toward Brand X. High reliability of this measure was found in a reliability test (Cronbach  $\alpha$  = .90). These four items were combined to form a unidimensional scale.

### *Discussion*

There were three primary purposes of the pilot study. One was to assess the efficacy of the manipulation and measures of the independent variables including attribute salience and chronic attribute accessibility.

Of four CRM cases used in attribute salience manipulation, three were satisfactory as the result of the manipulation check study indicated a significant difference between two scenarios of each case in terms of the location of this case on a continuum anchored by "the campaign is strongly described as firm-benefit-oriented" and "the campaign is strongly described as public-benefit-oriented."

The fourth case in the study "PepsiCo's Partnership with America on the Move (AOM) Foundation," included both public-serving and firm-serving attributes to neutralize the possible extreme effects of the manipulation. A disadvantage of including the fourth case in the experiment stimuli, however, was recognized in the manipulation check study. I decided that in the main study I would replace this case with another case which is unrelated to CRM.

The second purpose of the pilot study was to identify variables that should be controlled in the main study. The variable of gender was found to have an effect on AII and CRM motive inference, while pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general



was found to be correlated with CRM motive inference, brand evaluation, and purchase intention. These results suggested that these two variables should be controlled in the research model.

The third primary purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the measures of the dependent variables. Attribute importance was measured as indices combining the measures of two variable, public-serving attribute importance and firm-serving attribute importance. Both these two variables were measured on a five-point scale anchored by 1 (unimportant) and 5 (important). This scaling was adapted from the five-point scale (extremely important, very important, fairly important, somewhat important, not at all important) used to measure attitude importance in Bizer and Krosnick's study (2001). The reliability of this unidimensional scaling was not assessed in the previous study and neither in this current research. Another outcome variable, temporary attribute accessibility was measured through recording participants' reaction time by a computer program. This technique was popularly used in previous studies of attitude accessibility (e.g., Bizer & Krosnick, 2001; Fazio, 1986; Fazio et al., 1982), and the assumption that more accessible attitudes are associated with faster reaction times (see Arpan et al., 2007, p. 363; M. C. Powell & Fazio, 1984; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1992) was also adopted for this measure in the current research.

Three outcome variables regarded as the consequences of agenda setting include CRM motive inference, brand evaluation, and purchase intention. The reliability tests indicated the measures of these two variables were reliable.

In general, according to the pilot study, the manipulation of attribute salience, measures of chronic attribute accessibility, CRM motive inference, brand evaluation and purchase intention were largely successful. The stimuli materials were the major source of concern when taking the difficulty of neutral response manipulation (both public-serving and firm-serving in one case) into account. Another concern was about participants' possible habitual responses toward the repeated measure of two attribute-related statements, in that the two statements used in importance rating task were exactly the same as the two used in attitude expression task. The initial consideration given to this design was to make sure the attribute constructs measured in two tasks are exactly the same. Thus, the organization of the statement sentences needed to be modified so that the same constructs measured in two tasks have different appearances.

## Main Study

### *Design Changes From Pilot Study*

Based on the findings of the pilot study, two changes were made for the main study. In the pilot study, the greatest variance on the case "PepsiCo's Partnership with America on the Move (AOM) Foundation" became a serious concern, as the polarized interpretations of the case could damage the independent variable manipulation. The pretest of the pilot study indicated that participants were largely skeptical regarding the goodwill of sponsoring a CRM program (mean CAI = 60.28,  $SD = 94.43$ ; 79.2% of CAI < 100). Thus, given that it is difficult to change one's deep-rooted or deep-biased beliefs, the effect of manipulated public-serving attribute salience would

be easily counterbalanced or even overcome by a small amount of firm-serving-related information in this bi-attribute case.

However, a problem would occur if the bi-attribute case were simply removed from the stimuli materials. That is, reading and summarizing three cases all in one scenario consecutively would make participants be suspicious of the research purpose, and this in turn would influence their responses toward the dependent variable measures. To balance these two concerns, the bi-attribute PepsiCo case was replaced by another case which is unrelated to CRM. The new case select was about a real lawsuit stated by the California Supreme Court against Nike, Inc. This real case was selected from the Internet and then edited. In this case, both positive and negative assertions with regard to Nike's activity were presented. For example, a negative assertion was: "That designation... places them (Nike's statements of their full First Amendment protections) in the same category as the company's explicit product advertisements for purposes of applying state laws barring false and misleading advertising;" and a positive assertion was: "The California Supreme Court's decision is based on a bizarre, arbitrarily selective interpretation of the High Court's precedent on this subject. The U.S. Supreme Court has long protected a corporation's right to contribute to matters of public interest and to openly defend itself in public debate."

Another change was made to the sentence organization of the two attribute-reflecting statements in the attitude expression task so that the statement appearances of the same two constructs in the attitude expression task are different from the appearances in the importance rating task. Specifically, the two

attribute-reflecting statements in the importance rating task in the main study were as follows:

- ◆ *The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the society.*
- ◆ *The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the firms themselves.*

The two attribute-reflecting statements in the attitude expression task in the main study were as follows:

- ◆ *To serve and benefit the society is the main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations.*
- ◆ *To serve and benefit the firms themselves is the main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations.*

### *Pretest*

A pretest was conducted a week before the experiment in the main study to elicit the attributes pertaining to participants' inferences of cause-related marketing motivation and measure the chronic accessibility of these attributes.

*Participants.* One hundred sixteen students enrolled in mass communication courses in Southern Illinois University Edwardsville participated in the main study. They were rewarded with extra credits for their participation. Their gender was recorded when they signed up for participation. Of the participants, 62.1% (n = 72) are female and 37.9% (n = 44) were male. The pretest was conducted as part of participation sign-up process.

*Measure of chronic attribute accessibility.* The same questionnaire used in the pretest of the pilot study was adopted. The pretest of the main study went through the same three steps as the pretest of the pilot study did, to elicit participants' thoughts (attributes) about cause-related marketing motivation and measure the chronic accessibility of these attributes. In the first step, each participant was required to list four specific motives for CRM sponsorship. Of the 116 participants who completed the pretest, 111 listed four motives successfully while 5 listed only three. As a result, a total of 459 responses were elicited.

All the responses (N = 459) were coded by two coders blind to the research hypotheses and were labeled as either public serving or firm serving in the second step. A reliability test was conducted and the result indicated that the inter-coder reliability was acceptable (Cohen's  $\kappa = .74$ ). In the third step, each coded response was weighted and given a score based on the order of response elicitation. Finally, two attribute variables, public serving and firm serving, were combined to form chronic attribute accessibility indices (CAI).

*Measure of pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general.* Pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general was identified in the pilot study and it was suggested that it should be involved in the research model in the main study. All the participants were also required to evaluate CRM in a four-item, five-point semantic differential scale that was used in the pretest of the pilot study. The four items were bad/good, pleasant/unpleasant, for/against and favorable/unfavorable. A reliability test was conducted and the result indicated the measure was leniently acceptable (Cronbach's

$\alpha = .66$ ).

### *Experiment – Session I*

The first session of the main experiment regards the core part of the model and was conducted a week after the CRM motive elicitation test. A 2 (public-serving attribute salience vs. firm-serving attribute salience)  $\times$  2 (dependent variable measurement order: importance before attitudes or vice versa) between-subjects factorial experimental study including chronic accessibility as a continuous variable measured in pretest, was run to test the hypotheses including H1, H2a, H2b, H2c, and H3 as well as RQ1.

*Procedure.* A week after the pretest, the same 116 participants participated in two sessions of the experiment. The experiment procedure was the same as that of the pilot study. 29 participants were randomly assigned to each of four conditions (importance/attitude with public-serving attribute salience, importance/attitude with firm-serving attribute salience, attitude/importance with public-serving attribute salience, and attitude/importance with firm-serving attribute salience).

In the condition of importance/attitude with public-serving attribute salience, participants read and summarized three cases in the public-serving scenario and one case which is unrelated to CRM. After the reading and summary task, participants rated the importance of eight statements including the two attribute-reflecting ones before they performed the attitude expression task where they chose agree/disagree to ten statements including the two attribute-reflecting ones. The participants in the importance/attitude with firm-serving attribute salience condition read and

summarized the same three cases but in the firm-serving scenario and the same irrelevant case. And then, they performed the importance rating task and attitude expression task in the same order as in the importance/attitude with public-serving attribute salience condition.

In both the condition of attitude/importance with public-serving attribute salience and the condition of attitude/importance with firm-serving attribute salience, the participants read and summarized the same three cases and then expressed their attitudes toward ten statements including the two attribute-reflecting ones before they rated the importance of eight statements including the two attribute-reflecting ones. The only difference between these two conditions was that in the former condition, the three cases were presented in the public-serving scenario while the same three cases were presented in the firm-serving scenario in the latter condition.

The presentation order of the four cases was manipulated and fixed for all the participants. The four cases were presented in an order as follows: “TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think: TUMS Sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI),” “Briggs & Stratton and National Wildlife Federation (NWF)’s ‘Mower Tune-Up Month’ campaign,” “Nike v. California Supreme Court,” and “Pedigree Adoption Drive, Pedigree and numerous shelters.”

*Attribute importance.* The same measure used in the pilot study was adopted. Participants rated the importance of eight statements on a five-point unidimensional scale (from 1 = unimportance to 5 = important), but only the rate for the two attribute-reflecting ones was recorded. Thus, two attribute importance variables –

public-serving attribute importance and firm-serving attribute importance – were formed. Using the index calculation used in the pilot study, these two importance variables were combined to form unidimensional indices.

*Temporary attribute accessibility.* The measure of this dependent variable was the same as the one used in the pilot study. Participants expressed their attitudes toward ten statements including the two attribute-reflecting ones. They were required to express their attitudes by choosing agree or disagree as quickly as possible, but not so quickly that they would make any errors. Temporary attribute accessibility was measured by participants' reaction time. Only their reaction times to the two attribute-reflecting statements were recorded. Then, two temporary attribute accessibility variables – public-serving attribute accessibility and firm-serving attribute accessibility – were formed. Using the index calculation used in the pilot study, these two variables were combined to form a unidimensional index for each participant.

### *Experiment – Session II*

In this session, all the stimuli materials, experiment procedure and dependent variable measures were copied from the pilot study. After finished the first session of the experiment, all 116 participants immediately read a fictitious CRM campaign case (Brand X supporting MADD). After the reading task, participants answered the open-ended “why” question to infer Brand X’s motive to launch the CRM campaign and then expressed their attitudes toward the Brand X and their purchase intention to the brand. The second session of the experiment was conducted to test the possible



effects of temporary attribute accessibility and attribute importance on CRM motive inference, and in turn on perceivers' evaluations of the CRM sponsor, and their product purchase intention. Such effects of temporary accessibility and attribute importance are regarded as possible perceptual and cognitive consequences of agenda setting. Thus, H4b, H5b, H6a, H6b, and H6c were tested in this session.

*Measure of CRM motive inference.* The measure of CRM motive inference was exactly the same as that used in the pilot study. The result of a reliability test indicated that the measure was reliable (Cohen's  $\kappa = .79$ ). The three categories were meaningfully at three different levels. That is, from the perspective of public-serving motivation, the category of "firm-serving motive only" was at the lowest level, while the category of "both firm- and public-serving motives" located in the middle and the category of "public-serving motive only" was the highest. Thus, a three-point scale was applied to these three categories (from 1 = firm serving only to 3 = public serving only), the greater the number, the relative stronger the public-serving motive was attributed to the fictitious CRM campaign.

*Measure of brand evaluation.* Right after the open-ended "why" question, participants evaluated Brand X on a three-item, five-point semantic differential scale in a questionnaire. These three items were bad/good, unfavorable/favorable, and dislike/like (e.g., Kempf & Smith, 1998; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Shen & Chen, 2007; R. E. Smith, 1993). The result of a reliability test indicated that this measure of brand evaluation was highly reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ).

*Measure of purchase intention.* The following task for the participants was to

express their purchase intention toward Brand X on a three-item, five-point scale anchored by unlikely/likely, impossible/possible, and improbable/probable (Jeesun Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2005; MacKenzie et al., 1986; Shen & Chen, 2007; Yi, 1990). The result of a reliability test indicated that this measure of purchase intention was highly reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Manipulation Check

Of the four cases used as the stimuli materials in this experiment, three were used to manipulate the independent variable attribute salience while the fourth irrelevant case served as the buffer of the manipulation.

A separate manipulation check study for the three cases was conducted in the pilot study. To repeat, 28 raters judged these three cases on a seven-point unidimensional scale (from 1 = the campaign is strongly described as firm-benefit-oriented to 7 = the campaign is strongly described as public-benefit-oriented). The results of three paired-samples  $t$  tests indicated that the manipulation was largely successful. Specifically, the mean campaign description in the public-serving scenario ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = .10$ ) was significantly greater than the mean campaign description in the firm-serving scenario ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $t(27) = 9.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .77$  in the “TUMPS” case; in the “Briggs & Stratton” case, the mean campaign description in the public-serving scenario ( $M = 5.61$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) was significantly greater than its counterpart in the firm-serving scenario ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = .93$ ),  $t(27) = 10.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .80$ ; and in the “Pedigree” case, the mean campaign description in the public-serving scenario ( $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ) was

significantly greater than the mean campaign description in the firm-serving scenario ( $M = 2.54, SD = 1.20$ ),  $t(27) = 6.30, p < .001, \eta^2 = .60$ .

Although the fourth case was selected as the moderator of the manipulation and was unrelated to CRM, there was a concern that participants' extreme attitudes toward Nike's activity in the case might influence their CRM motivation inference in general. That was the reason why both positive and negative assertions about Nike's behavior were presented in the case. Thus, a new separate manipulation check study was conducted to evaluate the case viewers' attitudes toward the corporate behavior in the main study. 45 raters expressed their attitudes toward Nike's behavior in the case on a seven-point, three-item scale anchored by bad/good, dislike/like, and against/for. The reliability of this attitude measure was acceptable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$ ). The item statistics indicated that raters' attitudes toward Nike's behavior were close to neutral level, bad/good ( $M = 4.13, SD = 1.03$ ), dislike/like ( $M = 4.04, SD = 1.21$ ), and against/for ( $M = 4.36, SD = 1.30$ ).

#### Attribute Salience and Attribute Importance

##### *Separate ANOVAs on public-serving and firm-serving attribute importance*

Two 2 (public-serving attribute salience vs. firm-serving attribute salience)  $\times$  2 (dependent variable measurement order: importance before attitudes or vice versa) ANOVAs were conducted to evaluate the effects of attribute salience manipulation and the dependent variable measure order on two subvariables of attitude importance, public-serving attribute importance and firm-serving attribute importance. The means and standard deviations for public-serving attribute importance and firm-serving

attribute importance as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
Means and Standard Deviations for Public-Serving Importance and Firm-Serving Importance

Attribute Salience	DV Measure Order	Public-Serving Importance		Firm-Serving Importance	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Firm-serving	Importance Before Attitude	3.14	1.62	3.83	1.20
	Attitude Before Importance	3.38	1.29	3.66	1.26
	Total	3.26	1.46	3.74	1.22
Public-serving	Importance Before Attitude	4.31	.97	3.07	1.22
	Attitude Before Importance	3.69	1.37	3.31	1.44
	Total	4.00	1.21	3.19	1.33

As Table 2 shows, the ANOVA for evaluation of the factors' effects on public-serving attribute importance indicated no significant interaction between attribute salience manipulation and dependent variable measure order,  $F(1, 112) = 3.04, p = .08, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$ , no significant main effect for order of dependent variable measures,  $F(1, 112) = .59, p = .45, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$ , but significant main effect for attribute salience manipulation,  $F(1, 112) = 8.99, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .07$ .

Table 2  
Summary of ANOVA on Public-Serving Attribute Importance

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	22.37	3	7.46	4.20	.007	.101
Intercept	1527.94	1	1527.94	861.29	.000	.885
Salience	15.94	1	15.94	8.99	.003	.074
Order	1.04	1	1.04	.59	.445	.005
Salience*Order	5.39	1	5.39	3.04	.084	.026
Error	198.69	112	1.77			
Total	1749.00	116				
Corrected Total	221.06	115				

The results from the ANOVA conducted to evaluate the two factors' effects on firm-serving attribute importance were similar as shown in Table 3. It indicated no significant interaction between attribute salience manipulation and dependent variable measure order,  $F(1, 112) = .75, p = .39, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$ , no main effect for dependent variable measure order,  $F(1, 112) = .02, p = .89, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00$ , but significant main effect for attribute salience manipulation,  $F(1, 112) = 5.35, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$ .

Table 3  
Summary of ANOVA on Firm-Serving Attribute Importance

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10.10	3	3.37	2.04	.112	.052
Intercept	1393.14	1	1393.14	844.52	.000	.883
Salience	8.83	1	8.83	5.35	.023	.046
Order	.03	1	.03	.02	.885	.000
Salience*Order	1.24	1	1.24	.75	.388	.007
Error	184.76	112	1.65			
Total	1588.00	116				
Corrected Total	194.86	115				

*Regression analysis of attribute importance index (AII)*

The two subvariables of attribute importance were combined to form a unidimensional attribute importance indices (AII). The descriptive statistics for the dependent variable (AII) indicated that for an average participant, the public-serving attribute was more important than the firm-serving attribute ( $M = 136.67, SD = 111.77$ ). A hierarchical moderated multiple regression (MMR) analysis was conducted to evaluate the causal effects of attribute salience manipulation and dependent

variable measure order on attribute importance index with gender and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general in control. Attribute salience and dependent variable measure order were centered by converting them to Z scores with means of zero, and an interaction variable (SalienceOrder) was created by multiplying the two Z scores together. Gender and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general were entered into a hierarchical regression followed by the entry of attribute salience and dependent variable measure order as a group, and then the interaction variable (SalienceOrder). The results of this three-step hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 4.

The first regression model involving gender and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general as the predictors was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(2, 113) = 3.24$ ,  $p < .05$ . The value of  $R^2$  change when the two independent variables, attribute salience and dependent variable measure order were added was .07 and that change was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F \text{ Change}(2, 111) = 4.48$ ,  $p < .05$ . But in the third regression model when the interaction variable (SalienceOrder) was added, the value of  $R^2$  change, which was .005, was not significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F \text{ Change}(1, 111) = .66$ ,  $p = .42$ .

In the first regression model, the effect of gender on AII was significant, Beta =  $-.20$ ,  $p < .05$ , but was not significant when controlled in the second regression model involving attribute salience and dependent variable measure order as the independent variables, Beta =  $-.17$ ,  $p = .07$ , and not significant when controlled in the third regression model involving attribute salience and dependent variable measure order as the independent variables as well as the interaction of these two

(SaliencyOrder), Beta = -.16,  $p = .09$ . The regression analysis indicated that there was no significant effect of pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general on attribute importance in all three regression models: in the first regression model, Beta = .13,  $p = .15$ ; in the second regression model, Beta = .11,  $p = .24$ ; and in the third regression model, Beta = .11,  $p = .22$ .

Table 4  
Hierarchical MMR of Attribute Importance  
(Betas, N = 116)

Independent variables	Regression Model		
	I	II	III
Gender	-.204*	-.173	-.163
Pre-exposure attitude	.132	.107	.111
Attribute Saliency		.268**	.269**
DV Measure Order		.005	.005
SaliencyOrder			-.073
$R^2$	.054	.125	.130
Adjusted $R^2$	.038	.093	.091
$R^2$ Change	.054	.071	.005
Sig. of Change	.043	.013	.419

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Almost no effect of dependent variable measure order was found in both the second regression model, Beta = .00,  $p = .99$ , and the third regression model, Beta = -.001,  $p = .99$ . The interaction effect was also not significant in the third regression model, Beta = -.07,  $p = .45$ .

However, the significant effect of attribute saliency manipulation was found in both the second and third regression models, Beta = .27,  $p < .01$ . Thus, H1 was supported. That is, a salient attribute pertaining to an attitude object in information is



more likely to be judged as important than other non-salient attributes pertaining to the same attitude object by a person after being exposed to this information.

#### Attribute Salience and Temporary Attribute Accessibility

*Separate ANOVAs on temporary public-serving attribute accessibility and temporary firm-serving attribute accessibility*

Two 2 (public-serving attribute salience vs. firm-serving attribute salience) × 2 (dependent variable measurement order: importance before attitudes or vice versa) ANOVAs were conducted to evaluate the effects of attribute salience manipulation and the dependent variable measure order on two subvariables of temporary attitude accessibility, public-serving attribute accessibility and firm-serving attribute accessibility. The means and standard deviations for public-serving attribute importance and firm-serving attribute importance as a function of the two factors are presented in Table 5.

Attribute Salience	DV Measure Order	Temporary Public-Serving Accessibility		Temporary Firm-Serving Accessibility	
		Mean (seconds)	SD	Mean (Seconds)	SD
Firm-serving	Importance Before Attitude	6.92s	2.88	6.12s	3.42
	Attitude Before Importance	9.80	6.16	9.27	4.39
	Total	8.36	4.98	7.69	4.21
Public-serving	Importance Before Attitude	7.91	4.25	7.76	3.87
	Attitude Before Importance	9.37	6.72	13.64	7.96
	Total	8.64	5.62	10.70	6.87

The results from the ANOVA for evaluation of the factors' effects on

public-serving attribute accessibility indicated a significant main effect for dependent variable measure order,  $F(1, 112) = 4.97, p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ , but no significant main effect for attribute salience manipulation,  $F(1, 112) = .08, p = .77$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .001$ , and no significant interaction between attribute salience manipulation and dependent variable measure order,  $F(1, 112) = .53, p = .47$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$  (See Table 6).

Table 6  
Summary of ANOVA on Temporary Public-Serving Attribute Accessibility

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1.53	3	5.10	1.86	.140	.048
Intercept	8.38	1	8.38	306.39	.000	.732
Salience	2284813.79	1	2284813.79	.08	.773	.001
Order	1.36	1	1.36	4.97	.028	.043
Salience*Order	1.45	1	1.45	.53	.469	.005
Error	3.07	112	2.74			
Total	1.16	116				
Corrected Total	3.22	115				

Table 7  
Summary of ANOVA on Temporary Firm-Serving Attribute Accessibility

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	9.07	3	3.02	11.06	.000	.229
Intercept	9.81	1	9.81	359.13	.000	.762
Salience	2.63	1	2.63	9.61	.002	.079
Order	5.90	1	5.90	21.59	.000	.162
Salience*Order	5.42	1	5.42	1.98	.162	.017
Error	3.06	112	2.73			
Total	1.38	116				
Corrected Total	3.97	115				

Table 7 summarizes the results from the two-way ANOVA conducted to evaluate these two factors' effects on firm-serving attribute accessibility. The results

indicated a significant main effect for both dependent variable measure order,  $F(1, 112) = 21.59, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .16$ , and attitude salience manipulation,  $F(1, 112) = 9.61, p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .08$ , but no significant interaction between attribute salience manipulation and dependent variable measure order,  $F(1, 112) = 1.98, p = .16$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ .

#### *Regression analysis of temporary attribute accessibility (TAI)*

The two subvariables of temporary attribute accessibility were combined to form unidimensional temporary attribute accessibility indices (TAI). The descriptive statistics for the dependent variable (TAI) indicated that for an average participant, the public-serving attribute was more temporarily accessible than the firm-serving attribute ( $M = 126.22, SD = 78.38$ ). A hierarchical moderated multiple regression (MMR) analysis was conducted to evaluate the causal effects of attribute salience manipulation and dependent variable measure order on temporary attribute accessibility index (TAI) with gender and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general in control. Attribute salience and dependent variable measure order were centered by converting them to Z scores with means of zero, and an interaction variable (SalienceOrder) was created by multiplying the two Z scores together. Gender and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general were entered into a hierarchical regression followed by the entry of attribute salience and dependent variable measure order as a group, and finally the interaction variable (SalienceOrder). The results of this three-step hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 8.

The first regression model involving gender and pre-exposure attitude toward

CRM in general as the predictors was not significant,  $F(2, 113) = .48, p = .62$ . The value of  $R^2$  change when the two independent variables, attribute salience and dependent variable measure order were added was .12 and that change was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .10, F \text{ Change}(2, 111) = 7.79, p < .01$ . But in the third regression model when the interaction variable (SalienceOrder) was added, the value of  $R^2$  change, which was .02, was not significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .11, F \text{ Change}(1, 110) = 2.77, p = .10$ .

Table 8  
Hierarchical MMR of Temporary Attribute Accessibility (I)  
(Betas, N = 116)

Independent variables	Regression Model I	Regression Model II	Regression Model III
Gender	-.045	-.028	-.048
Pre-exposure attitude	-.076	-.084	.091
Attribute Salience		.243**	.242**
DV Measure Order		.252**	.252**
SalienceOrder			.148
$R^2$	.008	.130	.152
Adjusted $R^2$	-.009	.099	.113
$R^2$ Change	.008	.122	.021
Sig. of Change	.620	.001	.099

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

No significant effects of gender and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general were found in all three regression models: gender in the first regression model, Beta = -.05,  $p = .63$ , in the second regression model, Beta = -.03,  $p = .76$ , and in the third regression model, Beta = -.05,  $p = .59$ ; pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general in the first regression model, Beta = -.08,  $p = .42$ , in the second regression

model,  $Beta = -.08, p = .35$ , and in the third regression model,  $Beta = -.09, p = .31$ .

Although the results from the regression analysis indicated no significant interaction between attribute salience and dependent variable measure order,  $Beta = .15, p = .10$ , the effect of dependent variable measure order was significant in both the second regression model,  $Beta = .25, p < .01$ , and the third regression model,  $Beta = .25, p < .01$ . A significant effect also was found for attribute salience manipulation in both the second and third regression models,  $Beta = .24, p < .01$ .

Thus, H2b was supported. That is, a salient attitude attribute in information will be more accessible in a person's short-term memory than other non-salient attributes pertaining to the same attitude after being exposed to this information.

#### Attribute Salience, Chronic Attribute Accessibility, and Temporary Attribute Accessibility

A hierarchical moderated multiple regression (MMR) analysis was conducted to evaluate the causal effects of attribute salience manipulation, chronic attribute accessibility, and the interaction between these two factors on temporary attribute accessibility index. In this moderating model, the dependent variable was temporary attribute accessibility measured by TAI, the independent variables were attribute salience which was manipulated and chronic attribute accessibility measured by CAI, and the control variables were gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, and dependent variable measure order. The descriptive statistics for the independent variable, chronic attribute accessibility (CAI), indicated that for an average participant before the study, firm-serving attribute was more chronically accessible than public-serving attribute ( $M = 30.34, SD = 38.11$ ).

Attribute salience and chronic attribute accessibility index (CAI) were centered by converting them to *Z* scores with means of zero, and an interaction variable (SaliChronic) was created by multiplying the two *Z* scores together. Gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general and dependent variable measure order were entered into a hierarchical regression followed by the entry of attribute salience and CAI as a group, and finally the interaction variable (SaliChronic). The results of this three-step hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 9.

Table 9  
Hierarchical MMR of Temporary Attribute Accessibility (II)  
(Betas, N = 116)

Independent variables	Regression Model I	Regression Model II	Regression Model III
Gender	-.056	.000	-.008
Pre-exposure attitude	-.061	-.126	-.113
DV Measure Order	.254**	.265**	.236**
Attribute Salience		.226*	.224*
CAI		.240**	.243**
SaliChronic			.170
$R^2$	.073	.185	.213
Adjusted $R^2$	.048	.148	.170
$R^2$ Change	.073	.113	.028
Sig. of Change	.037	.001	.052

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

The first regression model involving gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general and dependent variable measure order as the predictors was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(3, 112) = 2.92$ ,  $p < .05$ . The value of  $R^2$  change when the two independent variables, attribute salience and CAI were added was .11 and that

change was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .15$ ,  $F$  Change(2, 110) = 7.60,  $p < .01$ . In the third regression model when the interaction variable (SaliChronic) was added, the value of  $R^2$  change, which was .03, was not significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .17$ ,  $F$  Change(1, 109) = 3.85,  $p = .052$ .

No significant effects of gender and pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general were found in all three regression models: gender in the first regression model, Beta = -.06,  $p = .54$ , in the second regression model, Beta = .00,  $p = .10$ , and in the third regression model, Beta = -.01,  $p = .93$ ; pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general in the first regression model, Beta = -.06,  $p = .51$ , in the second regression model, Beta = -.13,  $p = .16$ , and in the third regression model, Beta = -.11,  $p = .20$ . The effect of dependent variable measure order was significant in all three regression models, in the first regression model, Beta = .25,  $p < .01$ , in the second regression model, Beta = .27,  $p < .01$ , and in the third regression model, Beta = .24,  $p < .01$ .

The results from the regression analysis indicated a significant effect of attribute salience manipulation on TAI in both the second regression model, Beta = .23,  $p < .05$ , and the third regression model, Beta = .24,  $p < .01$ . This was in accordance with the earlier findings. It was found that the effect of CAI on TAI was significant in both the second and third regression models, Beta = .24,  $p < .01$ . These findings supported H2a that an attribute that is more chronically accessible in general will be more accessible in the person's short memory in specific situations.

However, the results from the regression analysis indicated no significant interaction between attribute salience and chronic attribute accessibility in the third

regression model,  $Beta = .17, p = .052$ . But based on the  $p$  value, it was judged that there was a marginal relationship between the interaction and temporary attribute accessibility. Thus, H2c, which states that the effect of attribute salience on temporary attribute accessibility in a person's short memory is moderated by the person's chronic accessibility of the attribute, was weakly supported.

### Temporary Attribute Accessibility and Attribute Importance

A correlational analysis was conducted to test the relationship between temporary attribute accessibility and attribute importance. The results indicated no significant correlation between these two variables, Pearson's  $r = .024, p = .80$ . Thus, hypothesis H3 that perceived importance of an attribute is correlated with temporary accessibility of this attribute was not supported. Hence, there was no need to answer RQ: Does perceived attribute importance mediate the attribute salience effect on temporary attribute accessibility or does attribute accessibility mediate the attribute salience effect on temporary attribute accessibility?

To examine the argument for the unreliability of temporary attribute accessibility and the stability of attribute importance, in addition to the analyses of the effect of dependent variable measure order on temporary attribute accessibility and attribute importance, additional analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between the attitudes toward the attribute statements that participants expressed and the reaction time on attitude expression, and the relationship between the attitudes toward the attribute statements and the importance of the same statements that participants rated. For the first relationship examination, the results of two



independent-samples  $t$  tests indicated no significant relationship neither between the attitudes toward the public-serving statement and the reaction time,  $t(114) = -.757, p = .450$ , nor between the attitudes toward the firm-serving statement and the reaction time,  $t(114) = .005, p = .996$ . On the other hand, the results of two independent-samples  $t$  tests indicated a significant relationship between the attitudes toward the public-serving statement and the importance of the same attribute statement,  $t(114) = 3.929, p < .001$ , and a significant relationship between the attitudes toward the firm-serving statement and the importance of this attribute statement,  $t(114) = 3.757, p < .001$ .

#### Temporary Attribute Accessibility, Causal Attribution, and Brand Evaluation

A regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of temporary attribute accessibility on CRM motive inference, involving gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, chronic attribute accessibility, and dependent variable measure order as the control variables. The regression model did not fit the data well, Adjusted  $R^2 = .05, F(5, 110) = 2.09, p = .07$ . Specifically, the only significant effect found was for pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, Beta = .22,  $p < .05$ , while no significant effects found for all other control variables, including gender, Beta = -.17,  $p = .06$ , chronic attribute accessibility, Beta = .04,  $p = .66$ , and dependent variable measure order, Beta = .05,  $p = .63$ . The results also indicated no significant effect for the independent variable, temporary attribute accessibility, Beta = .08,  $p = .40$ . Thus, H4a, which predicted that an attribute (public-serving or firm-serving) that is more accessible in a perceiver's memory will be more likely to be used for

CRM motive attribution than the other attribute (firm-serving or public-serving) that is less accessible in memory, was not supported. As a consequence, H4b predicting that temporary attribute accessibility mediates the effect of attribute salience on CRM motive inference was also not supported.

The relationship between temporary attribute accessibility and brand evaluation was also examined through a regression analysis. The result indicated no significant effect for temporary attribute accessibility neither,  $Beta = .03, p = .76$ . H6c was not supported.

#### Attribute Importance and Causal Attribution

A regression analysis was conducted to test the direct effect of attribute importance on CRM motive inference. In this regression model, the dependent variable, CRM motive inference has three values, firm-serving motive only, both firm- and public-serving motive, and public-serving motive only. The independent variable was attribute importance measured by attribute importance index (AII) while gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, chronic attribute accessibility measured by CAI, and dependent variable measure order served as control variables.

The regression model was fit, Adjusted  $R^2 = .09, F(5, 110) = 3.36, p < .01$ . The results from the regression analysis indicated a significant effect for attribute importance,  $Beta = .24, p < .05$ . No significant effects were found for all control variables including gender,  $Beta = -.13, p = .17$ , pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general,  $Beta = .17, p = .06$ , Chronic attribute accessibility,  $Beta = .08, p = .39$ , and dependent variable measure order,  $Beta = .07, p = .45$ . This result supported H5a that

an attribute (public-serving or firm-serving) that is judged more important will be more likely to be used for CRM motive attribution than the other attribute (firm-serving or public-serving) that is judged less important.

#### Attribute Salience, Attribute Importance, and Causal Attribution

Based on the results that supported H1 that attribute salience has causal effect on attribute importance and H5a that attribute importance has effect on CRM motive inference, it was hypothesized that the mechanism of the causal relationships among attribute salience, attribute importance, and CRM motive inference is that attribute salience influences CRM motive inference through attribute importance. That is, as H5b predicted, the effect of attribute salience on CRM motive inference is mediated by attribute salience.

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis. The control variables including gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, chronic attribute accessibility, and dependent variable measure order were entered into a hierarchical regression followed by the entry of attribute salience, and then attribute importance was entered in the last step. The first regression only involving the control variables was not significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(4, 111) = 2.44$ ,  $p = .05$ . When attribute salience was added to the regression, the  $R^2$  change, which was .02, was not significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F \text{ Change}(1,110) = 2.57$ ,  $p = .11$ . In the third regression model, the  $R^2$  change was .04 when attribute importance was added and that change was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F \text{ Change}(1, 109) = 4.82$ ,  $p < .05$ .

The results from the regression analysis indicated no significant direct effect for attribute salience on CRM motive inference in both the second regression model,  $Beta = .15, p = .11$ , and the third regression model,  $Beta = .09, p = .34$ . Thus, the mediation model that H5b stated was not supported, although there was a significant correlation between attribute salience and causal CRM motive inference, Pearson's  $r = .19, p < .05$ , without controlling gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM, chronic attribute accessibility, and dependent variable measure order.

#### Attribute Importance, Causal Attribution, and Brand Evaluation

It was hypothesized that attribute importance has effects on brand evaluation and such effects are mediated by CRM motive inference. To test this mediation model, guided by Baron and Kenny (1986), a series of regression analyses were conducted. Specifically, three following regression equations were estimated: first, regressing CRM motive inference, the mediator, on attribute importance, which was the independent variable (IV); second, regressing brand evaluation, the dependent variable (DV) on the attribute importance (IV); and third, regressing the dependent variable (DV) on both attribute importance (IV) and CRM motive inference (mediator).

To estimate the first regression equation, a multiple regression analysis was conducted where CRM motive inference was treated as the dependent variable, attribute importance served as the independent variable, and gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, chronic attribute accessibility and dependent variable measure order manipulation as the control variables. The results indicated that the

regression model fit the data well, Adjusted  $R^2 = .10$ ,  $F(5, 110) = 3.66$ ,  $p < .01$ . The results also indicated a significant effect for attribute importance, Beta = .26,  $p < .01$ . This finding also supported H5a.

Table 10  
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Brand Evaluation  
(Betas, N = 116)

Independent variables	Regression Model I	Regression Model II	Regression Model III
Gender	-.016	.021	.061
Pre-exposure attitude	.394***	.368**	.313***
CAI	-.060	-.049	-.074
DV Measure Order	.165	.165	.143
Attribute Importance		.175*	.100
Motive inference			.318***
$R^2$	.171	.199	.287
Adjusted $R^2$	.141	.163	.248
$R^2$ Change	.171	.029	.088
Sig. of Change	.000	.049	.000

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Then, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to estimate the second and the third regression equations involved in the mediation model. The control variables, gender, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, chronic attribute accessibility, and dependent variable order manipulation were entered the regression in the first step. Then, attribute importance was entered in the second step followed by the entry of CRM motive inference in the third step. The results (see Table 10) indicated that the first test model involving only the control variables fit the data well, Adjusted  $R^2 = .10$ ,  $F(4, 111) = 5.71$ ,  $p < .001$ . The  $R^2$  change (= .03) in the

second test model when the independent variable, attribute importance was added was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .16$ ,  $F \text{ Change}(1, 110) = 3.95$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the third test model when CRM motive inference was added, the  $R^2$  change (= .09) was significant, Adjusted  $R^2 = .25$ ,  $F \text{ Change}(1, 109) = 13.44$ ,  $p < .001$ .

In the first test model, the results of the analysis indicated a significant effect only for pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, Beta = .39,  $p < .001$  while no significant effect for other three control variables. In the second test model when attribute importance was added to regression, the results indicated significant effects for pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general again, Beta = .37,  $p < .001$ , and for the independent variable, attribute importance, Beta = .18,  $p < .05$ . However, in the third test model when CRM motive inference was added, the effect of attribute importance was not significant, Beta = .10,  $p = .25$ , while the results indicated a significant effect for CRM motive inference, Beta = .32,  $p < .001$ .

A procedure for testing the significance of the mediation effect of CRM motive inference was provided in the Sobel test, which resulted in a  $Z$  statistic. The formula used for the Sobel test was as below:

$$Z = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{b^2 SE_a^2 + a^2 SE_b^2}}$$

where  $a$  denotes the unstandardized regression coefficient for the relationship directed from attribute importance (IV) to CRM motive inference (presumed mediator) in the first regression equation ( $a = .091$ );  $SE_a$  means the standard error of  $a$  ( $SE_a = .032$ );  $b$  refers to the unstandardized regression coefficient for the relationship directed from CRM motive inference (presumed mediator) to brand evaluation (DV) when the IV

was also a predictor of the DV in the third regression equation ( $b = 1.076$ ); and  $SE_b$  means standard error of  $b$  ( $SE_b = .294$ ) (Todman & Dugard, 2007).

Application of the Sobel test formula to these unstandardized coefficient and standard error values yielded the statistic  $Z = 2.25$ ,  $p = .01$ . Thus, according to this mediation analysis, it was confirmed that CRM motive inference mediates the relationship directed from attribute importance to brand evaluation.

Finally, the possibility of substantial multicollinearity, which refers to the existence of a strong correlation between attribute importance (IV) and CRM motive inference (mediator), was evaluated. The correlation between the IV and the mediator in this study was moderate (Pearson  $r = .28$ ). Furthermore, the variance of inflation factors (VIF) for attribute importance ( $VIF_{\text{Attribute importance}} = 1.13$ ) and for CRM motive inference ( $VIF_{\text{Motive inference}} = 1.15$ ) were calculated, and the results indicated that multicollinearity was not statistically significant,  $10 < VIF_{\text{Attribute importance}} = 1.13 < \frac{1}{1-R^2} = 1.40$  and  $10 < VIF_{\text{Motive inference}} = 1.15 < \frac{1}{1-R^2} = 1.40$ . That is, multicollinearity was not a serious problem in this mediation model.

H6b was supported. That is, there exists an indirect effect of attribute importance on brand evaluation and such effect is mediated by CRM motive inference.

#### Correlation Between Brand Evaluation and Purchase Intention

Supporting H6a, the significant relationship directed from CRM motive inference to brand evaluation was found. As a consequence of the supported H6a, H8 predicted a direct relationship between brand evaluation and purchase intention, that

is, consumers who evaluated the CRM sponsor brand more positively will be more likely to purchase the brand. Therefore, if H8 was supported, the behavioral consequence of the proposed cognitive process model of agenda setting, which was called for by McCombs (2004), can be empirically verified. A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the prediction of purchase intention toward the CRM sponsor brand from attitudes toward that brand. The result indicated a significant attitude-intention relationship,  $Beta = .35, p < .001$ .

### Testing the Model

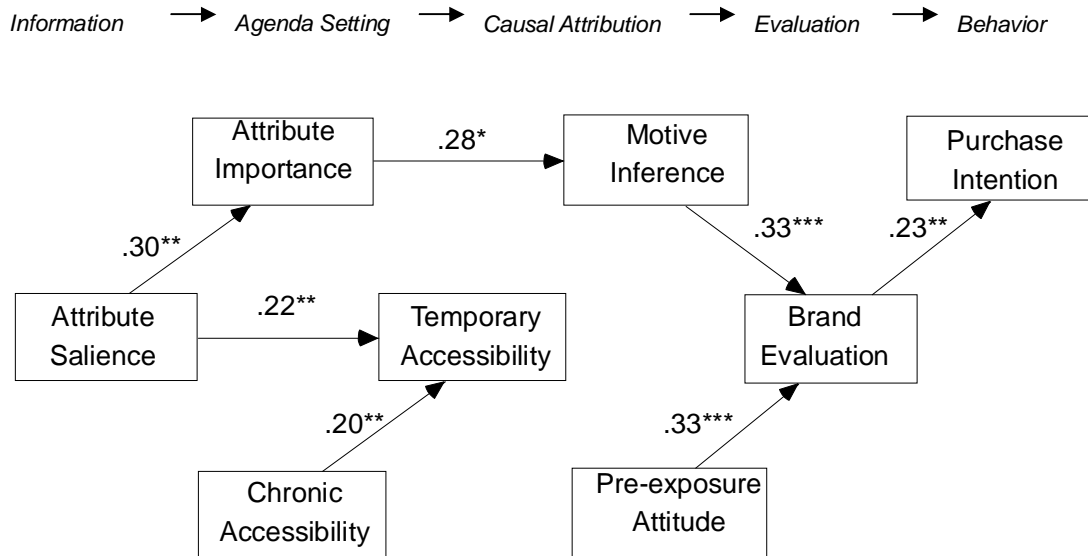
A series of separated multiple regression analyses have been conducted to examine research hypotheses by using a statistics software program, SPSS 16.0. But multiple regressions with this program did not provide estimate of goodness of model fit. To evaluate the cognitive process model of agenda setting, based on the results of the regression analyses, the AMOS graphics program was used to construct an input path diagram representing the causal model linking eight key variables. These key variables were attribute salience, chronic attribute accessibility, temporary attribute accessibility, attribute importance, CRM motive inference, pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general, brand evaluation, and purchase intention. Data were entered for 116 cases and standardized beta coefficients were generated for all paths and  $R^2$  values for all endogenous variables.

The output path diagram showing the computed values is in Figure 2 (see Figure 2 from appendix A). The goodness of fit given by chi-square was  $\chi^2(N = 116) = 25.07, df = 20, p = .20$ . The insignificance of chi-square indicated a good fit for this



model in whole. That is, the proposed cognitive process model of agenda setting was consistent with the observed data. Bentler-Bonnet normed fit index (NFI) was .77, which was relatively low. With a concern about the possible small sample size that might let the NFI underestimate the fit of the model (Bearden, Sharma, & Teel, 1982; see Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996, p. 698), Tucker-Lewis non-normed fit index (NNFI) was calculated and indicated a better fit (NNFI = .87). Comparative fit index (CFI = .93) was also considered indicative of a good fit while a value less than .10 for root mean square error of approximation (RMESA = .05) was considered a reasonable fit (Marcoulides & Hershberger, 1997; Todman & Dugard, 2007).

Figure 2. Causal paths in the cognitive-process model of agenda setting and consequences



Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

#### The Core of the Cognitive-Process Model

Predicting that the media transfer issue (first-level) or attribute (second-level) salience to the audience is the core of agenda setting theory. In the mass-communication model of agenda setting, the input variable is the issue or attribute salience in mass media and the salience of that issue or attribute among the public is the outcome. The correlation rather than the causal relationship between these two types of salience was examined by traditional agenda-setting researchers. The cognitive-process model that has been established in this dissertation deals with the causal relationships among the key variables including attribute salience, attribute importance, and attribute accessibility.

#### *Attribute Salience*

Adhering to the theoretical core of agenda setting, the examination of the cognitive-process model in this dissertation started from manipulating the independent variable, attribute salience. Discursive definitions of salience have been existing and used in the literature of communication and social psychology for decades. The main issue is that two distinct constructs, information salience and perceived salience, were confused. That is, both information properties and perceiver

properties were included in the definition of salience or even only perceiver properties were considered when defining salience of an object. This might be part of the misleading postmodern notions on science and reality as postmodernists insist that no objective reality exists independent of human thought processes. Such understanding of object salience, as Higgins (1996) argued, makes salience lose its distinct role as a factor in attitude research since previous reviews have included perceiver properties such as accessibility as the determinants of selective attention (McArthur, 1981; Taylor & Fiske, 1978).

Since salience is the key of the theoretical core of agenda setting, clarifying its definition is necessary for the following examination of the psychological mechanism of the theory. Two constructs pertaining to this concept including information salience and perceived salience were involved in the cognitive-process model as the key variables in this dissertation. Information salience, as Higgins (1996) suggested, should be defined as something about a stimulus event that occurs on exposure without considering the perceiver's personal properties. In Augoustinos and Walker's definition (1995), "salience refers to the extent to which a stimulus, or referent object in the surrounding situation, stands out from other stimuli, or from other aspects of the situation" (p.86). In second-level agenda setting, attribute salience is the focus of information salience and it was manipulated in this dissertation. The manipulation was carried out through presenting one of two attributes to participants while the other was absent (public-serving attribute vs. firm-serving attribute) in the experiment.

According to the theoretical core of agenda setting, a salient attribute in the

media will be perceived as salient by the audience. Such attribute salience on the audience side is called perceived salience in this dissertation. Perceived salience is the outcome variable in the agenda-setting process and should be about perceiver properties only while information salience is the input variable and should be solely based on information properties. Based upon the conceptualization of perceived salience in literature that importance and accessibility were used to define this concept, both attribute importance and attribute accessibility were included as the outcome variables in the cognitive-process model of agenda setting.

*Temporary Attribute Accessibility: The Temporary Outcome of Agenda Setting*

According to the construct activation principle that a construct can be temporary accessible through recent priming, it was hypothesized in this dissertation that through agenda-setting process, a salient attribute will be more temporarily accessible in a person's short-term memory after being exposed to that salient attribute. The results of the present study supported this hypothesis. It was found that the participants who were exposed to the cases containing the salient firm-serving attribute reacted to the attitude-probe statement about the firm-serving attribute ( $M = 7.69s$ ,  $SD = 4.21$ ) significantly faster than those who were exposed to the salient public-serving attribute ( $M = 10.70s$ ,  $SD = 6.87$ ) (see Table 5).

However, such significant effect of attribute salience manipulation on reaction time was not found for the public-serving attribute, as the reaction time of the participants in these two different salience conditions was not significantly different. As a matter of fact, in more detail, participants who were exposed to the salient

public-serving attribute reacted to the attitude-probe statement regarding the same attribute ( $M = 8.64s$ ,  $SD = 5.62$ ) even tinely slower than those who were exposed to firm-serving attribute ( $M = 8.36s$ ,  $SD = 4.98$ ) (see Table 5).

Such result distorting the effect of attribute salience on temporary attribute accessibility can be explained by the cognitive dissonance theory proposed by Festinger (1957). Belief disconfirmation is one of the paradigms used in the investigation of the dissonance theory (Harmon-Jones, 2002). First used by Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter(1956), belief disconfirmation assumes that dissonance is aroused when persons are exposed to information inconsistent to their beliefs. As conceptualized as a negative drive state, dissonance is assumed to ensure and to motive activity to reduce it (Chaiken, Wood, & Eagly, 1996). In other words, counterattitudinal messages create high levels of processing because they are more likely to threaten the message recipient's pre-existed attitude (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979). High levels of information processing, in turn, require more cognitive efforts and lead to slower judging action. Furthermore, recent research has also provided evidence that counterattitudinal primes trigger message resistance that would overshadow the priming effects (Carpentier, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2008).

In the present study, for most of the participants, the firm-serving attribute was more chronically accessible than the public-serving attribute when measured before the experiment, as 92.2 percent of chronic attribute accessibility indices (CAIs) were below 100 and of these CAIs, 35.3 percent were 0. In other words, for most of the

participants, the stimulus cases containing salient public-serving attribute were counterattitudinal messages. Such counterattitudinal priming might lead to more cognitive efforts that the participants would make to reduce the dissonance between their chronically accessible beliefs and the inconsistent messages, and this in turn, might slow the participants' reaction to the attribute-related attitude-probe statements. In fact, the results from the hierarchical regression analysis of temporary attribute accessibility, which was measured by temporary attribute accessibility index (TAI), indicated significant main effect for attribute salience manipulation (see Table 9).

It was also found that temporary attribute accessibility was influenced not only by attribute salience manipulation but also by chronic attribute accessibility, Beta = .24,  $p < .01$  (see Table 5). The effect of chronic attribute accessibility on temporary attribute accessibility was found to be parallel to the effect of attribute salience as the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated no interaction of these two factors. The moderate correlation between chronic attribute accessibility and temporary attribute accessibility indicated that these two are distinct constructs and implied that attitude change occurred after being exposed to the manipulated messages. That is, part of the chronically accessible beliefs about cause-related marketing motivation in participants' mind was discounted or suppressed or even changed after reading and summarizing the attribute-reflecting cases. Such attitude change toward low personally relevant attitude objects such as cause-related marketing may occur relatively easier than high personally relevant objects.

These results indicate that agenda setting at the cognitive-process level has

recent priming effects. That is, the communicator can transfer the attribute salience from the media to the audience if perceived attribute salience is conceptualized as temporary attribute accessibility.

However, in consistent with the literature of priming research, this dissertation provides evidence that such temporary attribute accessibility is not stable and easily dissipates in a short time. The results from the two-way ANOVAs on both temporary public-serving attribute accessibility and temporary firm-serving attribute accessibility indicated a significant effect for dependent variable measure order. The attitude-probe statements for the importance-rating task were the same as the ones for the attitude-expression task except the word orders were different in the questions. Therefore, when the dependent variable measure order was manipulated as importance/attitude, the importance-rating task itself served as a more recent prime for the following measure of temporary attribute accessibility.

The results showed that after being exposed to the stimulus cases reflecting the public-serving attribute, the participants who reported the attribute importance before the attitude-expression task reacted to the attitude-probe statements about the attribute ( $M = 7.42s$ ,  $SD = 3.63$ ) significantly faster than those who reported the attribute importance after the measure of temporary attribute accessibility ( $M = 9.58s$ ,  $SD = 6.39$ ). The result of the ANOVA on the temporary firm-serving attribute accessibility was similar. It showed that after being exposed to the stimulus cases reflecting the firm-serving attribute, the participants who reported the attribute importance before attitude expression reacted the questions ( $M = 6.94s$ ,  $SD = 3.71$ ) significantly faster



than those who expressed their attitudes before the importance-rating task ( $M = 11.45s$ ,  $SD = 6.74$ ).

*Attribute Importance: The Stable Outcome of Agenda Setting*

In the traditional mass-communication model of agenda setting, the outcome of agenda-setting process, perceived salience, was conceptualized as perceived importance. This conceptualization was challenged by some media framing scholars as they argued that the outcome of agenda-setting process should be accessibility only and using importance to measure perceived salience is wrong (S.-H. Kim et al., 2002; Sheufele, 2000; Sheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The present study examined the relationship between attribute salience and attribute importance. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis of attribute importance measured by attribute importance index (AII) indicated that the causal relationship directed from attitude salience to attitude importance was significant (see Table 2). That is, the participants who were exposed to the stimulus cases reflecting the public-serving attribute rated the public-serving statement more important compared to the firm-serving attribute than those who were exposed to the stimulus cases reflecting the firm-serving attribute did.

The results of two separate two-way ANOVAs on the public-serving attribute importance and the firm-serving attribute importance also revealed the causal relationship between attribute salience and attribute importance. It was found that when rating the importance of the statement reflecting the public-serving attribute, the participants who were exposed to the stimulus cases reflecting the public-serving

attribute attached more importance ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) to this attitudinal statement than those who were exposed to the firm-serving attribute cases did ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ). The result of the analysis of firm-serving attribute importance was similar. It showed that the participants who were exposed to the firm-serving attribute cases rated the firm-serving statement more important ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ) than those who were exposed to the public-serving attribute cases did ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ).

The stability of attribute importance was also examined in this study. The result of the regression analysis of attribute importance measured by attribute importance index (AII) indicated no significant effect for the dependent variable measure order (see Table 2). This result indicated that the importance that the participants attached to the attribute statements did not vary significantly over time (at least in a short time as designed in this dissertation study). The results of two separate two-way ANOVAs also indicated that attribute importance was consistent over time for both the public-serving attribute and the firm-serving attribute. These results provide evidence that as an outcome of agenda setting, attribute importance is stable over time.

#### *Independence of Attribute Importance and Temporary Attribute Accessibility*

Positive correlation between attitude/attribute importance and attitude/attribute accessibility was found in a number of studies (Bizer & Krosnick, 2001; Krosnick, 1989; Krosnick et al., 1993; Lavine et al., 1996; Roese & Olson, 1994; van Harreveld et al., 2000). Based on these findings, a few researchers have started to examine whether importance causes accessibility or vice versa (e.g., Bizer & Krosnick, 2001;

Roese & Olson, 1994).

However, the results of the correlational analysis in this dissertation study told a different story: No significant correlation between attribute importance and temporary attribute accessibility was found, Pearson's  $r = .024$ ,  $p = .80$ . One possible explanation to such inconsistent findings could be the measure of the construct of attribute importance used in this dissertation. When explaining the levels of attitude importance in their review article, Boninger and his associates (1995) said, "one could envision measuring a person's perception of the importance of an attitude object at a variety of social levels in addition to the personal level" (1995). Personal importance and collective importance were distinguished. Collective importance is not to the judge himself or herself but to various social levels such as attitudinal importance to the nation as a whole or to a particular social groups. Different from personal importance, the construct of attribute importance in this dissertation study was a type of third-person importance. That is, when performing the importance-rating task, the participants weighted the importance to third-person rather than themselves. Specifically, they were required to rate how important is the statements for a person to learn about corporate behavior.

Research has provided evidence supporting that personal importance and national importance reflect distinguishable constructs (see Boninger et al., 1995; Fabrigar & Krosnick, 1994). Fabrigar and Krosnick (1994) also found the significant relationship between personal importance and attitude accessibility while no measurable impact for national importance. Similar results were provided in a study

of the relationship of national and personal issue salience to attitude accessibility on foreign and domestic policy issues (Lavine et al., 1996). Lavine and his associates found that attitude accessibility was more closely associated with the personal importance of an issue than with the perceived national importance of an issue. These findings in previous studies might explain why no correlation between third-person importance and accessibility in this dissertation.

However, on the other hand, it has been argued that attribute importance and accessibility are not necessarily related as the information retrieval from memory is unreliable and subject to various distortions (Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988). Tourangeau and Rasinski (1988) argued that the retrieval process may yield accessibility rather than importance and the retrieval process is not reliable as most of the determinants of accessibility such as goal relevance, recency and frequency of use and temporary salience (see Higgins & King, 1981), do not necessarily relate to its long-term strength. In deed, “Just because a piece of information or a belief has been primed does not guarantee that respondents will use it in forming a judgment or answering a question” (Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988, p. 305). A number of studies that respondents will discount or actively suppress information that they regard as suspect or irrelevant so that the accessible concepts do not have effects on the later judgment (e.g., Martin, 1986; N Schwarz & Clore, 1983) and even generate backfire effect results (e.g., Higgins & King, 1981; Martin, 1986; R. Wyer, Rodenhause, & Gorman, 1985).

The argument for the unreliability of accessibility and the stability of

importance was also supported by the additional analyses conducted in this dissertation study. The results of two independent-samples  $t$  tests indicated no significant relationship neither between the attitudes toward the public-serving statement and the reaction time,  $t(114) = -.757, p = .450$ , nor between the attitudes toward the firm-serving statement and the reaction time,  $t(114) = .005, p = .996$ . This implies that when the participants expressed their attitudes toward the attribute statements, their final judgment (agree/disagree) was not based on what was most accessible in their mind at the moment. That is, the unconscious attribute accessibility was not the determinant of the conscious attitudinal judgment, even in the simultaneous situation.

On the other hand, the results of two independent-samples  $t$  tests indicated a significant relationship between the attitudes toward the public-serving statement and its importance,  $t(114) = 3.929, p < .001$ , and a significant relationship between the attitudes toward the firm-serving statement and the importance of this attribute statement,  $t(114) = 3.757, p < .001$ . These results indicated that the cognitive attitudinal judgment was stable across two different attribute-judging tasks, attitude expression and importance rating. That is, the participants who agreed with the attribute statements attached greater importance to the statements, or vice versa.

In light of these arguments and findings in literature as well as the evidence provided by this dissertation study, that the constructs of importance and accessibility are not necessarily related to each other seems reasonable. For example, through an effective advertising campaign, a brand has successfully increased its awareness and

has been easily remembered by consumers. But this does not necessarily guarantee that consumers will believe the brand is important in whatever reason when the brand comes into their mind. That is, accessibility does not necessarily cause importance. “As Tversky and Kahneman demonstrated, what is most readily retrieved from memory does not necessarily reflect either reality or the contents of memory” (Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988, p. 301). It is also believed that a construct that is perceived as important by a person will not necessarily be accessible in that person’s short-term memory, even the construct is important to the person himself or herself. Such situation actually often occurs in real life. We often hear people’s confession that they forgot very important things such as an important meeting. That’s why many people attach reminding notes somewhere conspicuous in their offices. When people forget so-important things, meaning that these important things are not accessible in their short-memory temporarily, very likely they are cognitively busy with other unimportant or distractive noises. In other words, those unimportant trivial things are temporarily more accessible than the important things.

#### Consequences of Agenda Setting: Predicted by Attribute Importance

The consequences of the agenda-setting process have been often confused with the outcome in the process in agenda-setting literature. In traditional agenda-setting effects research, the broad concept of public opinion was often regarded as the output and was specified in various ways in different studies. One popular dependent variable specifying public opinion was issue or attribute salience (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; McCombs et al., 2000; McCombs & Shaw, 1972;

Winter & Eyal, 1981) while other popular dependent variables specifying public opinion were also used in agenda-setting effects studies such as attitude toward the object (e.g., Kioussis, 2003; Kioussis, Bantimaroudis, & Ban, 1999; McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997) and even behavior (e.g., Roberts, 1992).

Although there is nothing inherently wrong to use the consequences of agenda-setting process or the outcome within the process as the dependent variables under the umbrella of agenda-setting effects, distinguishing between them may be helpful to understanding the psychological mechanism of agenda setting. In the cognitive-process model of agenda setting, the outcome within the salience-transference process of attribute agenda setting is perceived attribute salience, which consists of two parallel outcomes, temporary attribute accessibility as the temporary priming outcome and attribute importance as the stable cognitive outcome. The consequences of agenda setting should occur after the salience-transference process.

#### *Attitudinal Consequence*

When discussing the consequences of agenda-setting in his latest book about the theory, McCombs (2004) demonstrated, as attribute agenda setting provides more detailed understanding of the attitudes and opinions, along with priming, this theory leads the media effects research paradigm back to the influence of mass media on attitudes and opinions. According to McCombs' (2004) theoretical map of agenda-setting's consequences, opinion is the direct consequence predicted by object/attribute salience among the public. In this dissertation study, such attitudinal

consequence predicted by both temporary attitude accessibility and attribute importance was examined.

The hypothesis that as a consequence of agenda setting, brand evaluation is predicted by temporary attribute accessibility was tested. Similar to the research findings in Miller and Krosnick's (2000) study, the result indicated no significant effect for temporary attribute accessibility. This finding is consistent with the results indicating the unreliability of this variable.

A regression analysis on brand evaluation predicted by attribute importance was also conducted. Contrary to the findings against temporary attribute accessibility as a predictor of brand evaluation, the result indicated a significant effect for attribute importance. Such significant effect of attribute importance on brand evaluation is also consistent with the earlier findings of the stability of attribute importance. However, this result was contradictory to the findings in Miller and Krosnick's (2000) study where no association between increased national issue importance of an issue and impact of that issue on overall performance evaluations of President Clinton was found. However, after reviewed their study, I would argue, such insignificant relationship might be due to the invalidity of their study design. In their study, only two national issues, illegal drugs and immigration were used. Thus, to test whether national issue importance has effects on overall performance evaluation of President Clinton, it must assume that these two most important issues are sufficient determinants of the dependent variable. In other words, the participants would most likely evaluate the president's overall performance based on the president's handling



of these two most important issues. Unfortunately, such assumption is not tenable.

The participants' evaluation of the overall performance of the president might be based on other national issues or other things rather than national issues.

In addition, it was found that brand evaluation was also influenced by pre-exposure attitude toward CRM in general.

#### *Causal Attribution as the Direct Consequence and a Mediator*

Finding the association between attribute importance and brand evaluation is still not sufficient to expound the mechanism of the consequences of agenda setting. Without revealing whether the importance attribute will be used to judge the later related attitudinal object, the statement that through attribute agenda setting, media can tell the public how to think about it (the attitudinal object), would be still an assumption.

In the present study, it was hypothesized that the agenda-setting effects on brand evaluation is mediated by causal attribution, the direct consequence of agenda setting, which was specified as CRM motive inference. The results from a hierarchical regression analysis followed by the Sobel test verified this mediational model. It was found that more important attributes were more likely to be used as the motives for the CRM campaign, and this in turn influenced the participants' evaluation of the sponsor brand. This mediational model practically implies the appropriateness for the theory of agenda setting to be the theoretical framework for the research of CRM effectiveness, since from the perspective of causal attribution agenda-setting process serves as a primary antecedent.

### *Behavioral consequence*

Still, McCombs' (2004) theoretical map of agenda-setting consequences includes behavior as the last step after attitude and opinion. Such causal direction reflects the attitude-behavior consistence paradigm. Numerous empirical verifications of strong attitude-behavior relations have been provided since 1950s (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The behavioral consequence of agenda setting was also examined in this dissertation. Consistent with the literature, significant correlation between the CRM sponsor brand evaluation and purchase intention toward the sponsor brand was found to be significant. This implicated that consumers' attitudes toward the CRM sponsor brand are one factor that predicts their purchase intention toward the brand. This finding confirms behavior as an indirect consequence of agenda setting.

### *Agenda-setting and CRM Research*

Attribution theory has been used as a theoretical framework for CRM effectiveness research for years. The core mechanism is that how consumers evaluate a CRM sponsor is influenced by how they infer the sponsor's motive for CRM activities. However, the hypothesized cognitive process model of agenda-setting involves the antecedent cognitive process that influences CRM motive attribution or motive inference. In other words, CRM motive inference is a consequence of an outcome of the agenda-setting process (attribute importance), which in turn affects consumer evaluation of the CRM sponsor and brand purchase intention. This dissertation provides evidence supporting this theoretical mechanism. It was found that attribute salience manipulation (public-serving salience vs. firm-serving salience)

has direct influence on participants' rating of the relative importance of these two attributes, which in turn influences participants' CRM motive inference.

### Study limitations

#### *Internal Validity Issues*

One of the main concerns about the study limitations is internal validity. The stimulus materials used to manipulate attribute salience were four real cause-related marketing cases. The purpose was to make the participants highly involved in the study. However, although these four cases were carefully selected and edited to match the need for attribute salience manipulation, the use of real cases as the stimulus materials may cause a problem that would threaten internal validity of the study. That is, some of the participants might know some of the cases or know some of the sponsor brands, and their pre-exposure knowledge of and attitudes toward the cases or brands could bias the research results. For example, an extreme negative pre-exposure attitude toward a sponsor brand in a stimulus case could distort the public-serving attribute salience manipulation in this case. The participant would interpret the CRM campaign in a negative way, although the case was manipulated for the public-serving attribute salience.

Another concern about internal validity might be the intact-group issue. Although all the participants were recruited from the academic department and were randomly assigned to the conditions in the experiment, they were at different grade levels from freshmen to senior. Those at higher grade levels might have taken or were taking some courses in advertising and marketing while those freshmen participants

had not taken such courses yet. For the participants at higher grade levels who had been trained with advertising and marketing knowledge, the agenda-setting effects of the manipulation could be weakened. Such intact-group issue cannot be solved through the technique of random assignment.

Finally, there is a concern about the response latency measure. In this dissertation study, a computer software program was used to record the participants' reaction times to the attribute statement as the measure of temporary attribute accessibility. Although this measurement technique has been commonly used in attitude accessibility research, its serious problems have been discussed. It was found that reaction time data are inherently messy (Fazio, 1990). A number of sources that result in the messiness of reaction time data have been identified including a lack of practice sessions for participants, undesired variance in participants' speed of responding to probes and attention to the experiment, unintended effects of independent variables, and the order of attitude probes (Arpan et al., 2007).

The experiment was carefully designed based on the guideline for accessibility measurement provided in literature. For example, the presentation order of two attribute statements was randomized so that the possible priming effects of one on another could be eliminated. Also, several attribute-irrelevant statements were presented before the appearance of the attribute statements as the practice to make participants familiar with the task and keyboard. Aside from these measures, to urge the participants to balance their reaction speed and accuracy as desired, following Fazio's guideline (Fazio, 1990), the participants were required to respond as quickly

as possible, but not so quickly that they would make any error. Thus, although it has not been discussed in literature, the validity of the measure was based on an assumption that the participants would perform the task accurately as required by the instruction. Unfortunately, this assumption is not guaranteed because the participants' reaction process was not controllable.

### *External validity Issues*

External validity was taken into account when thinking of the study limitations. As Shadish, Cook and Campbell (2002) demonstrated, "external validity concerns inferences about the extent to which a causal relationship holds over variations in persons, settings, treatments, and outcomes" (p. 83), and estimates of such extent to which a causal relationship holds are conceptually similar to tests of statistical interactions. Specifically, threats to external validity include interaction of the causal relationship with units, interaction of the causal relationship over treatment variations, interaction of causal relationship with outcomes, interactions of the causal relationship with settings, and context-dependent mediation (Shadish et al., 2002). The first three types of interactions are especially considered regarding the concern about external validity of this dissertation study.

First, the unique characteristics of the participants were concerned with respect to external validity. All the participants recruited for this dissertation were college students enrolled in Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. This specific group of people is different from other generations such as their parents in terms of many aspects of personality such as cynicism. Guastello and Peissig (1998) found in

their study that college students were more cynical than their parents. Cynicism is the tightly related to cause-related marketing research as it may be hard to convince a cynical person that the main purpose of corporate donation from sales is to benefit the society. Thus, if other types of participants such as in the generation of college students' parents had been involved in the study, the research results could have varied.

Three attribute-reflecting cases were used to manipulate attribute salience. Such design was in accordance with Krugman's three-plus rule (1972) popularly used in determining the effectiveness of advertising exposure frequency, which suggests that only after being exposed to a commercial three times or more, viewers are able to comprehend the message. However, some other researchers have challenged this rule and proposed an inverted U-curve to denote the frequency effects. For example, an overexposure effect was found in Williams' (1987) study of the correlation between repeated exposure and the attractiveness of synthetic speech that the preference function does rise with familiarity at first but then reaches a turning point and diminishes. Singh and Rothschild (1983) even found that, after four exposures, the effectiveness of a commercial began declining. Thus, it would be a problem if attempting to generalize the results from this dissertation study to other study where attribute salience is manipulated at different frequency levels, even all else being equal.

Finally, attribute importance, the cognitive outcome of the cognitive process of agenda setting, was measured through the participants' judgment of the importance of

the attribute statements to other people rather than themselves. In other words, attribute importance in this dissertation study was not personal importance but a type of third-person importance. The difference between personal importance and other types of importance such as national importance was discussed earlier in this chapter. This implies that if personal importance instead of third-person importance had been used in the study to specify attribute importance, the research results could have been different. Thus, it might not be suitable to try to generalize the results from this dissertation to other situations where personal importance is adopted, even all else being equal.

## APPENDICES



Appendix A:

Consent Form

## Acknowledgement of Informed Consent

### Section I: Identification of Project and Responsible Investigator:

*I hereby agree to cooperate and participate in a research project entitled "Consumer Opinion Study" to be conducted by Jason Jusheng Yu as principal investigator.*

### Section II: Participant Rights and Information:

1. Purpose of the Project:

*This study seeks to understand consumer perception of corporate behavior as well as consumer brand evaluation and purchase behavior.*

2. Description of Risks:

*There is no foreseeable risk for participants*

3. Description of Benefits:

*Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study.*

4. Disclosure of Alternative Procedures:

*If you choose to not participate, you will not be treated as a participant in the research. If you withdraw from the research before completing it, all your responses will be excluded from the research.*

5. Confidentiality of Records:

*Your responses will be confidential. Only the researcher can access to the data. No one will access to the data without the researcher's permission. Your ID information such as your name will be used only for participation reminding and check receiving.*

6. Contact Information:

*If you have any questions about our research project or about your rights and activities as a participant, then please contact the project's principal investigator, Prof. Jason Jusheng Yu. You can call Prof. Yu at (618) 650-2219, e-mail him at [jyu@siue.edu](mailto:jyu@siue.edu), or write him at Department of Mass Communications, SIUE, Edwardsville, IL 62026. If you are a participant*

**APPROVED**

AUG 26 2008

SIUE Institutional  
Review Board

and become worried about your emotional and physical responses to the project's activities, then we encourage you to immediately notify Prof. Yu. He will work with you to help identify the problem and solve it. You can also seek assistance from SIUE Counseling Services (at 618-650-2197) If you have any questions about your rights or any other concerns, you may also contact Linda Skelton with the SIUE Institutional Review Board at (618) 650-2958 or [lskelto@siue.edu](mailto:lskelto@siue.edu).

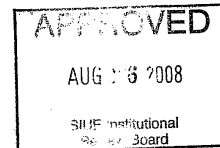
7. Statement of Voluntary Participation:

If you choose to join our research project, your participation will be voluntary. You can ask to withdraw from the research project at any time.

**Section III: Signatures**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant \_\_\_\_\_  
Date
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date
3. Department of Mass Communications, SIUE, Edwardsville, 62026  
Principal Investigator's Address
4. (618) 650-2219 jyu@siue.edu  
Principal Investigator's Phone Number Principal Investigator's E-Mail Address

Updated 5/27/03



Appendix B:

Stimulus Materials and Questionnaire Used in Pilot Study:

Public-serving Attribute Salience Condition

In this task, you will read four cases. After reading each case, you will need to write ONE sentence to conclude the case very briefly in a box below the text. When you finish concluding a case, click the "next >" button to move to the next case and do the same work again until you finish all four cases.

Before each case presentation except the first one, a sign, "Next Case," will appear on the screen shortly as a cue for the coming case.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the cases that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all four cases.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

-----  
Case I: "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" Campaign: TUMS Sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI)

In 2003, TUMS, America's first response to heartburn, decided to sponsor America's first responders to fire and local emergencies through the First Responder Institute. The program that TUMS and FRI worked on together is called "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think."

The First Responder Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing leadership and support to the nation's First Responders through programs of instruction and education.

Through "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" campaign, TUMS pledged to donate 10 cents to the First Responder Institute for every bottle of TUMS sold.

The campaign was successful. TUMS donated \$238,000 to the First Responder Institute, which in turn funded 60 fire departments throughout the United States.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

-----  
Next Case  
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## Case II: Briggs & Stratton and National Wildlife Federation (NWF)'s "Mower Tune-Up Month" Campaign

Research has shown that a regular tune-up helps protect the environment, extends the life of your mower and improves engine performance. That's why the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and Briggs & Stratton launched the first-ever National Mower Tune-Up Month in March 2002.

Briggs & Stratton sponsored a website, <http://www.tuneupmonth.com/>, that included information on lawn mower tune-ups, tips for reducing pollution and energy inefficiency, and educational information.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the nation's largest member-supported conservation education and advocacy group, unites people from all walks of life to protect nature, wildlife and the world. The Federation has educated and inspired families to uphold America's conservation tradition since 1936.

Through Mower Tune-Up Month, Briggs & Stratton and NWF have focused on the 40 million U.S. households that don't perform mower maintenance. By performing a simple mower tune-up, these households can reduce emission levels up to 50 percent, reduce fuel consumption up to 30 percent and extend equipment life. Converting even a small percentage of these households would be a positive step toward protecting the environment.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

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## Case III: PepsiCo's partnership with America on the Move (AOM) Foundation

Responding to consumers' increased awareness and concern about their dietary intake (and that of their families), PepsiCo created the Smart Spot™ line of products to provide a wide array of better product choices for consumers.

PepsiCo was committed to partnering Smart Spot with a nonprofit that focused on energy balance managed through healthy eating and physical activity. PepsiCo decided to sponsor America on the Move (AOM) Foundation by providing funding in the form of unrestricted grants for grassroots efforts.

Perhaps the most ambitious element of the Smart Spot and AOM partnership was PepsiCo's sponsorship of AOM Day of Action, a national awareness event held on September 28, 2005, encouraging the American public to make AOM's two recommended small changes to their daily routine – 2,000 more steps and 100 fewer calories – in order to prevent weight-related illness.

As a result of AOM day, the outcome in growth is impressive. There were over 50,000 AOM participants, both online and offline. There are more than 725 million media impressions to date, and 30,000 schools are reaching 123 million students while over 1,800 work sites are reaching 3.2 employees. AOM's user success has reported that 71 percent of participants maintained or lost weight, and 36 percent increased daily steps by 2,000 or even more.

By enhancing their reputation through such marketing program, PepsiCo's image issues were solved. Its brand credibility is significantly enhanced because of its association with AOM. Its visibility on all of the AOM materials both online and offline promotes the building of customer loyalty. Along with sponsoring AOM, PepsiCo is finally seen as a company that offers consumers nutritional options. Through this partnership, PepsiCo stands out from competitors, because unlike most of the latter, PepsiCo is now affiliated with health and nutrition.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

---

## Next Case

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### Case IV: Pedigree Adoption Drive, Pedigree and numerous dog shelters

Each year, approximately four million dogs are up for adoption at animal shelters and breed rescue organizations across the country. Sadly, only half of these dogs ever find homes, leaving two million dogs in a dire situation.

Kicked off in February 2006, actress Minnie Driver and PEDIGREES® Food for Dogs have been giving millions of homeless dogs new "leashes" on life through the second annual The PEDIGREES® Adoption Drive. The national awareness and fundraising campaign rallies and rewards dog lovers nationwide who come to the rescue of the millions of shelter dogs waiting to find good homes.

This program was designed to raise money for dog shelters nationwide and increase awareness of the dog adoption cause through shelters while positioning Pedigree as a

brand that loves dogs and understands the dog-owner relationship. By donating a percentage of the sales of each bag of Pedigree sold to benefit dog shelters, Pedigree included retailers and consumers in the effort.

Supported by advertising, PR and promotion, the program has raised \$750,000, generated 51 million media impressions, and John Anton, director of Pedigree brand marketing, projected the company would raise \$2 million for dog shelters through foundation donations and Pedigree dog food sales in 2008.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

-----

Next step, you will read several statements about corporate behavior. In your personal opinion, how important is each of the following statements for a person to learn about corporate behavior. Please indicate their importance by pressing one of five keys, from "1" (unimportant) to "5" (important).

Be aware: These statements are not necessarily correct.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the statements that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all the statements.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

-----

Corporate laws require that corporations be structured into classes of superiors and subordinated within a centralized pyramidal structure: chairman, directors, chief executive officer, vice presidents, division managers and so on.

1	2	3	4	5
Unimportant				Important

-----

Theoretically, privately held corporations—those owned by individuals or families—do not have the imperative to expand.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



Unimportant

Important

---

Corporations' political lobbying fits uneasily into the machinery of American democracy.

1  
Unimportant

2

3

4

5  
Important

---

Corporations do not care about nations; they live beyond boundaries.

1  
Unimportant

2

3

4

5  
Important

---

The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the society.

1  
Unimportant

2

3

4

5  
Important

---

When investing in a foreign country, a corporation will inevitably be influenced by that country's domestic economic policy.

1  
Unimportant

2

3

4

5  
Important

---

Corporate planners consciously attempt to bring "less developed societies into the modern world" to create infrastructures for development, as well as new workers and new consumers.



development.

Agree

Disagree

-----  
The Courts should give business a wide variety of rights to political speech and petitioning.

Agree

Disagree

-----  
Corporations live or die by whether they can sustain growth.

Agree

Disagree

-----  
As an employee, you are expected to be part of the "team," but you also must be ready to climb over your own colleagues.

Agree

Disagree

-----  
The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the society.

Agree

Disagree

-----  
Corporations place every person in management in fierce competition with each other.

Agree

Disagree

When investing in a foreign country, a corporation will inevitably be influenced by that country's domestic economic policy.

Agree

Disagree

---

The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the firms themselves.

Agree

Disagree

---

Next step, you will read an extract from a newspaper's business section about a corporation's activity, and then answer the following questions.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the reading materials and questions that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all questions.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

---

A well-known national chain fast food restaurant (we will call it Brand X instead of its true name) announced that Brand X will make a donation to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). The goal of MADD was to reduce drunk driving traffic fatalities and this nonprofit organization has been highly effective in raising public disapproval of drunk driving. The proportion of traffic fatalities that are alcohol-related has dropped dramatically, in part because of MADD's good efforts.

Brand X will donate to MADD 2% of each customer's money spent for each meal in any of its 528 restaurants in the United States from June 1 to August 31, 2008. That is, the eventual amount of the donation is based on the number of Brand X meal sold and the generation of revenue for Brand X.

When interviewed by a national newspaper, the CEO of Brand X said, "This donation program reflects our high social responsibility as an active member of our society and our effort to building a safe community."





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**END**

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Congratulations! You have finished the whole study. Please **DO NOT** press any key and leave quietly.

Please **DO NOT** tell other people about the content of this study so that the result of the study won't be biased.

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix C:

Stimulus Materials and Questionnaire Used in Pilot Study:

Firm-serving Attribute Salience Condition



In this task, you will read four cases. After reading each case, you will need to write ONE sentence to conclude the case very briefly in a box below the text. When you finish concluding a case, click the "next >" button to move to the next case and do the same work again until you finish all four cases.

Before each case presentation except the first one, a sign, "Next Case," will appear on the screen shortly as a cue for the coming case.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the cases that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all four cases.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

---

#### Case I: "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" Campaign: TUMS Sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI)

In 2003, TUMS, America's first response to heartburn, decided to sponsor America's first responders to fire and local emergencies through the First Responder Institute through its marketing program, called "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think."

The First Responder Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing leadership and support to the nation's First Responders through programs of instruction and education.

Through "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" campaign, TUMS pledged to donate 10 cents to the First Responder Institute for every bottle of TUMS sold.

The campaign was successful. TUMS saw a 30% increase in the number of displays shipped to stores and 16% increase in sales volume.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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### Next Case

---

#### Case II: Briggs & Stratton and National Wildlife Federation (NWF)'s "Mower Tune-Up

## Month” Campaign

Briggs & Stratton Corporation is the world's largest manufacturer of small, air-cooled engines for outdoor power equipment, including lawn mowers, pressure washers and generators. With a 70% market share for its products, the company sought to drive sales of its lawn mower tune-up kits among consumers who don't maintain their equipment.

To accomplish this marketing goal, Briggs & Stratton turned to the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) to build credibility for the campaign message.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the nation's largest member-supported conservation education and advocacy group, unites people from all walks of life to protect nature, wildlife and the world. The Federation has educated and inspired families to uphold America's conservation tradition since 1936.

The “Mower Tune-Up Month” campaign started in March 2002. The campaign message stressed that a tuned-up mower cuts emissions of ozone-producing hydrocarbons by up to 50 percent and reduces fuel consumption by as much as 30 percent.

A tune-up can be done at home in 30 minutes or less, or at a service dealer. It involves four simple steps: changing the air filter and oil, replacing the spark plug and adding fuel stabilizer. Briggs & Stratton provides maintenance kits with all elements to perform tune-ups.

The campaign had more than 175 million media impressions. Briggs & Stratton saw its tune-up kit sales tripled.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

---

### Case III: PepsiCo's partnership with America on the Move (AOM) Foundation

Responding to consumers' increased awareness and concern about their dietary intake (and that of their families), PepsiCo created the Smart Spot™ line of products to provide a wide array of better product choices for consumers.

PepsiCo was committed to partnering Smart Spot with a nonprofit that focused on energy balance managed through healthy eating and physical activity. PepsiCo

decided to sponsor America on the Move (AOM) Foundation by providing funding in the form of unrestricted grants for grassroots efforts.

Perhaps the most ambitious element of the Smart Spot and AOM partnership was PepsiCo's sponsorship of AOM Day of Action, a national awareness event held on September 28, 2005, encouraging the American public to make AOM's two recommended small changes to their daily routine – 2,000 more steps and 100 fewer calories – in order to prevent weight-related illness.

As a result of AOM day, the outcome in growth is impressive. There were over 50,000 AOM participants, both online and offline. There are more than 725 million media impressions to date, and 30,000 schools are reaching 123 million students while over 1,800 work sites are reaching 3.2 employees. AOM's user success has reported that 71 percent of participants maintained or lost weight, and 36 percent increased daily steps by 2,000 or even more.

By enhancing their reputation through such marketing program, PepsiCo's image issues were solved. Its brand credibility is significantly enhanced because of its association with AOM. Its visibility on all of the AOM materials both online and offline promotes the building of customer loyalty. Along with sponsoring AOM, PepsiCo is finally seen as a company that offers consumers nutritional options. Through this partnership, PepsiCo stands out from competitors, because unlike most of the latter, PepsiCo is now affiliated with health and nutrition.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

---

Case IV: Pedigree Adoption Drive, Pedigree and numerous dog shelters

Through a marketing program "Pedigree Adoption Drive," Pedigree, a well-known dog food brand, has successfully enhanced its brand reputation and increased its product sales.

This program was designed to raise money for dog shelters nationwide and increase awareness of the dog adoption cause through shelters while positioning Pedigree as a brand that loves dogs and understands the dog-owner relationship. By donating 1% of the sales of each bag of Pedigree sold to benefit dog shelters, Pedigree included retailers and consumers in the effort.

Supported by advertising, PR and promotion, the program generated 51 million media impressions, engaged more than 80% of Pedigree's key retailers and helped Pedigree top \$1 billion in sales for the first time.

"When you find something that works, you want to stick with it and you want to do things that make things better and better," John Anton, director of Pedigree brand marketing, tells Marketing Daily. "We make dog food and we help dogs. We've gotten so much traction over the last three years that it only made sense to put as much as we could behind this."

The effort has translated into increased sales. While Anton would not disclose sales figures, he says the marketing push has resulted in "double digit" growth for the brand on both the dry and wet dog food lines.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

-----  
Next step, you will read several statements about corporate behavior. After reading each statement, press "y" or "n" key AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT SO QUICKLY that you would make any errors. Pressing "y" key indicates that you agree with the statement, while pressing "n" key indicates that you disagree with the statement.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the statements that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all the statements.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

-----  
Business corporations are indispensable institutions for American capitalism.

Agree

Disagree

-----  
Corporations' political lobbying fits uneasily into the machinery of American democracy.

Agree

Disagree

---

For multinational corporations, global growth plan is more important than local development.

Agree

Disagree

---

The Courts should give business a wide variety of rights to political speech and petitioning.

Agree

Disagree

---

Corporations live or die by whether they can sustain growth.

Agree

Disagree

---

As an employee, you are expected to be part of the "team," but you also must be ready to climb over your own colleagues.

Agree

Disagree

---

The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the society.

Agree

Disagree

---

Corporations place every person in management in fierce competition with each other.

Agree

Disagree

-----

When investing in a foreign country, a corporation will inevitably be influenced by that country's domestic economic policy.

Agree

Disagree

-----

The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the firms themselves.

Agree

Disagree

-----

Next step, you will read several statements about corporate behavior. In your personal opinion, how important is each of the following statements for a person to learn about corporate behavior. Please indicate their importance by pressing one of five keys, from "1" (unimportant) to "5" (important).

Be aware: These statements are not necessarily correct.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the statements that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all the statements.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

-----

Corporate laws require that corporations be structured into classes of superiors and subordinated within a centralized pyramidal structure: chairman, directors, chief executive officer, vice presidents, division managers and so on.

1

2

3

4

5



Unimportant

Important

---

Corporate planners consciously attempt to bring "less developed societies into the modern world" to create infrastructures for development, as well as new workers and new consumers.

1  
Unimportant

2

3

4

5

Important

---

The main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations is to serve and benefit the firms themselves.

1  
Unimportant

2

3

4

5

Important

---

Next step, you will read an extract from a newspaper's business section about a corporation's activity, and then answer the following questions.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the reading materials and questions that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all questions.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

---

A well-known national chain fast food restaurant (we will call it Brand X instead of its true name) announced that Brand X will make a donation to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). The goal of MADD was to reduce drunk driving traffic fatalities and this nonprofit organization has been highly effective in raising public disapproval of drunk driving. The proportion of traffic fatalities that are alcohol-related has dropped dramatically, in part because of MADD's good efforts.

Brand X will donate to MADD 2% of each customer's money spent for each meal in any of its 528 restaurants in the United States from June 1 to August 31, 2008. That is, the eventual amount of the donation is based on the number of Brand X meal sold and









Appendix D:

Stimulus Materials and Questionnaire Used in Main Study:

Public-serving Attribute Salience Condition

In this task, you will read four cases. After reading each case, you will need to write ONE sentence to conclude the case very briefly in a box below the text. When you finish concluding a case, click the "next >" button to move to the next case and do the same work again until you finish all four cases.

Before each case presentation except the first one, a sign, "Next Case," will appear on the screen shortly as a cue for the coming case.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the cases that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all four cases.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

---

### Case I: "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" Campaign: TUMS Sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI)

In 2003, TUMS, America's first response to heartburn, decided to sponsor America's first responders to fire and local emergencies through the First Responder Institute. The program that TUMS and FRI worked on together is called "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think."

The First Responder Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing leadership and support to the nation's First Responders through programs of instruction and education.

Through "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" campaign, TUMS pledged to donate 10 cents to the First Responder Institute for every bottle of TUMS sold.

The campaign was successful. TUMS donated \$238,000 to the First Responder Institute, which in turn funded 60 fire departments throughout the United States.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

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### Case II: Briggs & Stratton and National Wildlife Federation (NWF)'s "Mower Tune-Up

## Month" Campaign

Research has shown that a regular tune-up helps protect the environment, extends the life of your mower and improves engine performance. That's why the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and Briggs & Stratton launched the first-ever National Mower Tune-Up Month in March 2002.

Briggs & Stratton sponsored a website, <http://www.tuneupmonth.com/>, that included information on lawn mower tune-ups, tips for reducing pollution and energy inefficiency, and educational information.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the nation's largest member-supported conservation education and advocacy group, unites people from all walks of life to protect nature, wildlife and the world. The Federation has educated and inspired families to uphold America's conservation tradition since 1936.

Through Mower Tune-Up Month, Briggs & Stratton and NWF have focused on the 40 million U.S. households that don't perform mower maintenance. By performing a simple mower tune-up, these households can reduce emission levels up to 50 percent, reduce fuel consumption up to 30 percent and extend equipment life. Converting even a small percentage of these households would be a positive step toward protecting the environment.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

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### Case III: Nike vs. California Supreme Court

In May, California Supreme Court ruled that public statements by Nike, Inc. -- including press releases and letters to newspaper editors -- in response to public accusations leveled against its overseas labor practices, constituted "commercial speech." That designation strips Nike's statements of their full First Amendment protections, and places them in the same category as the company's explicit product advertisements for purposes of applying state laws barring false and misleading advertising.

Nike is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review the decision. Without the High Court's intervention, the company will have to stand trial in a lower state court against

California resident Mark Kasky, who, under the state's rigid consumer protection laws, filed a claim -- without having to show any personal harm -- alleging Nike's public relations campaign contained false or misleading statements. If found liable, Nike could be forced to surrender all profits attributable to the statements.

The California Supreme Court's decision is based on a bizarre, arbitrarily selective interpretation of the High Court's precedent on this subject. The U.S. Supreme Court has long protected a corporation's right to contribute to matters of public interest and to openly defend itself in public debate.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

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### Case IV: Pedigree Adoption Drive, Pedigree and numerous dog shelters

Each year, approximately four million dogs are up for adoption at animal shelters and breed rescue organizations across the country. Sadly, only half of these dogs ever find homes, leaving two million dogs in a dire situation.

Kicked off in February 2006, actress Minnie Driver and PEDIGREES® Food for Dogs have been giving millions of homeless dogs new "leashes" on life through the second annual The PEDIGREES® Adoption Drive. The national awareness and fundraising campaign rallies and rewards dog lovers nationwide who come to the rescue of the millions of shelter dogs waiting to find good homes.

This program was designed to raise money for dog shelters nationwide and increase awareness of the dog adoption cause through shelters while positioning Pedigree as a brand that loves dogs and understands the dog-owner relationship. By donating a percentage of the sales of each bag of Pedigree sold to benefit dog shelters, Pedigree included retailers and consumers in the effort.

Supported by advertising, PR and promotion, the program has raised \$750,000, generated 51 million media impressions, and John Anton, director of Pedigree brand marketing, projected the company would raise \$2 million for dog shelters through foundation donations and Pedigree dog food sales in 2008.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

---

Next step, you will read several statements about corporate behavior. After reading each statement, press "y" or "n" key AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT SO QUICKLY that you would make any errors. Pressing "y" key indicates that you agree with the statement, while pressing "n" key indicates that you disagree with the statement.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the statements that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all the statements.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

---

Business corporations are indispensable institutions for American capitalism.

Agree                      Disagree

---

Corporations' political lobbying fits uneasily into the machinery of American democracy.

Agree                      Disagree

---

For multinational corporations, global growth plan is more important than local development.

Agree                      Disagree

---

The Courts should give business a wide variety of rights to political speech and petitioning.

Agree                      Disagree



---

Corporations live or die by whether they can sustain growth.

Agree                      Disagree

---

As an employee, you are expected to be part of the "team," but you also must be ready to climb over your own colleagues.

Agree                      Disagree

---

To serve and benefit the society is the main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations.

Agree                      Disagree

---

Corporations place every person in management in fierce competition with each other.

Agree                      Disagree

---

When investing in a foreign country, a corporation will inevitably be influenced by that country's domestic economic policy.

Agree                      Disagree

---

To serve and benefit the firms themselves is the main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations.





Unimportant

Important

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Next step, you will read an extract from a newspaper's business section about a corporation's activity, and then answer the following questions.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the reading materials and questions that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all questions.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

-----

A well-known national chain fast food restaurant (we will call it Brand X instead of its true name) announced that Brand X will make a donation to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). The goal of MADD was to reduce drunk driving traffic fatalities and this nonprofit organization has been highly effective in raising public disapproval of drunk driving. The proportion of traffic fatalities that are alcohol-related has dropped dramatically, in part because of MADD's good efforts.

Brand X will donate to MADD 2% of each customer's money spent for each meal in any of its 528 restaurants in the United States from June 1 to August 31, 2008. That is, the eventual amount of the donation is based on the number of Brand X meal sold and the generation of revenue for Brand X.

When interviewed by a national newspaper, the CEO of Brand X said, "This donation program reflects our high social responsibility as an active member of our society and our effort to building a safe community."

Make sure you have read this news extract carefully, and then press "p" key to move to the questions.

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Why do you think the company started this program? (Provide a ONE-sentence answer in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next question.)

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**Next Question**





Appendix E:

Stimulus Materials and Questionnaire Used in Main Study:

Firm-serving Attribute Salience Condition

In this task, you will read four cases. After reading each case, you will need to write ONE sentence to conclude the case very briefly in a box below the text. When you finish concluding a case, click the "next >" button to move to the next case and do the same work again until you finish all four cases.

Before each case presentation except the first one, a sign, "Next Case," will appear on the screen shortly as a cue for the coming case.

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Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

---

#### Case I: "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" Campaign: TUMS Sponsoring the First Responder Institute (FRI)

In 2003, TUMS, America's first response to heartburn, decided to sponsor America's first responders to fire and local emergencies through the First Responder Institute through its marketing program, called "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think."

The First Responder Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing leadership and support to the nation's First Responders through programs of instruction and education.

Through "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" campaign, TUMS pledged to donate 10 cents to the First Responder Institute for every bottle of TUMS sold.

The campaign was successful. TUMS saw a 30% increase in the number of displays shipped to stores and 16% increase in sales volume.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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### Next Case

---

#### Case II: Briggs & Stratton and National Wildlife Federation (NWF)'s "Mower Tune-Up



## Month” Campaign

Briggs & Stratton Corporation is the world's largest manufacturer of small, air-cooled engines for outdoor power equipment, including lawn mowers, pressure washers and generators. With a 70% market share for its products, the company sought to drive sales of its lawn mower tune-up kits among consumers who don't maintain their equipment.

To accomplish this marketing goal, Briggs & Stratton turned to the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) to build credibility for the campaign message.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the nation's largest member-supported conservation education and advocacy group, unites people from all walks of life to protect nature, wildlife and the world. The Federation has educated and inspired families to uphold America's conservation tradition since 1936.

The “Mower Tune-Up Month” campaign started in March 2002. The campaign message stressed that a tuned-up mower cuts emissions of ozone-producing hydrocarbons by up to 50 percent and reduces fuel consumption by as much as 30 percent.

A tune-up can be done at home in 30 minutes or less, or at a service dealer. It involves four simple steps: changing the air filter and oil, replacing the spark plug and adding fuel stabilizer. Briggs & Stratton provides maintenance kits with all elements to perform tune-ups.

The campaign had more than 175 million media impressions. Briggs & Stratton saw its tune-up kit sales tripled.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

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### Case III: PepsiCo's partnership with America on the Move (AOM) Foundation

Responding to consumers' increased awareness and concern about their dietary intake (and that of their families), PepsiCo created the Smart Spot™ line of products to provide a wide array of better product choices for consumers.

PepsiCo was committed to partnering Smart Spot with a nonprofit that focused on energy balance managed through healthy eating and physical activity. PepsiCo

decided to sponsor America on the Move (AOM) Foundation by providing funding in the form of unrestricted grants for grassroots efforts.

Perhaps the most ambitious element of the Smart Spot and AOM partnership was PepsiCo's sponsorship of AOM Day of Action, a national awareness event held on September 28, 2005, encouraging the American public to make AOM's two recommended small changes to their daily routine – 2,000 more steps and 100 fewer calories – in order to prevent weight-related illness.

As a result of AOM day, the outcome in growth is impressive. There were over 50,000 AOM participants, both online and offline. There are more than 725 million media impressions to date, and 30,000 schools are reaching 123 million students while over 1,800 work sites are reaching 3.2 employees. AOM's user success has reported that 71 percent of participants maintained or lost weight, and 36 percent increased daily steps by 2,000 or even more.

By enhancing their reputation through such marketing program, PepsiCo's image issues were solved. Its brand credibility is significantly enhanced because of its association with AOM. Its visibility on all of the AOM materials both online and offline promotes the building of customer loyalty. Along with sponsoring AOM, PepsiCo is finally seen as a company that offers consumers nutritional options. Through this partnership, PepsiCo stands out from competitors, because unlike most of the latter, PepsiCo is now affiliated with health and nutrition.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

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## Next Case

---

Case IV: Pedigree Adoption Drive, Pedigree and numerous dog shelters

Through a marketing program "Pedigree Adoption Drive," Pedigree, a well-known dog food brand, has successfully enhanced its brand reputation and increased its product sales.

This program was designed to raise money for dog shelters nationwide and increase awareness of the dog adoption cause through shelters while positioning Pedigree as a brand that loves dogs and understands the dog-owner relationship. By donating 1% of the sales of each bag of Pedigree sold to benefit dog shelters, Pedigree included retailers and consumers in the effort.

Supported by advertising, PR and promotion, the program generated 51 million media impressions, engaged more than 80% of Pedigree's key retailers and helped Pedigree top \$1 billion in sales for the first time.

"When you find something that works, you want to stick with it and you want to do things that make things better and better," John Anton, director of Pedigree brand marketing, tells Marketing Daily. "We make dog food and we help dogs. We've gotten so much traction over the last three years that it only made sense to put as much as we could behind this."

The effort has translated into increased sales. While Anton would not disclose sales figures, he says the marketing push has resulted in "double digit" growth for the brand on both the dry and wet dog food lines.

Write a ONE-sentence conclusion of this case in the box below. When you finish, click the "next >" button to move to the next case.

-----

Next step, you will read several statements about corporate behavior. In your personal opinion, how important is each of the following statements for a person to learn about corporate behavior. Please indicate their importance by pressing one of five keys, from "1" (unimportant) to "5" (important).

Be aware: These statements are not necessarily correct.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the statements that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all the statements.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

-----

Corporate laws require that corporations be structured into classes of superiors and subordinated within a centralized pyramidal structure: chairman, directors, chief executive officer, vice presidents, division managers and so on.

1	2	3	4	5
Unimportant				Important

-----





Agree

Disagree

---

For multinational corporations, global growth plan is more important than local development.

Agree

Disagree

---

The Courts should give business a wide variety of rights to political speech and petitioning.

Agree

Disagree

---

Corporations live or die by whether they can sustain growth.

Agree

Disagree

---

As an employee, you are expected to be part of the "team," but you also must be ready to climb over your own colleagues.

Agree

Disagree

---

To serve and benefit the society is the main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations.

Agree

Disagree

---

Corporations place every person in management in fierce competition with each other.

Agree

Disagree

-----

When investing in a foreign country, a corporation will inevitably be influenced by that country's domestic economic policy.

Agree

Disagree

-----

To serve and benefit the firms themselves is the main purpose of corporate sponsorship of charities or nonprofit organizations.

Agree

Disagree

-----

Next step, you will read an extract from a newspaper's business section about a corporation's activity, and then answer the following questions.

This is a one-way task. That is, there is NO way to go back to review the reading materials and questions that you have finished. You must keep going forward until you finish all questions.

Make sure you understand this instruction, and then press "p" key to start the task.

-----

A well-known national chain fast food restaurant (we will call it Brand X instead of its true name) announced that Brand X will make a donation to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). The goal of MADD was to reduce drunk driving traffic fatalities and this nonprofit organization has been highly effective in raising public disapproval of drunk driving. The proportion of traffic fatalities that are alcohol-related has dropped dramatically, in part because of MADD's good efforts.

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