

University of Alberta

**SOCIAL TREATMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIALLY-
ELEVATING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

by

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ABSTRACT

Small-talk, flattery, teasing, ridicule, threats or insults are part of the daily fabric of consumers' life. This dissertation is concerned with the way consumers behave toward others depending on how they are treated themselves. 'Pay-it-forward' is the notion that a person who is treated well by someone should be nice toward others (and conversely, a person who is treated badly may treat other people badly in turn). The present research proposes and shows that the pay-it-forward mechanism does not always occur; in fact, under certain circumstances consumers behave in a manner that contradicts it.

Although research has begun to explore social influences on consumer behavior, to date a coherent theoretical account of how social treatment (i.e., the way a person acts toward another individual during a social encounter) influences consumers is lacking. This thesis offers a theoretical framework for the impact of social treatments, and tests it in four scenario-based experiments and two field studies. Results provide support for the proposed conceptual model, indicating that two dimensions of social treatment (affiliation: friendliness vs. hostility; and relevance for self-assessment: high vs. low) interactively influence consumers' likelihood to engage in socially-elevating behaviors (i.e. helping another consumer, picking up the tab when dining out with others, returning money to a salesperson who accidentally gives them too much change back for a purchase). Process evidence for the underlying roles of positive/negative affect and perceived social efficacy is provided. The dissertation addresses the implications of these findings to existing theory, and identifies avenues for future research.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Big Picture

In the critically-acclaimed movie “Pay it Forward” (2000, featuring Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt, and Haley Joel Osment), 12-year-old Trevor receives an intriguing assignment for the social studies class which challenges him to try changing the world for the better. Unlike most other people, he succeeds. His revolutionary idea is the notion of paying a favor not back, but forward. Specifically, he advocates repaying good deeds not with payback, but with new good deeds done to three new people. Trevor’s efforts bring positive changes not only in the lives of his family and friends, but in those of an ever-widening circle of people completely unknown to him. The idea behind the film (based on Catherine Ryan Hyde’s book with the same title) did not remain in the realm of fiction. A real-life social movement inspired by “Pay It Forward” has emerged worldwide. For example, a Pay It Forward Foundation was created in the U.S. by the author of the book, and a non-profit organization, Timebank, was established in the U.K. through the work of social activist Jane Tewson. In October 2005, Syracuse University began a Pay It Forward Campaign on campus, which spread rapidly and became a model for many other schools (Kelly 2008).

Inspired by the pay-it-forward notion, the present research asks the question whether being nice to one person indeed motivates him/her to be nice toward other people. Consistent with the movie, the two nice acts do not have to

be the same, but rather loosely included in the category of good /desirable/ beneficial things. Contrasting with the movie, this research also considers the dark side of human behavior, by asking if treating a person badly will influence him/her to treat other people badly in turn. An affirmative answer to these questions could provide support to the long-standing belief of humans that “what goes around comes around”. This belief appears in various forms throughout mainstream religions. For example, the tenet of karma is essentially that if you do good things, good things will happen to you; if you do bad things, bad things will happen to you (Keyes 1983). The Christian concept preached by Apostle Paul, “man reaps what he sows” (from Galatians 6:7) can be considered equivalent to Karma.

At its broadest level, the present research is concerned with the way people behave toward others depending on the social treatment they receive themselves. *Social treatment*, the central concept of this research, represents the way a person (i.e., a source) acts toward another individual (i.e., a target) during a social encounter, and includes emotionally-charged verbal behaviors (e.g. complimenting, encouraging, insulting, threatening) or non-verbal behaviors (e.g. smiling, touching, frowning, pushing) that reveal approach /avoidance intentions of the source toward the target. This research examines a specific process of social influence involving, in addition to the source and the target, a third-party called beneficiary. The issue examined is whether the social treatment administered by the source to the target influences the subsequent behavior of the

target toward a beneficiary. Through this process, the source can unintentionally and unknowingly influence a stranger (i.e. the beneficiary).

The relevance of this topic for consumer behavior research will be explained in the following pages. First, a brief overview of the literature on social influence (i.e. the process through which actions, thoughts or feelings of an individual are changed by other individuals) will be offered, highlighting the role of social treatment in social influences. Second, the scope of this research will be specified, emphasizing the intention to investigate the impact of social treatment on socially-elevating consumer behavior (i.e. behavior that requires a personal sacrifice and enhances the welfare of another person), and providing details as to how this analysis will be performed. Third, the reasons why it is important to investigate this aspect of consumer behavior and human behavior in general will be discussed while presenting the contributions of the current research. The introduction will conclude with an outlook of the seven chapters that comprise this dissertation.

1.2. The Nature of the Research Problem

Humans are social creatures, and their social environment plays an important role (equal to or even more important than the physical environment) in satisfying their needs, framing their activities and guiding their lives. Although research in psychology was fast to acknowledge this basic truth and to study social influences (e.g. James 1890), the marketing literature has embraced the topic with a substantial delay. In a prominent theory of buyer behavior, Howard

and Sheth (1969) suggested that social influences might impact consumers' behaviors. Starting from this premise, marketing researchers have examined social influences in various contexts, such as word-of-mouth and satisfaction (e.g. Ariely and Levav 2000; Brown and Reingen 1987; Rosenbaum 2006; Ryu and Han 2009; Tuk et al. 2009), product development and diffusion (e.g. Berning and Jacoby 1974; Gatignon and Robertson 1985), sales force management (e.g. Busch and Wilson 1976; Reingen and Kernan 1993; Woodside and Davenport 1974; Friestad and Wright 1995), retail store management (e.g. Argo, Dahl and Manchanda 2005; Wakefield and Inman 2003), channel relationships (e.g. Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux and Simpson 1992; Hunt and Nevin 1974; Lusch 1976; Payan and Nevin 2006), and advertising (e.g. Dholakia and Sternthal 1977; Fisher and Dubé 2005; Martin and Gentry 1997; Richins 1991).

The literature on social influences indicates that consumers are influenced by the norms of the society they live in (e.g. Cialdini, Kallgren and Reno 1991; Fisher and Ackerman 1998; Miniard and Cohen 1983), by the beliefs and behaviors of people in their social class or reference group (such as family, friends, and colleagues; Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel 1989; Childers and Rao 1992), and by the lifestyle of people they admire (e.g. Cocanougher and Bruce 1971; Thomson 2006). Further, it shows that social influence is facilitated by a number of factors pertaining to the influenced person or the influencer.

Noteworthy attributes of the influenced person include level of expertise and understanding of the topic, persuasion knowledge, cognitive capacity, and demographic factors such as age and occupation (e.g. Campbell and Kirmani

2000; Friestad and Wright 1994; Park and Lessig 1977). Influencer-related characteristics include persuasiveness, attractiveness, expertise, credibility, power and even mere presence of the influencer (e.g. Argo, Dahl and Manchanda 2005; Doney and Cannon 1997; Karmarkar and Tormala 2010; Reingen and Kernan 1993). For example, the expertise of a salesperson is positively linked to successful influence attempts toward a targeted customer (e.g. Busch and Wilson 1976; Crosby, Evans and Cowles 1990). However, research in this area has paid scant attention to the possibility that consumers' behavior might be shaped by how people treat them (e.g. being treated with friendliness or hostility by a salesperson or by another consumer). Given that in their daily lives consumers are often flattered, teased, encouraged, ignored, ridiculed, insulted or threatened, and that such treatments might influence them (Janes and Olson 2000), the limited theoretical and empirical knowledge accumulated to date about the impact of social treatments is surprising. Even more disconcerting is the fact that a coherent account of social treatment is lacking not only in the marketing literature, but also from other disciplines studying individuals in their social environment (e.g. psychology, sociology).

The present research underscores the fact that examining the impact of social treatments in consumption contexts is central to understanding the role of social influences in marketing. This is particularly relevant considering that each time individuals (e.g. consumers, service employees) are involved in a social influence event they may automatically monitor the behavior of the influencer

looking for hostile or friendly cues (Leary and Downs 1995; Leary, Tambor, Terdal and Downs 1995).

The current research attempts to understand whether and how social treatment influences consumers, including their affect, cognitions, and socially-elevating behavior. The boundaries of this inquiry are presented below.

1.3. The Scope of the Research

The scarcity of prior marketing research regarding social treatments creates fertile but overwhelmingly numerous avenues for exploration. For instance, the researcher must decide which of the parties involved in the social treatment episode should be investigated first, who or what is being influenced by social treatment, and what characteristics of social treatment may be influential. As a result of these decisions, the scope of the present research is narrowed down along four lines, as follows.

First, social treatment involves at the very least two parties – a source (the person who administers the treatment) and a target (the person who receives the treatment). The focus of this research is on the target of social treatment, and the reactions experienced by this person after being exposed to the treatment. More specifically, the objective of the present research is to examine consumers' reactions to the social treatment they receive from other consumers or from service employees. Note that more than two parties can be implicated in social treatment influences. The present research studies a three-party context which entails the source, the target, and a final beneficiary, as explained below.

Second, social treatment could impact the consumers who receive it by influencing their behavior toward the source (i.e. the person who administered the treatment) or their behavior toward other people. Instead of focusing on the former possibility, the current research investigates the latter because it is more general and interesting from a theoretical point of view, as it goes beyond reciprocal behavior which has been studied quite extensively in psychology and economics (for examples of early influential works on reciprocity see Blau 1964; Clark 1984; Cook 1987; Gouldner 1960; Heath 1976; Homans 1961; Kleinke and Pohlen 1971; Sahlins 1965).

Third, of the many possible characteristics of social treatment, this research investigates two dimensions: affiliation (ranging from friendliness to hostility) and relevance for self-assessments (ranging from high to low relevance). These dimensions are selected based on research indicating that 1) during interactions, individuals are looking for friendly or hostile cues in the social behavior of the other persons, thus being sensitive to affiliation-related signals (Kiesler 1983, Wentura et al. 2000); and 2) individuals spontaneously attempt to understand the events that happen to them, to assess themselves and their environment in order to effectively manage situations (e.g. White 1959; Kelley 1971).

Fourth, this research investigates if and to what extent receiving a particular social treatment influences consumers' feelings (affect), cognitions and behaviors. Affect and cognitions are studied as process mechanisms, and the behavioral focus is on consumers' socially-elevating behaviors (e.g. helping

behavior). Exploring this type of behaviors is deemed necessary for a number of reasons. First, they represent an essential component of consumer welfare that triggered repeated calls for research in recent years from scholars, editors and organizations who acknowledged the limited theoretical and empirical knowledge obtained to date on this topic (e.g. Irwin 1999; Mick 2008). Second, while prior research in marketing has focused on certain types of socially-elevating behaviors such as charitable donations (e.g. Aaker and Akutsu 2009; Fennis, Janssen and Vohs 2008; Winterich, Mittal and Ross 2009), other behavioral forms remain under-investigated. To address this, the current research explores consumer behaviors such as picking up the tab when dining out with other consumers, and returning money to vendors when being overpaid for a purchase. Finally, socially-elevating behaviors are relevant not only to the consumer behavior literature but also to other social sciences, as evidenced by the massive research attention they have received in social psychology (e.g. Boezeman and Ellemers 2007; Clary and Orenstein 1991; Eagly and Crowley 1986). However, the theory offered to date in social sciences does not incorporate the influence of the factors proposed in the current theoretical framework, especially with respect to the impact of social treatments. If the present conceptualization may be extended to individuals in general rather than consumers in particular¹, this research can offer valuable contributions to the larger sphere of human science.

The conceptual framework developed to account for the impact of social treatment on consumers' socially-elevating behavior consists of a series of

¹ To test whether this extension is possible, the first study of the dissertation investigates helping behavior that is not specific to consumption, and suggests that the theoretical framework is indeed applicable to individuals in general.

assumptions and hypotheses that are tested in three studies, including laboratory and field experiments.

1.4. Contributions of the Research

The present research contributes to the consumer behavior literature, and more generally to marketing and social sciences, in a number of ways.

First, it extends the literature regarding social influences (e.g. Argo, Dahl and Manchanda 2005; Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Friestad and Wright 1995; Park and Lessig 1977; Reingen and Kernan 1993), which has shown that the process of social influence is shaped by features of the environment (e.g. social norms in that environment, number of people present, or proximity to those people), by characteristics of the influencer (e.g. attractiveness, expertise, credibility, and power), or by attributes of the influenced person (e.g. cognitive capacity, topic and persuasion knowledge, demographic factors such as age and occupation). However, this literature has paid only cursory attention to characteristics of the actual interaction between the influencer and the influenced person. One research stream that did explore such characteristics showed that relationship type (e.g. whether the parties involved are family, friends, colleagues or strangers) plays a significant role in social influence (e.g. Argo and Main 2008; Childers and Rao 1992; Duncan, Haller and Portes 1968; Lewis and Gallois 1984). The present research proposes and demonstrates that another characteristic, namely social treatment (i.e. how the influencer treats the influenced person), is important and can have significant behavioral consequences.

Second, the current work integrates separate lines of research which so far have been confined to examining behaviors such as flattery (e.g. Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Main et al. 2007), small-talk (Dolinski et al. 2001; Efran and Broughton 1966), teasing (Keltner et al. 2001; Scambler et al. 2001) or threat (e.g. Baumeister et al. 1996; Heatherton and Vohs 2000) in isolation from each other. I emphasize that various streams of literature can be unified under the umbrella of social treatment research, and that the context-specific explanations offered by prior scholars can be refined and reformulated in terms of underlying dimensions of social treatment.

Third, this research proposes and demonstrates that the impact of social treatment goes beyond reactions to the person who administered it, influencing behavior in subsequent interactions. Stepping outside the confines of dyadic interactions and reciprocity, I explore trickle-down effects of social treatment to third parties, based on the notion of pay-it-forward. I show that consumers do pay-it-forward, but only under certain circumstances.

Fourth, this research not only examines the effects of social treatment, but also explores the underlying processes that drive its influence. In undertaking this task, the present research brings noteworthy contributions to the literatures on affect and on self-efficacy, refining existing theory in these areas. For example, while prior literature (e.g. Barbee, Rowatt and Cunningham 1998; Berkowitz 1972; Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980; Schaller and Cialdini 1990) indicates that individuals who experience positive affect are more likely to do good deeds (e.g. to help other people) compared to individuals who experience

negative affect, this research proposes and shows that the opposite effect can occur when positive/negative affect is generated by social treatments. As another example, the way in which affect interplays with self-efficacy in society is a novel theoretical element brought about by this research. The combination of affect and efficacy can be important not only in influencing socially-elevating behavior (as studied in the present research) but also for other phenomena such as consumption of food in public, purchases of luxury products or environmentally-friendly behavior.

Finally, by studying socially-elevating behavior and examining ways to enhance it, this research attempts to contribute to consumers' welfare and the welfare of society at large. By exploring consumers' helpfulness, honesty and generosity, the present work bridges research streams that have previously examined these topics in separate enquiries (e.g. Price, Feick and Guskey 1995; Argo, White and Dahl 2006; Pracejus and Olsen 2004). Through this endeavor, the current research points out the common thread of socially-elevating behaviors and also demonstrates the generalizability of the proposed conceptual framework to a wide range of phenomena.

1.5. Organization of this Document

The remainder of this document is divided into six chapters. Chapter Two reviews and integrates the literature on social treatment, embedded in the broader context of social influences, from both marketing and social psychology. Chapter Three describes the conceptual development of a framework that focuses on the

impact of social treatment on consumers. The theoretical framework includes assumptions and formal hypotheses pertaining to the influence of two characteristics of social treatment on consumers' feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Chapters Four, Five and Six present the experimental studies used to test the conceptual framework. For each experiment, the research design, procedure and results are discussed. Finally, Chapter Seven summarizes research findings, highlights implications, identifies limitations, and proposes avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motto: “Social behavior is one of the most complex of all behavioral phenomena. It has fascinated scientists and the layperson for centuries. Social behavior has a clear relevance for our modern society too. After all, Homo sapiens is a social mammal, and we are all experts at interpreting, utilizing, and manipulating social signals.”

Lambert and Gerlai, 2003

In this chapter I review the literature on social influences to provide theoretical support for my proposed framework regarding the impact of social treatment on socially-elevating consumer behavior.

2.1. Social Influences

A growing body of research has indicated that consumer behaviors, such as product purchases or donations to charity, are not driven solely by stimulus characteristics (e.g. product attributes or aspects of the donation itself), but also by factors related to consumers’ environment (e.g. Belk 1975; Bitner 1992; Hibbert et al. 2005; Park et al. 1989; Rosenbaum 2006; Schlosser 1998; Turley and Milliman 2000; Yang et al. 2002; Wakefield and Inman 2003; Zhuang et al. 2006). In Belk’s (1975) seminal taxonomy of situational/environmental characteristics, the influence of the social environment was mentioned, and this

specific situational factor was labeled “social surroundings”. Social surroundings consist of the people present in a consumption context and their specific characteristics, including the roles these people play. The study of social surroundings in consumer behavior has been largely based on the social influence literature from psychology. Relevant research in this area will be reviewed below, focusing on the theories and findings of instrumental value for the theoretical framework under development.

2.1.1. Normative and Informational Social Influence: In the area of social influence, early research was focused on conformity, investigating the simple act of going along or agreeing with a visible majority. This direction of research has followed theoretically from the conformity studies of Solomon Asch and his associates, who demonstrated that social pressure can make a person say something that is obviously incorrect. The classic experiments on judgments of line lengths (Asch 1951, 1955, 1956) showed high levels of social conformity despite the fact that an objectively correct response to the task existed. Participants in these experiments - real students and ‘under-cover’ confederates - were all seated in a classroom and exposed to a picture of a line, followed by another picture of three lines varying in length. Participants were asked questions about the lines (e.g. which line was longer than the other). The group was told to announce their answers publicly and the confederates always provided their answers prior to the study participant. The confederates answered a few questions correctly but eventually began providing wrong responses. Results indicated that

in the control group, with no pressure to conform to an erroneous view, only one subject provided an incorrect answer. However, when surrounded by individuals all voicing an incorrect answer, participants responded incorrectly to a high proportion of the questions. Seventy-five percent of the participants gave an incorrect answer to at least one question. Using a similar experimental setting, Allen and Levine (1968) showed that in judging visual items conformity can be significantly reduced either by a dissenter giving the correct response or by a dissenter giving an answer much more incorrect than the response of the group. However, in the case of opinions (as opposed to judgements), the presence of an extremely erroneous dissenter does not reduce conformity. The basic paradigm proposed by Asch has guided numerous subsequent studies of conformity (e.g. Allen and Levine 1971; Bernheim 1994; Cialdini and Trost 1998; Kaplan and Miller 1987; McAuliffe et al. 2003; Schlenker and Weigold 1990). However, Asch's paradigm was qualified by Deutsch and Gerard (1955), who attributed shifts in judgments or choice either to norm adherence (normative influence) or to the acceptance of persuasive arguments (informational influence).

A similar theoretical direction has been followed in models used for studying consumer decision-making and behavior. Initially, Fishbein (1967) proposed that behavior is driven not only by attitudes, but also by social or subjective norms. Fishbein's multi-attribute model of behavioral intentions points out that an individual's motivation to behave in a certain manner is influenced by others. Miniard and Cohen (1983) refined this model based on the two separate components identified in the social influence literature: normative and

informational influence. In the case of normative influence, the information received by the consumer is inextricably bound to the person(s) who provided it, whereas in the other case information is valued for its own sake and tends to become disassociated from its source. Lascu and Zinkhan's (1999) literature review suggests that the normative-informational distinction can be identified in various other models and taxonomies of consumer behavior. For instance, the framework proposed by Park and Lessig (1977) identifies three types of social influence: utilitarian (similar to the normative influence), informational (corresponding to informational influence) and value-expressive (reflecting an individual's need for social association). The classification proposed by Burnkrant and Cousineau's (1975) also includes three types of processes: internalization, identification and compliance. The process of internalization, through which an individual accepts influence because it is conducive to maximization of his/her values and attainment of personal goals, can be thought of as informational influence. Identification, where the consumer adopts opinions or behaviors of others in order to satisfy self-defining relationships, and compliance, where the consumer conforms to the expectations of important/powerful others, are forms of normative influence.

Having tracked the origins of the normative-informational dichotomy, details regarding each type of social influence are offered next.

Normative Influence: A norm can be defined as a “stable, shared conception of the behavior appropriate or inappropriate to a given social context

that dictates expectancies of others' behavior, and provides 'rules' for one's own behavior" (McKirnan 1980). Allen (1965) argued that it is important to identify the circumstances under which an individual adheres to norms, drawing the distinction between public compliance and private acceptance. Public adherence is accompanied by private acceptance of an idea or behavior if the individual desires to gain acceptance as a member of the social group which endorses the idea/behavior. Once the individual no longer desires to be a member of the group, private acceptance is less likely to occur (Allen 1965; Festinger 1954). Other researchers have shown that both public and private normative influences occur only if the norm is salient to the individual (Kallgren, Reno and Cialdini 2000; Cialdini and Goldstein 2004). Different environments (e.g., library, restaurant) raise the relevance of environment-specific social norms (e.g., being quiet, using table manners), and trigger different intentions to comply with norms (Joly, Stapel and Lindenberg 2008). Cialdini and colleagues (e.g. Cialdini, Kallgren and Reno 1991) revealed the meaningful distinction between injunctive norms (about what is typically approved / disapproved) and descriptive norms (about what is typically done). The fact that consumers are influenced by norms has been illustrated in a variety of contexts, including contributions of money or time to a worthy cause (Aaker and Akutsu 2009; Dawson 1988; Fennis, Janssen and Vohs 2008; Fisher and Ackerman 1998; Fisher, Vandenbosch and Antia 2008; Fraser, Hite and Sauer 1988; Liu and Aaker 2008; Garcia et al. 2009; Reingen 1978; Sargeant, Ford and West 2006; Yavas, Riecken and Babakus 1993; Winterich, Mittal and Ross 2009), blood and body-part donations (Allen and Butler 1993;

Bagozzi 1982; Burnett 1981; Pessemier, Beamon, and Hanssen 1977; La Tour and Manrai 1989), environmentally-friendly behaviors such as recycling, energy conservation, litter reduction and the purchase of “green” products (Berger and Kanetkar 1995; Grankvist, Dahlstrand and Biels 2004; Kahneman 1986; Osterhus 1997; Polonsky 1995), and moderation in alcohol consumption (Bernthal, Rose and Kaufman 2006; Piacentini and Banister 2006; Treise, Wolburg and Otnes 1999).

Individuals accept normative influences and behave in accordance to them mainly because they expect rewards (as a result of compliance with norms), or because they fear social sanction (as a result of deviance from norms). The system of rewards/punishments can take on a variety of forms. For example, the expectation of getting accepted in a group (reward) or rejected by the group (punishment) can regulate the behavior of individuals toward compliance with group standards (Festinger 1954; Ross, Bierbrauer and Hoffman 1976; Wooten and Reed 2004). Also, individuals are motivated to conform in order to gain (or not lose) privileges and to enhance (or not diminish) their status within a group (Bourne 1957; Kelley and Shapiro 1954; Schlosser 2009). Furthermore, individuals may comply with social norms in order to experience positive emotions (e.g. pride; Scheff 1988) or to avoid negative emotions (e.g. shame / embarrassment; Goffman 1967).

A different research view of normative influences focuses on basic human needs as motivational drivers for adopting/rejecting the opinions, preferences and behaviors of others. Specifically, it was proposed that individuals may either

conform due to a need to belong / assimilate / fit in (see Baumeister and Leary 1995 for a review), or behave differently from others in order to satisfy a need to be unique and distinctive (Snyder and Fromkin 1980). Because the need to belong and the need to be unique have different effects in terms of social influence, the salience of each need and people's efforts to establish priorities in a given situation decide the outcome of social influence (Griskevicius et al. 2006). Developing the theory of optimal distinctiveness, Brewer (1991) argued that individuals can simultaneously satisfy their needs for assimilation and differentiation from others by being part of a group that is highly homogeneous and also clearly distinct from other groups. In this case, the need for similarity and validation is met within the group, while the need for distinctiveness is satisfied through inter-group comparisons. The optimal distinctiveness framework has been subsequently tested and extended by various researchers (Hornsey and Jetten 2004; Kashdan and Roberts 2004; Pickett and Brewer 2001; Pickett, Bonner and Coleman 2002; Pickett, Silver, and Brewer 2002; Simon et al. 1997).

Informational Influence: Informational influence arises when individuals accept information received from others as data and facts about reality (Lascu and Zinkhan 1999). The behavioral impact of such information does not depend on the subsequent approval or disapproval of the person who provided information. Rather, the basis of influence is that the recipient places value on the information itself (Miniard and Cohen 1983).

Informational influence can occur for two reasons. First, individuals may internalize information received from others because it is instrumental in the achievement of their personal goals (e.g. Kelman 1961). For example, information from social sources is accepted if it is useful in finding a solution for some problem confronting the individual, or if it adds to that individual's preexisting knowledge about a salient aspect of his/her environment (e.g. Wooten and Reed 1998). This type of informational influence has been examined predominantly in the word-of-mouth literature, where it was shown not only that consumers are influenced by communication with other consumers (e.g. Bone 1995; Ford and Ellis 1980; Gershoff, Mukherjee and Mukhopadhyay 2007; Rosen and Olshavsky 1987; Ryu and Han 2009; Tuk et al. 2009; Schlosser 2005; Wooten and Reed 1998), but also that this influence is stronger compared to the impact of other sources of information (e.g. Herr, Kardes and Kim 1991). Research indicates that consumers are *actively* seeking advice from family and friends when choosing products or brands and selecting service providers (Arndt 1967; Brown and Reingen 1987; Brown et al. 2005; Godes et al. 2005; Price and Feick 1984; Richins 1983). For instance, Walker (1995) showed that more than forty percent of U.S. consumers ask for advice before choosing a doctor, a lawyer, or an auto mechanic, but men and women differ in how often they seek advice and from whom.

Second, individuals may use information received from social sources as a comparison point against which they can evaluate themselves (i.e. such information fulfills a social comparison function; Kelley 1955). Information

garnered from social comparisons allows a better understanding of personal capacities and limitations, and has behavioral consequences in that it drives individuals to act toward achieving a desired state. For example, research has found that female consumers of all ages compare themselves with other women around them or with women they see in movies and advertisements in terms of body image (French and Raven 1969; Reingen et al. 1984; Smeesters, Mussweiler and Mandel 2010). Such self-comparisons can affect self-esteem and may motivate women to start dieting or fitness programs.

2.1.4. Interactive and Non-interactive Social Influence: Consumers can be socially influenced during interpersonal interactions or during non-interactive episodes. For example, research showed that a consumer can be influenced during interpersonal interactions by the opinions of a friend or family member regarding products and services, by the greeting of a salesperson, or by the preferences of a group (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Childers and Rao 1992; Fisher and Ackerman 1998; Palan and Wilkes 1997; Park and Lessig 1977). Moreover, it was found that social influence can occur during non-interactive episodes. For instance, Argo, Dahl and Manchanda (2005) and McFerran et al. (2010) demonstrated that the mere presence of another shopper in the immediate retail environment (i.e. the other shopper was present but not interacting with the consumer) influences shopping behavior.

Further, even an imagined social presence can be influential: imagining that another person might be (or become) present in the environment affects

consumers' purchases for embarrassing products such as condoms (Dahl, Manchanda and Argo 2001) or other types of behavior such as volunteering (Garcia et al. 2002).

2.1.5. Social Groups and Individual Consumers: The literature pertaining to the way consumers are socially influenced can be divided into research that examines social influence at the group level or at the individual level.

First, consumer behavior literature that has focused on social groups typically studied the family unit (e.g. Cox 1975; Cotte and Wood 2004; Epp and Price 2008; Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Fisher and Yany 2006; Palan and Wilkes 1997; Tinson and Nancarrow 2007). This stream of research has produced mixed findings regarding the balance of power and influence within the family dyad: some investigators show that husbands and wives are equally influential (Blood and Wolfe 1960), while others point out imbalances in the system of familial influence (Davis 1971, 1976). However, the apparent conflict of results can be explained by differences in the type of behaviors and decisions studied (e.g. purchases of non-durable goods such as orange juice, coffee and pet food, versus durable goods such as cars and real estate), as demonstrated in a thorough review of influences based on product category by Putnam and Davidson (1987). The influence of other family members, such as children, has gained growing attention in the literature. Research has found that small children have a negligible influence within the family when purchases are not for their personal use (Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980), but adolescents are more influential, particularly

when they imitate the influence tactics of their parents (Palan and Wilkes 1997; Lee and Beatty 2002; Tinson and Nancarrow 2007).

A second stream of consumer research has examined the impact of social influence on an individual's behavior and decision making (e.g. Ariely and Levav 2000; Ashforth and Mael 1989; Bearden and Etzel 1982; Briley and Wyer 2002; Childers and Rao 1992; Moschis 1976; Park and Lessig 1977; Quester and Steyer 2010). A substantial part of this literature is still anchored in the group paradigm, by examining the influence of a group on the individual, or by considering the membership of the individual in a reference group. This approach is due to the fact that social interactions, judgments and evaluations are not absolute, but rather they become meaningful relative to specific benchmarks. Thus, research in this area relies on the concept of reference group, defined as the point of reference used by individuals in evaluating given situations (Hyman 1942). Building on the early work of Sherif (1953), three types of reference groups have been identified: membership group (a group to which the individual already belongs), aspiration group (a group in which the individual is not currently a member but aspires to be), and dissociative group (a group with which the individual does not want to be associated). The literature indicates that the usage of a brand by individuals in membership or aspiration groups provides brand meaning to the consumer via the mental associations regarding that group (Escalas and Bettman 2005; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The opinions of membership groups about brands/products influence consumers' attitudes toward those brands/products, typically in a direction that converges with the group's opinion (e.g. Duhachek, Zhang and

Krishnan 2007; Priester and Petty 2001). Furthermore, consumers tend to purchase and consume the same brands/products used by individuals in their membership group, especially when such products are for public consumption (e.g. Bearden and Etzel 1982; Childers and Rao 1992; Escalas and Bettman 2005). Research on dissociative groups suggests that consumers negatively evaluate and avoid buying brands/products used by individuals from which they want to distance themselves (e.g. Berger and Heath 2007; White and Dahl 2007; Wooten 2006).

2.1.6. Factors that Contribute to Social Influence: With respect to factors that contribute to social influence, three major characteristics have been identified: the number of people in a given situation (i.e. size of the social presence), the immediacy (i.e. closeness of the source of influence to the target, in space and time) and the strength of the social source (i.e. the importance or salience of the source). These factors have been formally proposed in Latané's (1981) social impact theory and experimentally investigated in various contexts, such as retail purchases (Argo, Dahl and Manchanda 2005), responses to cause-related marketing (Grau and Folse 2008), chatting about products online (Ryu and Han 2009), behavioral mimicry (Milgram, Bickman and Berkowitz 1969), discussions of memorable events (Latané et al. 1995), and charitable donations (Williams and Williams 1989; Garcia et al 2009).

Research has also shown that social influence is shaped by characteristics of the influenced person or characteristics of the influencer (which could arguably

be interpreted as special cases of source strength). Specifically, the success of an influence attempt depends on the influenced person's level of expertise and understanding of the topic, persuasion knowledge, cognitive capacity, attention to social comparison information, age and occupation (e.g. Bearden and Rose 1990; Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Friestad and Wright 1995; Goldberg 2009; Park and Lessig 1977).

The outcomes of the influence process can be positively impacted by the attractiveness (Carli et al. 1991; Lynn and Simons 2000; Reingen and Kernan 1993), persuasion and credibility (Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Friestad and Wright 1995; Seiter 2004; Sternthal, Dholakia and Leavitt 1978), expertise (Doney and Cannon 1997; Hart, Stasson and Karau 1999; Karmarkar and Tormala 2010; Wolf and Latané 1983), and power of the influencer (Corfman and Lehmann 1993; Koslowsky and Schwarzwald 2001; Georgesen and Harris 2000).

Research has paid only cursory attention to the possibility that the way an influencer treats consumers at an interpersonal level may affect the outcomes of the influence episode. The present research proposes and experimentally demonstrates that social treatment is an essential component of social influence. Therefore, the literature that speaks to the notion of social treatment is reviewed next.

2.2. Social Treatment

Social treatment represents the way a person acts toward another individual during a social encounter, and includes behavioral manifestations such as complimenting, encouraging, insulting or grumbling at someone. To date, research conducive to understanding the way people perceive, interpret and react to social treatments is fragmented and underdeveloped. Although little is known about social treatment in general, various streams of research have examined particular instances of social treatment, including small-talk, flattery, teasing, ridicule and threat.

2.2.1. Small-Talk: Efran and Broughton (1966) defined small-talk as the act of engaging in a friendly conversation with another person, and showed that it influences interpersonal liking and visual behavior. This was illustrated in an experiment where participants were exposed to two confederates, one of which started a small-talk ("Hi! Are you here for the experiment, too?" "I wonder what this is going to be about?" "I hope it won't be too bad," "What are you majoring in?"). Participants reported that they felt more comfortable and liked more the person who used small-talk compared to the neutral confederate. Furthermore, during a subsequent group task when participants were given the opportunity to interact with the two confederates, they maintained more eye contact with the individual who previously engaged them in small-talk compared to the confederate who did not. In a separate investigation of small-talk, Dolinski et al. (2001) showed that it leads people to treat strangers as if they were friends or

acquaintances, and to comply with their requests. In this particular experiment, when a confederate engaged university students in a short dialogue² prior to making the request for a charitable donation, higher levels of compliance were obtained relative to the no-talk condition. The authors contended that scripts for dealing with strangers or with friends are activated by the particular mode of communication in which people are engaged. Specifically, individuals tend to associate monologues with strangers and dialogues with closer relationships. Small-talk may activate scripts for close relationships, prompting participants to be more helpful.

Based on these studies it can be concluded that small-talk is a friendly social treatment which motivates individuals to feel comfortable with their social environment and to behave in a helpful manner.

2.2.2. Flattery / Compliments: Although the terms “flattery” and “complimenting” have been used interchangeably in research, there are some definitional issues surrounding these notions. Early definitions of flattery conceptualized it as a tactical form of impression management with the goal of increased liking. For example, Jones and Wortman (1973) defined it as a strategic behavior “illicitly designed to influence a particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one’s personal qualities”. However, the authors also acknowledged that people may use flattery in an automatic, rather than controlled, manner (i.e. as an over-learned response to contextual cues in the social

² The small-talk manipulation included the following comments: “Hi! Is this session going to be hard for you? How many exams are you taking?” [...] “How are you feeling before the session?”

environment). When flattery is not the result of deliberate tactical planning it is typically referred to as complimenting (Main, Dahl and Darke 2007).

Research on workplace relationships has shown that flattery has positive effects on people's judgment and behavior (e.g. Fogg and Nass 1997; Gordon 1996; Higgins and Judge 2004; Watt 1993). For example, using a survey of 873 university alumni, Judge and Bretz (1994) found that ingratiating the higher-ranking person at the workplace is a significant and positive predictor of both extrinsic career success (i.e. salary and number of promotions) and intrinsic career success (i.e. job satisfaction and life satisfaction). In Gould and Penley's (1984) study of career strategies, employees with greater salary progression reported more extensive use of flattery toward their superiors compared to employees with lower salaries. Finally, studying recruiters' attempts to evaluate the fit of applicants during employment interviews, Higgins and Judge (2004) found that flattery had a positive effect on perceived fit and recruiter hiring recommendations (and indirectly, on receipt of a job offer).

A meta-analysis of studies on flattery (Gordon 1996) concluded that there is a small positive relationship between social treatment and performance evaluations, and a significantly stronger positive relationship between flattery and judgments of interpersonal attraction (i.e., liking). The meta-analysis also indicated circumstances under which flattery can have negative effects. Specifically, negative perceptions of flattery or the flatterer can arise (Jones and Workman 1973; Vonk 1998, 1999) depending on the particular ingratiation tactic used, the perceived transparency of the tactic, the direction of the influence

attempt (upward, downward, or lateral), the dependency of the flatterer on the target for rewards, and the role of the perceivers (i.e. targets of the influence attempt or simply observers).

Research in marketing has focused mostly on the negative effects of flattery on consumers' judgments and behaviors. For example, Campbell and Kirmani (2000) have shown that flattering remarks from a salesperson are received with suspicion by consumers, who tend to judge the salesperson as being insincere and manipulative (provided that consumers have access and sufficient cognitive resources to recognize the ulterior motives of the salesperson).

Furthermore, Main, Dahl and Darke (2007) found that consumers' reactions to a salesperson's flattery were actually more negative than warranted by the situation. In one of the experimental conditions a plausible ulterior motive existed for the salesperson's flattery (e.g., trying to make a sale), whereas in the other condition the ulterior motive was not plausible (i.e. the flattery occurred after the sale was completed). The results showed that consumers continued to distrust a compliment offered by a salesperson even when the ulterior motive was not plausible. The authors argued that this effect occurred through automatic processing (i.e. without effortful thinking).

In sum, while the marketing literature reveals a negative impact of flattery on consumers, the organizational behavior research suggests the possibility that flattery may have positive outcomes. Given that these streams of research have focused on different dependent variables, to date it is not clear why in some cases the impact is negative and in other cases the impact is positive.

2.2.3. Praise: Praising, which represents the act of commending someone or expressing favorable evaluations of a person, has been primarily studied in the context of child development due to its healing potential for psychological and social phobias. For example, Moroz and Jones (2002) investigated the effects of structured peer praise on three socially withdrawn children. Each child's teacher implemented the Positive Peer Reporting technique, which consisted of rewarding classmates for publicly praising the social behavior of the participant during brief, daily sessions. Results indicated that structured peer praise had positive effects, increasing the level of social involvement of the formerly withdrawn children. Using the same peer praise technique, Ervin, Miller and Friman (1996) found that it decreased negative social interactions and/or increased positive social interactions during classroom activities. The findings support the use of peers as sources of positive reinforcement for the prosocial behavior of at-risk children.

Positive effects of praising have also been found in management research. Loewy and Bailey (2007) showed that praises delivered by managers contributed to increased employee performance (measured through customer service behaviors in a large retail setting). However, Messmer (2006) warns that well-intentioned efforts to offer team members praise for a job well done often backfire when managers fail to acknowledge others who also made integral contributions.

Overall, research on praising suggests that this type of social treatment tends to have positive effects on individuals, increasing their levels of social involvement and their performance in social interactions.

2.2.4. Tease and Ridicule: Laypeople's interpretations of teasing have been investigated by Kowalski (2000), who showed that some individuals perceive it to be fun and a matter of joking around, while other people view it as a cruel way of hurting someone's feelings. In Kowalski's study, teasers perceived the event as more humorous and less damaging than did victims. However, teasers also reported feeling more guilt than did victims. Georgesen et al. (1999) demonstrated that personality characteristics (e.g. neuroticism, agreeableness) influence both interpretations of teasing events and reactions to teasing. Three types of reactions to teasing have been documented by Scambler, Harris and Milich (2001), who indicated that individuals rate the use of humor as the most effective way to respond to teasing, followed by ignoring and lastly hostility.

With the exception of theorists who conceptualize teasing as a kind of bullying (e.g., Boulton and Hawker 1997), most researchers consider teasing as a humorous or playful form of behavior. However, scholars agree that teasing also involves some form of aggression, ranging from mild hostility up to serious acts of physical violence (e.g. Georgesen et al. 1999; Keltner et al. 2001; Scambler, Harris and Milich 2001). Attempting to offer an encompassing definition that reconciles the various intuitions and theoretical perspectives on teasing, Keltner et al. (2001) emphasized in their review that teasing is an indirect provocation characterized by the use of off-record markers. While on-record communication or action is direct and must be taken literally (Grice 1975), off-record markers break this rule through exaggeration or understatement, implying that the act should not be interpreted literally (Brown and Levinson 1978), and that the

provocation is to be taken in jest. The number of off-record markers directly influences the outcomes of teasing. In a study of romantic partners, holding constant the hostility of the provocation, teases that involved few off-record markers evoked more negative emotion (anger, contempt) and less positive emotion (amusement, desire, love) than those that involved more off-record markers (Keltner et al. 1998).

Researchers have studied the phenomenon of teasing in the contexts of games between parents and their young children (e.g. Clancy 1986), bullying on the playground (e.g. Voss 1997), flirting among adolescents and romantic nicknaming (e.g. Bell et al. 1987), adult banter (Siegel 1995) and ritualized insults (Betcher 1981). Throughout these contexts, two important outcomes of teasing emerged, namely conflict resolution and corrective action. Details regarding each of these outcomes are provided below.

Analyzing spontaneous conversations, Straehle (1993) found that teasing among friends is most likely to occur when discussing conflicting goals and beliefs. Conflict resolution as an outcome of teasing was also suggested in Eder's (1991) study, which indicated that teasing is often used among high school girls during negotiations of divergent interests, particularly over affection for boys or intimacies with group members. An observational study of department store workers found that individuals employ teasing when resolving conflict-laden issues, such as the allocation of limited office space (Bradney 1957).

Another sought-after outcome of teasing is corrective action following violations of social norms. For example, children may be teased by their peers

when they are not following the rules of playground games (Voss 1997) or they trespass gender norms (Thorne 1993; Thorne and Luria 1986). Parents tease children after engaging in undesirable behaviors such as possessiveness, selfishness, and aggression (Dunn and Brown 1994; Miller 1986). Teasing among adults can target deviations from culture-specific norms regarding sexual behavior (Flynn 1976), or violations of communication norms such as the use of exaggerate claims, wordy or overly formal expressions (Drew 1987; Straehle 1993). In organizational contexts, teasing is often aimed at breaches of norms concerning work loads and professional conduct (Coser 1960; Yedes 1996). Research suggests that the corrective mechanism rests on embarrassment, as teasing is one of the most frequent and effective ways by which people embarrass others (Sharkey 1997). In Sharkey's (1992) study, ninety-two percent of 1,040 embarrassors declared that the use of intentional embarrassment allowed them to achieve their goals.

Embarrassment can also be produced by ridicule - a type of disparagement humor directed at an individual concerning some aspect of his or her behavior or appearance. According to Freud (1960), ridicule serves an important purpose in society because it provides an escape route for hostility: individuals are allowed to display aggressive feelings in a socially acceptable manner. Similar to teasing, ridicule can be used as a behavior modifier due to the punishing power of derisive laughter. For example, Bryant, Brown, Parks and Zillmann (1983) had children observe videotaped messages discouraging certain actions. The videotapes featured puppet models that were corrected with ridicule, commands, or

suggestions when they engaged in undesirable behaviors. Watching a model being ridiculed was more effective at inhibiting the undesirable behavior than was either of the other means of correction. Importantly, this effect was obtained for 6-year-olds, but not 4-year-olds. The authors argued that “4-year-olds . . . may lack the experience to recognize derision for what it is” (Bryant et al. 1983, p. 252).

Although ridicule has been predominantly studied in child development and social psychology research, it has significant relevance for consumer behavior. As Janes and Olson (2000) point out, ridicule is ubiquitous in movies, advertisements, and television shows, and it allows consumers to learn that it is “uncool” to wear certain clothes or display certain behaviors. Also, Wooten (2006) demonstrates that teenagers use ridicule to admonish peers who violate consumption norms, and as a result of ridicule the targeted individuals can alter their perceptions, acquisition, use, and disposition of products in order to avoid unwanted attention.

In sum, research on teasing and ridicule suggest that these social treatments tend to be perceived negatively by those who receive them and positively by individuals who administer the treatment. Such social treatments have a corrective impact on behavior, because they inform the individual about what is appropriate / desirable in a given situation.

2.2.5. Grumble: Grumble, the behavioral manifestation of grumpiness, is an interpersonally aversive, annoying, and negatively sanctioned behavior which conveys disapproval and dissatisfaction (McDiarmid 2004). Some researchers consider grumpiness a close synonym to grouchiness (e.g. Alvarado and Jameson

2002), which is viewed as an act of irritability (Giancola 2002). In turn, irritability is defined as the ‘tendency to react impulsively, controversially, or rudely at the slightest provocation or disagreement’ (Caprara et al. 1985, p. 667). An example of grumbling is complaining even when the individual is not really dissatisfied with a feature or a situation (McDiarmid 2004).

Research on adolescent behavior indicates that being grumpy towards others is a symptom of depression (Mezzich and Mezzich 1979). In other words, acts of grumpiness can be caused by a person’s state of depression. Other research finds that grumpiness can arise from the temperament of the person who grumbles. Specifically, Yuill (1997) showed that grumbles reveal a character trait that is perceived by observers as moderately controllable and usually stable. This suggests that if an individual grumbles at others, perceivers will tend to attribute the social treatment to the person’s character. While research has pointed out antecedents of grumble (i.e. the mental state and the character of the person who administers the social treatment), little is known about the consequences of this behavior. To date, research pertaining to individuals’ reactions to grumble is not available.

2.2.6. Insult: Insulting someone is defined as symbolically attacking that person (Orbach 1978) in a way that falls outside legitimate modes of social control (Bond, Wan, Leong, and Giacalone 1985). Research has examined insults primarily from the point of view of reactions to this type of social treatment, showing that insults trigger aggressive responses (e.g. Henry, Rousseau and

Schlottmann 1974; Gaines, Kirwin and Gentry 1977; Orbach 1978). For instance, in Henry, Rousseau, and Schlottmann's study (1974), participants who were insulted gave significantly higher shocks to a confederate compared to participants in the control condition. The extent to which receiving insults generates aggressive behavior has been shown to depend on three major factors, as follows.

First, the retaliation threat factor (i.e. insulted individuals' expectation that if they become aggressive in response to insults the other person will retaliate with aggression) was experimentally studied by Orbach (1978). In his experiment, participants interacted with a partner who insulted³ them during a guessing game, and were then given the opportunity to counterattack by withholding a monetary reward from the insulter. Retaliation threat was manipulated by informing half of the participants that after the guessing game they would face their partner (attacker) in a task where the partner would use punishment for every mistake they make. The other half of the participants did not receive any information pertaining to the possibility of retaliation. The results showed that insulted participants who expected retaliatory action behaved less aggressively toward their insulter compared to participants who did not expect retaliation⁴.

Second, the status of the insulter (i.e. the extent to which the insulter is a powerful or prestigious individual) was shown to influence the relationship between insult and likelihood of aggression (e.g. Brown, Schelinker and Tedeski

³ The insulting verbal attacks included messages such as "What is the matter with you? Can't you do anything right?", "Oh well, you were not too much help to us; anybody could have been better than you".

⁴ This effect is consistent with Bandura's argument (1973) that people pay attention to cues that signify the probable retaliation for aggressive behavior.

1972; Faley and Tedeski 1971; Orbach 1978). The typical research finding was that high-status (vs. low-status) insulters receive less aggression from the insulted person. Two explanations have been proposed for this effect. One argument is that the status of a perpetrator inhibits aggression because it represents power to control reward and punishment (Berkowitz 1962). The other explanation is that a person will react differently to a highly prestigious (vs. a low-prestige) perpetrator because high-status individuals are allowed to deviate from norms (Hollander 1958).

Researchers have pointed out that reactions to insult are subject to cultural variations. Specifically, Bond et al. (1985) showed in a business meeting context that Chinese (vs. American) respondents were less critical of an insulter and of his action as long as he had a higher status than the insulted person. Cultural variations based on one's heritage (e.g. growing up in the Northern or Southern part of the U.S.) have also received empirical attention. For example, in Cohen et al.'s (1996) study, while northerners were relatively unaffected by a confederate who bumped into them and called them an "asshole", southerners were upset by the insult (as shown by a rise in cortisol levels), cognitively and physiologically primed for aggression (as shown by a rise in testosterone levels), and likely to engage in aggressive and dominant behavior. The authors interpreted the results as an illustration of the insult-aggression relationship in cultures of honor, where insults taint a man's reputation and he tries to restore his status by aggressive behavior. Similar findings were reported by IJzerman, van Dijk and Gallucci (2007), indicating that Dutch male train travelers - who received a degrading

remark from a confederate who bumped into them - were angrier, less fearful, and less resigned when they had strong (versus weak) adherence to honor norms.

Third, ambient factors such as temperature and crowding have been shown to impact the relationship between insult and likelihood of aggression. For example, in Palamarek and Rule's (1979) study participants were either insulted or not insulted, under either normal or excessively hot conditions, and then given the opportunity to choose between two tasks (i.e. aggressive or non-aggressive) for the next part of the experiment. Results showed that the insulted relative to non-insulted students were more likely to choose a potentially aggressive task in the normal temperature condition. However, under hot circumstances, participants who were insulted (vs. not-insulted) tended to choose a non-aggressive interaction. In O'Neal et al.'s (1980) study, participants were either insulted or not insulted by the experimenter, and subsequently tested for body-buffer zone (the physical distance between themselves and an approaching person at which they first reported being uncomfortable) relative to either the experimenter or an assistant. The body-buffer zone of insulted⁵ participants was larger when tested by the experimenter than when tested by his assistant, pointing to a greater propensity to avoid the insulter than to avoid neutral others.

Overall, the literature on insults indicates that receiving this type of social treatment can generate aggressive behaviors, but the specific form and extent of the reaction depends on factors such as retaliation expectations, insulter's status, perceiver's cultural background and ambient features.

⁵ For participants who were not insulted, there were no differences in body-buffer zone produced by the identity of the tester.

2.2.7. Threat: Two conceptualizations of threat have been proposed, one focusing on a person's physical being or material possessions, and another focusing on a person's identity/ego. Because the two interpretations of the term threat garnered separate streams of research, they are discussed in subsections here.

Physical Threat: One definition of threat specifies that “to threaten someone is to declare one's intention to punish or hurt, or inflict injury to reputation or property which may restrain a person's freedom of action” (Hough 1990, p. 169). Threats to a person's physical being or material possessions can manifest themselves in various forms, including explicit verbal threats, conditional threats or blackmail, and even implied verbal and/or non-verbal threats. These forms of threat have been studied in the context of workplace relationships. For example, Hoobler and Swanberg (2006) surveyed 868 full-time employees of a municipal government, exploring the incidence of verbal threats, yelling, physical intimidation, hitting/ pushing/ shoving, sexual harassment and assault. They found that organizational norms play a critical role in the manifestation of such acts, and that perpetrators are more likely to be customers than co-workers or supervisors.

A series of studies have investigated threats in the context of intimate relationships or stalking episodes. For example, Ryan (1995) studied intimate relationships and found that threats were predictive of intimate violence. Brewster (2002)⁶ investigated threats in stalking episodes (along with other factors such as

⁶ In Brewster's study (which involved 187 victims screened to ensure that they have been repeatedly followed, harassed or threatened within the past five years by a stalker), direct verbal

the stalker's use of drugs or alcohol, a history of violence in the prior relationship, the frequency of phone calls, etc.), and found that only verbal threat was a statistically significant predictor of the likelihood of violence, and of the number of violent occurrences during stalking. However, in a review of nearly twenty years of research on obsessional following, Meloy (1996) found that seventy-five percent of stalkers who made threats did not carry out violent acts, and that violence did not usually occur when the stalker did not make threats. The most important consequence of threat is the emotional harm suffered by victims. Even if they are not physically injured (i.e. the threats do not materialize), they can suffer from stress, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, exhaustion, insecurity, embarrassment, nightmares and poor concentration (Atkinson 2000). Behavioral consequences include the tendency of threatened individuals to take self-protecting measures such carrying pepper-sprays, knives or guns, and signing up for self-defense programs (e.g. Brown and Sutton 2007; Weitlauf, Smith and Cervone 2000).

The findings reviewed above are restricted to the definition of threat as a declared intent of inflicting physical harm. However, another use of the term threat pertains to a person's identity or ego-threat (e.g. Baumeister, Heatherton and Tice 1993; Campbell and Sedikides 1999).

Identity Threat: Identity or ego threat refers to a menace to an individual's self-concept, and occurs "when favorable views about oneself are

threats of violence were reported in over half (52.9%) of the stalking situations, while implied threats occurred in 19.8% of the cases.

questioned, contradicted, impugned, mocked, challenged, or otherwise put in jeopardy” (Baumeister, Smart and Boden 1996, p. 8). Because individuals are motivated to protect, maintain, or enhance the positivity of their self-concept, they act to counter or minimize negative information that threatens positive self-perceptions (Brown and Dutton 1995; Dunning 1993; Sedikides and Strube 1997). This motivation of preserving the self-concept on exposure to threatening information appears in several influential theories of the self, including Epstein’s (1973) view of the self, Nicholl’s (1984) achievement motivation, Steele’s (1988) self-affirmation theory, Tesser and Cornell’s (1991) framework on self-processes and Greenwald’s (1980) conceptualization of the ego.

The types of individual reactions to self-threatening information, as well as the magnitude of such reactions, have been examined in controlled experimental settings. In some studies participants were asked to perform a task, received success or failure feedback, and made causal attributions for their performance (e.g. Baumeister, Heatherton and Tice 1993; Frankel and Snyder 1978; Miller 1976; Pyszczynski and Greenberg 1985). In other studies threats to a salient group identity were used (e.g. Hutchison⁷, Jetten, Christian and Haycraft 2006; White⁸ and Argo 2009). Although ego threats were not necessarily

⁷ University of Exeter students were informed that “the academic achievements of University of Exeter students compared unfavorably with the achievements of students of other universities; compared to the national average there are more drop-outs and failures among Exeter students; the prospects on the job market are significantly worse for Exeter students compared to the national average; and there is some evidence to suggest that Exeter students will continue to under achieve in the years to come”.

⁸ The threatened identities were gender and nationality. University students learned that their gender group was earning lower GPAs, had a higher likelihood of dropout, and took longer to secure employment than their counterparts. In the second, third and fourth experiments, participants read an article reporting that their own gender demonstrates weak analytical reasoning skills, low motivation in the workplace, and a less developed sense of social intelligence. In the

operationalized as social treatments (i.e. participants performed the task themselves, without being threatened by another individual, except when face-to-face feedback on the task was provided by the experimenter or a confederate), the strategies used for coping with ego threat appeared to have significant consequences on a person's behavior in social encounters. Specifically, it was shown that self-threatening information motivates consumers to lie (Argo, White and Dahl 2006⁹) or to make other people responsible for failures in their own lives (e.g. Miller 1976; Mirels 1980). The use of this sort of self-protecting mechanisms is associated with successful coping and mental health (Taylor and Armor 1996; Taylor and Brown 1988), but it can also have negative consequences, such as being perceived as untrustworthy or immature, and being socially or professionally ostracized (Colvin, Block and Funder 1995; Heatherton and Vohs 2000; Schlenker and Leary 1982; Tice 1991). Also, the self-protecting behavior may ironically have destructive effects on the individual's own physical health (Leary and Jones 1993; Leary, Tchividjian and Kraxberger 1994).

Overall, the literatures on physical threat and ego threat suggest that threatened individuals experience emotional distress as a result of this type of social treatment and engage in self-protecting behaviors to cope with the situation. As a final note, threatening behavior often occurs when the perpetrators target victims of a different race, religion or sexual orientation than themselves (e.g. Atkinson 2000).

fifth experiment where national identity was threatened, participants read that Canadians were doing a very poor job of conserving their natural resources.

⁹ In Argo, White and Dahl's (2006) study, participants lied about their purchase after learning that they paid more than another consumer for an identical product.

2.2.8. Summary of Social Treatment Research: Up to this point I have described existing research on a number of social treatments, but it is important to emphasize that many other treatments - such as encouragement, tenderness, comfort, sarcasm, scorn, and insolence - could be analyzed. My intent was to focus the review on treatments that have received more pronounced research attention, and to offer examples of how social treatment has been studied to date.

While informative, the streams of literature reviewed above suffer from a lack of integration, offering a fragmented picture of the impact of social treatment. Researchers have studied one particular behavior at a time; therefore, they did not specify the similarities and differences between the social treatments they investigated. Moreover, scholars offered context-specific explanations for the impact of each treatment on a variety of dependent variables (e.g. small-talk increases helping behavior because it activates scripts for dealing with strangers/friends; insult leads to increased aggression because it is perceived as a taint to one's reputation). However, I propose that such explanations could be grouped and reformulated in terms of basic underlying dimensions of social treatments, corresponding to fundamental human motivations.

The present research represents a first step toward an integrative theoretical framework of social treatment.

2.3. Research Positioning

This research is positioned in the context of social influence and social treatment literatures as follows. First, it is a study of social influence in which the unit of analysis is an individual consumer as opposed to a group, the forms of social influence are both informational (i.e. consumers use social information to evaluate their personal limitations and abilities) and normative (i.e. consumers are offered the possibility to engage in behaviors that are approved in society), the source strength is weak rather than strong (i.e. the source is a stranger rather than friend or family), and the potential reasons underlying social influence under investigation are the need to fit in versus the need for uniqueness.

Second, this is a study of social treatment. Unlike prior research that has predominantly focused on one specific treatment at a time, in this research multiple forms are investigated (i.e. compliment, small-talk, grumble, threat), and two underlying dimensions of these treatments are explored by analyzing their combined impact on consumer behavior.

Finally, while social treatment may influence a variety of consumer behaviors, this research focuses on a subset of behavioral outcomes, namely socially-elevating behaviors. As such, a brief overview of socially-elevating behavior is offered next.

2.4. Socially-elevating Behavior

Socially-elevating behavior is defined in the present research as an individual's behavior that enhances the welfare of another person, by providing

material or psychological benefit, usually with little or no expectation of a commensurate reward in return. This definition builds on prior research that has focused on instantiations of such behaviors (e.g. helping; Bendapudi, Singh and Bendapudi 1996). Socially-elevating behavior can cover a wide range of forms, such as being kind, generous, forgiving and patient towards others. Examples of marketing-relevant behaviors of this nature include picking up the tab when dining out, patience toward service providers when being put on hold, polite reactions toward sellers during transaction errors or when problems with the product/service arise, charitable donations, gift giving, and purchases of Fair Trade products or products associated with cause-related marketing efforts.

Such behaviors are encouraged by social norms (e.g. Piliavin and Charng 1990; Webb, Green and Brashear 2000) and in some streams of research have been labeled “socially-conscious” behaviors (e.g. Scott 1977) or “prosocial” behaviors (e.g. Bagozzi and Moore 1994; Benabou and Tirole 2006; Knight et al. 1994), while in other streams of research have been referred to as “socially-desirable” behaviors (e.g. Paulhus 2002; Toh, Lee and Hu 2006; Zerbe and Paulhus 1987). The term “prosocial” typically has the connotation of “altruistic”, implying that individuals engage in such behaviors out of a genuine concern for others, while the term “socially-desirable” suggests an egoistic motivation to project a good impression in social contexts. Note that the observable outcomes are the same in the case of prosocial and socially-desirable behaviors, the primary difference lies in the presumed motivation. While there has been much research debate on whether behaviors such as helping are driven by altruistic or egoistic

motives (e.g. Batson et al. 1988; Cialdini, Kenrick and Baumann 1982), many researchers conclude that both types of motives are likely to co-exist (e.g. Dovidio, Allen, and Schroeder 1990; Piliavin and Charng 1990). Given this, I also take the perspective that individuals can have both altruistic and egoistic motives for behaving in a certain manner, and consequently, I use the “socially-elevating behavior” label in the conceptual development of the present research. However, to accurately reproduce the arguments of prior scholars, and in the interest of conciseness, I will sometimes employ the term “prosocial behavior” instead of “socially-elevating behavior”. Whenever this occurs, it is important to remember the above discussion of terminology.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORY DEVELOPMENT

This chapter offers a theoretical framework for understanding the impact of social treatment on socially-elevating consumer behavior. The role of two dimensions of social treatment - affiliation and relevance for self-assessments - will be delineated, highlighting why they are important when studying consumers' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to the social treatment they receive. The present research proposes that the affiliation and relevance of social treatment will have a joint impact on consumers, ultimately determining their socially-elevating behavior in subsequent interactions (i.e. behavior toward another person, different from the individual who administered the social treatment). Formal hypotheses pertaining to this argument will be forwarded.

3.1. The Concept of Social Treatment

Because the term “social treatment” might evoke related constructs, such as “interpersonal behavior” or “personality trait”, a conceptualization of social treatment is deemed necessary. The conceptualization includes a definition, a discussion of associated terms, and a classification of social treatments based on two dimensions of interest to the present research.

Social treatment is defined here as the way a person (i.e., a source) acts toward another individual (i.e., a target) during a social encounter, and includes emotionally-charged verbal behaviors (e.g. complimenting, encouraging,

insulting, threatening) or non-verbal behaviors (e.g. smiling, touching, frowning, pushing) that reveal approach /avoidance intentions of the source of social treatment toward the target. The manner of treating someone can be dictated by characteristics of one or both individuals involved in the social encounter, or by situational circumstances. The above definition highlights the content and the triggers of social treatment. Given its content, it is apparent that social treatment constitutes a subcomponent of the broader class of interpersonal behaviors. This implies that all social treatments are interpersonal behaviors, but some interpersonal behaviors are not social treatments (e.g. dancing with someone). Furthermore, social treatments, which manifest themselves during single instances of social encounters, must not be equated with personality traits, which are tendencies (proclivities, propensities, dispositions, inclinations) of a person to behave in certain ways across multiple encounters with different individuals (e.g. Wiggins 1979).

The various forms of social treatment can be classified according to a number of underlying dimensions. First, consider the striking difference between treatments such as complimenting and insulting someone. From early ages individuals are able to recognize this difference and to acknowledge the former treatment as friendly behavior and the latter as hostile behavior. The dichotomy is mentioned in interpersonal behavior research, where the dimension underlying friendly or hostile behaviors is labeled “affiliation” (e.g. Kiesler 1983). Second, it is possible to detect differences even between behaviors that have the same level of affiliation. For example, grumbling at someone is quite different from

ridiculing that person, even though both treatments are hostile. The difference becomes apparent when considering what types of cues are conveyed by such treatments to the recipient. Grumbles tend to convey cues about the person who administers the social treatment (e.g. revealing a grumpy, disgruntled person), whereas ridicule often offers cues about the recipient of social treatment (e.g. exposing a flaw or deficiency of the recipient, something that can be mocked in society). Thus, while treatments such as ridicule can have high relevance for the recipient in assessing himself/herself, treatments such as grumble have lower relevance for a recipient's self-evaluations.

Although other dimensions besides affiliation and relevance may characterize social treatments, these factors are of primary interest in the present research because of their potential to influence socially-elevating behaviors. I will describe each of these two dimensions in turn.

3.1.1. Affiliation: In the context of social interactions, affiliation (also known as “sociability” - Borgatta, Cottrell and Mann 1958; Carter 1954; Foa 1961) is defined as an individual's behavior related to efforts to establish cordial and socially satisfying relations with others (Carter 1954). The affiliation dimension is marked by two polar opposites: friendliness versus hostility (e.g. Bierman 1969; Carson 1969; Haslam 1995; Kiesler 1983; Moskowitz 1988; Wiggins 1979 and 1982). The terms “friendliness / hostility” have sometimes been used interchangeably with other labels, such as warmth / coldness and cooperation / competition (Andersen, Saribay, and Thorpe 2008; Cohen 1982;

Costa et al. 1987; Haslam and Fiske 1999; Jones 1986; Wish, Deutsch, and Kaplan 1976).

Hogan (1982) abbreviates the challenges of social life to “getting along and getting ahead.” These challenges entail on the one hand knowing when to treat another human being with friendliness or hostility (depending on the goals associated with that person), and on the other hand monitoring the social environment for friendly / hostile cues that reflect the intentions of other people toward the self. The social signals sent by other people inform the individual whether s/he should approach or avoid the sender. As Jones (1986) points out, “an approach orientation (for example, one involving smiles and eye contact) is the most likely behavioral reaction to the expectation of warmth, friendliness, and liking. Expectations of hostility or competitiveness tend to breed hostility or competitiveness in response”.

Prior research indicates that during social encounters, individuals are actively looking for friendly or hostile cues (Alden, Mellings and Lapsa 2004; Wentura et al. 2000). This social preparedness, or state of readiness that mobilizes an individual to scan the social environment for friendly or hostile signs, has evolutionary bases (e.g. Buck 1985). For the human species, the odds of survival and perpetuation are enhanced by cooperation against common enemies, cooperation between mating partners during attraction, retention and child-raising, or intra-sexual alliances such as friendships and coalitions (e.g. Ainsworth 1989; Baumeister and Leary 1995; Bowlby 1969). However, cooperation might not

always be feasible given the natural scarcity of resources, which gives rise to competitiveness (i.e. hostility).

3.1.2. Relevance for Self-Assessment: The concept of relevance has been studied in the literature dealing with the diagnosticity of stimuli (e.g. Lynch 2006; Zhao and Pechmann 2007). An input is diagnostic for an evaluation or decision to the degree that individuals believe that resting the evaluation/decision on that input would accomplish their decision goals (Lynch et al. 1988, p. 171). In the context of making evaluations of products, persons, or behaviors, diagnosticity has been operationalized as relevance or importance (e.g. Ahluwalia, Unnava and Burnkrant 2001; Kempf and Smith 1998; Miniard, Sirdeshmukh and Innis 1992). The relevance of a stimulus for an evaluator can range from low to high, and is task specific. For example, if the task is to evaluate a person who signs up for a beauty contest, physical attractiveness is a highly relevant (i.e. diagnostic) input. However, if the task is to evaluate a person who applies for a doctoral program, physical attractiveness is an input with low relevance.

Because my research focuses on reactions to social treatment, the perspective of the evaluator (the person who receives the social treatment) is adopted, so the definition of relevance is from the point of view of the recipient. When exposed to a particular social treatment, the recipient will attempt to interpret and make sense of it. This is a natural tendency, rooted in humans' constant pursuit of understanding events, which has been explained by various theories. One theoretical interpretation is known as the principle of mastery

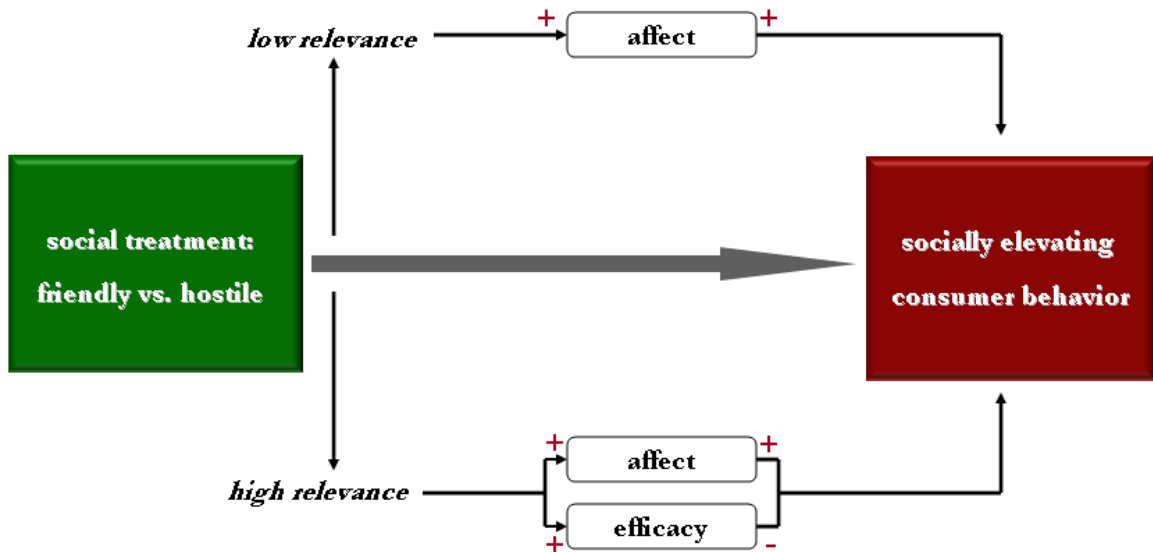
(White 1959), according to which individuals simply want to gain knowledge, to understand themselves and their surroundings. Another influential perspective emphasizes that it is functional and adaptive to understand events because the individual “is not simply [...] a seeker after knowledge; his latent goal in attaining knowledge is that of effective management of himself and his environment” (Kelley 1971, p. 22). Understanding allows the person to manage the situation, and provides a guide for future action. To this end, the recipients of social treatment may want to understand how they are perceived in society and to evaluate themselves. Self-assessment is of particular interest in the current research, as it provides the lens through which the relevance dimension of social treatment is conceptualized.

Relevance for self-assessment represents the extent to which a social treatment received by a person is useful for him/her in making an evaluation of the self. Some social treatments are highly relevant to the recipient, as they allow the recipient to extract information about how s/he is perceived by other people, and to assess personal strengths and weaknesses. For example, receiving a compliment may reveal that the person possesses a quality that is valued in society. In contrast, other social treatments such as small-talk are less likely to signal how the self is perceived by other people, and convey limited information for self-evaluations.

3.2. Outline of the Conceptual Framework

I propose that the affiliation and relevance of the social treatment received by a consumer will impact his/her subsequent behavior, and in particular socially-elevating behavior that requires a personal sacrifice (e.g. picking up the tab when dining out with other people, donating money to charity, being patient with a salesperson).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The influence of the two dimensions of social treatment will be as follows. Overall, I predict that affiliation (friendliness vs. hostility) will impact socially-elevating behavior through two mechanisms, affect and social efficacy, as illustrated in Figure 1. The direction of influence and which mechanism will be at play will depend on the relevance of the social treatment. In the next sections I

describe in turn the two processes by which social treatments may influence consumer behavior, starting with the affect-based mechanism.

3.3. Affect as a Process Mechanism

3.3.1. What is Affect? Affect represents an overarching emotional space which includes emotions and moods as specific processes (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999). Arguably the best way to define affect is to think of it as “the positive or negative valence of the emotional experience” (Clore, Schwarz and Conway 1994). Positively-valenced affect is felt when individuals experience pleasant emotions such as happiness, hope, or satisfaction, while negatively-valenced affect characterizes unpleasant emotions such as unhappiness, despair, or dissatisfaction. Affective valence is the least disputed emotional feature, infiltrating almost all theories concerned with emotions, including the discrete or basic emotions model (Scherer and Wallbott 1994; Ekman 1992; Izard 1992; Johnson-Laird and Oatley 1989; Roseman 1991; Lazarus 1982; Frijda 1986), the dimensional approach with the circumplex structure, the three-dimensional model and the multi-dimensional model (Russell 1980; Watson and Tellegen 1985; Daly et al. 1983; Mehrabian and Russell 1974), and the prototype model of emotions (Plutchik 1980). Due to the unifying element of affective valence across emotional frameworks, the present research is more concerned with the positive versus negative affect generated by social treatments, than with specific emotions such as fear, anger, pride, or joy. The focus on affect (as opposed to discrete

emotions) has not only theoretical, but also methodological bases: Dillard and Wilson (1993) pointed out that affective valence typically accounts for twice as much variance as discrete emotions.

The possibility that receiving friendly/hostile social treatments generates emotional reactions with positive/negative valence will be discussed in the following sections. In order to illustrate how affect can be related to classes of emotions, the theoretical incursion will include a discussion of hurt feelings (negative) and interpersonal warmth (positive feelings).

3.3.2. Negative Affective Reactions to Social Treatment: Being treated with hostility by another person creates the conditions for experiencing negative emotions such as “hurt feelings”. The term “hurt feelings” originates from colloquial descriptions of people’s emotions in everyday life, but has been adopted by social psychologists in the study of interpersonal emotions (e.g. Feeney 2005; Leary, Springer et al 1998; Macevoy 2007; Snapp and Leary 2001; Vangelisti 1994; Vangelisti et al. 2005). Hurt feelings are defined as the psychological hurt that occurs in response to real, anticipated or imagined encounters with other people (Leary, Springer et al. 1998). According to Vangelisti and Young (2000), people risk having their feelings hurt anytime they interact with others, because “sensitive issues might be raised, teasing may get too serious, evaluative statements may be too pointed, and disparaging remarks may be used as verbal weapons”. Research has shown that the psychological pain induced by such treatments can be as acute and aversive as the physical pain of

bodily injury, and it can last far longer (Leary, Springer et al. 1998). The theoretical explanation offered for hurt feelings is that they arise from the affective component of the *sociometer* - the psychological system that monitors the quality of an individual's relationships with other people.

Sociometer theory (Leary and Downs 1995; Leary, Tambor, Terdal and Downs 1995) proposes that humans are endowed with a cognitive-affective mechanism (the sociometer) that monitors the social environment for cues of rejection, disapproval or exclusion. When such cues are detected, the sociometer alerts the individual through negative affect, and motivates the individual to act toward minimizing social exclusion. The negative affect elicited by the detection of rejection cues plays a vital role in coping with the situation. According to Frijda (1986) and Izard (1993), negative affect fulfills three important functions in helping a person deal with events that jeopardize their well-being: 1) it signals to the individual that an undesired change in its state has occurred; 2) it interrupts ongoing behavior to allow the individual to assess the situation; and 3) it informs the individual when appropriate behaviors have satisfied the motive (i.e. negative affect declines when appropriate behaviors occur). These functions of affect are carried out not only in the case of vital physical needs (e.g. dealing with hunger or fire danger), but also in the context of social behaviors (see Baumeister and Tice 1990; Miller and Leary 1992).

Although sociometer theory posits that the sociometer scans the social environment for cues of rejection, disapproval or exclusion (for adaptive/functional purposes) and alerts the individual through negative affect, it

seems reasonable to believe that the sociometer may also search for cues of approval or inclusion (for the same adaptive/functional purposes). If this is true, the logic that links hostile social treatments with negative affect also links friendly social treatments with positive affect.

3.3.3. Positive Affective Reactions to Social Treatment: When individuals are treated with friendliness by another person, they are likely to experience a class of emotions termed “interpersonal warmth” (Andersen and Guerrero 1998, pg.305). Feelings of interpersonal warmth are hard to describe in a single word in the English language (although in other languages such terms are not only available but also very important for the respective cultures – e.g. “hygge” in Danish or “gemütlichkeit” in German). The notion of “interpersonal warmth” covers a variety of affective states, such as feelings of cozy emotional bonding, intimacy, attachment and closeness.

Support for the proposition that individuals search for signs of inclusion or approval in their environment and are alerted to the detection of such cues through positive affect (in the same way that the detection of cues of disapproval or exclusion trigger negative affect) comes from the literature dealing with the impact of the environment on people’s emotional state. For example, Cunningham (1979) found that sunshine makes people feel happy and joyful. The explanation offered for this phenomenon can be transferred from the physical environment into the social environment. Just as sunshine triggers positive affect because it signals a rewarding physical environment in which humans can thrive, friendly

social treatments trigger positive affect because they signal a propitious social environment. Additional support for the argument that friendly social treatments generate positive affect comes from the literature on integral feelings, particularly on the Type II affect¹⁰ (Buck 1985; Cohen and Areni 1991; Pham, Cohen, Pracejus and Hughes 2001). Type II affect is produced integrally, by a percept of the stimulus (e.g. while being face-to-face with a lion, a puppy, a threatening individual or a baby) or by a mental representation (e.g. imagining the lion, the puppy, the threatening individual or the baby). This type of affect results from the mapping of stimulus features onto acquired schematic structures that have been previously associated, through conditioning, with particular emotional responses (e.g. the fear response triggered by predatory animals). The schema-matching process of Type II affect operates very rapidly and is fairly consistent across individuals (e.g., LeDoux 1996; Pham, Cohen, Pracejus and Hughes 2001). This suggests that the instant affective reactions to friendly/hostile individuals should be almost invariably positive/negative.

The above-mentioned arguments grounded in Sociometer Theory and Type II affect can be summarized in the following assumption¹¹:

¹⁰ According to this perspective on emotions, three types of mechanisms are involved in affective responses: Type I Affect, Type II Affect and Type III Affect. Type I affect is based on the triggering of innate, sensory-motor programs essential to bioregulation (e.g. the affective response elicited by the intake of spoiled food). Type II affect is discussed in more detail in the present research. Type III affect is based on a controlled appraisal of the stimulus, consisting of a subjective assessment of the significance of the stimulus for well-being (e.g. the guilt response experienced by students if they attribute an exam failure to their lack of effort). Type I and Type II affective responses occur very rapidly (e.g., Hermans, de Houwer, and Eelen 1994; LeDoux 1996), but Type III affective responses are elicited more slowly because they often involve substantial cognitive mediation (Cohen and Areni 1991).

¹¹ Note that the hypotheses that make up the conceptual framework are based on a number of core assumptions, the first of which is presented here.

A1: The affiliation of a social treatment received by consumers will influence their affective state, such that friendly social treatments will generate more positive affect than hostile social treatments.

The affect produced by social treatments may have further effects on consumers' behavior, particularly on socially-elevating behaviors such as helping another person. This argument will be developed and explained in detail below.

3.3.4. The Influence of Affect on Socially-elevating Behavior: Research has shown that experiencing positive affect (vs. neutral or vs. negative affect) leads to a higher likelihood of doing good deeds (e.g. Berkowitz 1972; Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980; Isen 1970; Isen, Clark and Schwartz, 1976; Krueger, Hicks and McGue 2001; Rosenhan, Salovey and Hargis 1981; Weyant 1984). This effect was obtained by manipulating/measuring the mood of participants¹² in either laboratory or field settings, and then providing them the opportunity to help someone. The observed positive impact of mood on prosocial behavior has received various explanations (for reviews see Barbee, Rowatt and Cunningham 1998; Carlson, Charlin, and Miller 1988; Schaller and Cialdini 1990). For example, it was proposed that individuals in a positive mood are more outwardly and socially focused (Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980;

¹² Some of the procedures by which positive moods were induced include allowing participants to succeed on an experimental task (e.g. Isen 1970; Weyant 1978), unexpectedly finding a dime in the return slot of a public phone (e.g. Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980), being on the winning team in a football game (Berg 1978), receiving a gift (Isen, Clark and Schwartz 1976; Isen, Clark, Shalke and Carp 1978), imagining an enjoyable vacation in Hawaii (Rosenhan, Salovey and Hargis 1981) and listening to pleasant music (Fried and Berkowitz 1979). Procedures for inducing negative moods (see Carlson and Miller's 1987 review) include reading depressing or sad material, witnessing the misfortune of another person, breaking some equipment or destroying other people's work, and being the subject of unfortunate events.

Cunningham et al. 1990), or positively cued (Manucia, Baumann and Cialdini 1984) toward optimism (Cunningham 1988; Forgas, Bower and Krantz 1984), liking others (Mayer and Gaschke 1988), and remembering positive experiences (Isen 1984). Also, mood management theorists proposed that individuals who experience positive emotions are willing to do good deeds in order to enhance (Mayer, DiPaolo and Salovey 1990) or maintain their own positive mood (Isen et al. 1978). Furthermore, it was argued that “positive affective states offer the indication that the world is a positive place, and therefore that there is little need to engage in effortful cognitive processing or further scrutiny” (Schaller and Cialdini 1990). Thus, individuals in a positive affective state act rather impulsively and rarely give a second thought to the personal consequences of their altruism (Langer, Blank and Chanowitz 1978). Based on this, Schaller and Cialdini’s (1990) hypothesized that positive affect prompts individuals to approach rather than avoid the social environment, and de-emphasizes the potentially negative consequences of prosocial behavior by focusing more on the positive consequences for the self and the environment (also see Isen et al. 1978).

Negative (vs. positive) affect decreases prosocial behavior because individuals in negative emotional states tend to engage in “a higher level of scrutiny of the situation” (Schaller and Cialdini 1990) compared to individuals in a positive mood. When the environment is scrutinized and perceived as hostile, adaptation concerns dictate that an avoidant stance be taken: “an organism is more likely to survive and successfully reproduce if it withdraws from an immediately harmful environment” (Schaller and Cialdini 1990). Tomkins (1962) proposed

that negative affect produces “sociophobia”, and Cunningham and colleagues (Cunningham 1988; Cunningham et al. 1980, 1990) also discussed the avoidance phenomenon in their extensive research on the influence of negative emotional states.

Negative (vs. neutral) affect may increase or decrease prosocial behavior depending on situational circumstances. For example, McMillen, Sanders and Solomon (1977) showed that sad subjects were less likely than control subjects to respond to an opportunity to help, unless their attention was “accidentally” drawn to this opportunity. Similarly, Mayer, Duval, Holtz and Bowman (1985) found that helping is enhanced only when the salience of help as an opportunity to alleviate negative feelings is increased. This suggests that individuals experiencing negative affect are likely to help only when the potential for self-reward is made explicit. The most prominent explanation for this effect is the negative state relief - or the mood repair model, which posits that individuals who experience negative affect are prone to engage in behaviors that allow them to escape this unpleasant psychological state (Carver and Scheier 1998; Cialdini, Kenrick and Baumann 1982; Clore, Schwarz and Conway 1994; Clore et al. 2001; Howard 1992).

Overall, the literature suggests that individuals experiencing a negative affective state can sometimes engage in prosocial (i.e. socially-elevating) behavior, but they are much less willing to do that compared to individuals in a positive affective state. Taken this together with the earlier discussion on the impact of social treatment on affect, it is expected that receiving friendly (vs.

hostile) social treatment will generate more positive affect, which in turn will increase consumers' likelihood to engage in socially-elevating behavior.

Beyond the affective route, a social treatment's affiliation (friendliness vs. hostility) can be expected to influence socially-elevating behavior through a second mechanism (social efficacy) as explained below.

3.4. Social Efficacy as a Process Mechanism

3.4.1. What is Social Efficacy? Social efficacy (e.g. Bandura 1994; Kashdan and Roberts 2004; Patrick, Hicks and Ryan 1997; Hochwarter et al. 2004) refers to how well an individual is performing in his/her social surroundings at a given moment in time. Other labels used for this concept in various streams of research are "social performance" (e.g. Alden, Teschuk and Tee 1992), "social competence" (e.g. Spitzberg and Cupach 1989), "social skill" (e.g. Furnham 1983; Hargie 1986), and "social fitness" (e.g. MacDonald and Leary 2005; Thornhill and Thornhill 1989). The common definitional ground among these research perspectives on the concept is that it reflects the extent to which individuals conduct themselves adequately or inadequately in social circumstances.

Although there is a certain average tone to the self-perceptions of social efficacy that individuals maintain (i.e. they have an overall sense of self-efficacy in society derived from averaging beliefs about themselves across a number of different social situations), social efficacy is open to momentary changes. That is,

individuals' perceptions of their own efficacy in society can fluctuate depending on relevant events, just like perceptions of efficacy or skill in other domains. For example, perceptions of math skill/efficacy can be influenced by the results of a math test, while perceptions of social skill/efficacy can be influenced by a social interaction episode.

The idea of being a social misfit (i.e. having low social efficacy) is frequently encountered in colloquial language, and reflects a social standing with negative implications for individuals in everyday life. Why would people try to avoid having low social efficacy? According to Bandura (1994), “perceived social inefficacy [...] increases vulnerability to depression through social isolation”, whereas “people who judge themselves to be socially efficacious [are able to] cultivate social relationships” and to cushion themselves from the adverse effects of social isolation. This suggests that it is important for individuals to monitor their efficacy in society, because having an adequate level of social efficacy translates into good chances of satisfying the need for social connectedness.

3.4.2. The Need for Social Connectedness is a fundamental human motivation that has received generous research attention as part of a broader theoretical interest in the need to belong. According to belongingness theory (e.g. Baumeister and Leary 1995), individuals have an innate need to belong, to establish and maintain interpersonal bonds.

Lee and Robbins (1995) identify multiple aspects of belongingness, including companionship, affiliation, and connectedness. I focus on the social

connectedness component of belongingness, which I believe is particularly relevant to the interpersonal context I study. While the need for companionship and the need for affiliation are concerned with important individuals in someone's life (e.g., spouse, parents), the need for connectedness is a precursor to these more involved forms of belongingness and can be achieved in a larger social context than family or friends (Jiang et al. 2010; Newcomb 1990; Timpone 1998). For example, a sense of connectedness can be created by simple interaction or participation with others (Heider 1958; Lee and Robbins 1995). This sense of connectedness allows the individual to consider himself/herself as a "human among humans" (Kohut 1984, p. 200) and to feel comfortable among people. According to Lee and Robbins (1995) failures to satisfy the need for connectedness and frustrations along this aspect of belongingness may impair the person's ability to effectively function in life.

Documented arguments that individuals are strongly motivated to seek out and maintain social ties date back to 1908, when McDougall proposed the gregarious instinct as a motivating force driving individuals to seek social relationships. Later on, Asch (1956) emphasized the fundamental desire of individuals to establish connections with others, and Bowlby (1969) asserted in his attachment theory that individuals need to form and maintain relationships. Maslow (1954, 1968) has identified the need for belongingness as a basic component in the hierarchy of human needs. By placing belongingness needs in the middle of the hierarchy, Maslow suggests that they are important but less stringent than lower-order needs such as physiological (e.g. food, water, and

sleep) and safety needs (e.g. shelter and protection from danger). However, Baumeister and Leary (1995) have argued that individuals' need to belong is almost as essential as their need for food. Further, Williams (1997) has observed that many people prefer to be hit than ostracized, suggesting that the pain of social exclusion may be more aversive than the pain of physical injury in many instances. The need to belong is universal in the sense that it is felt by people all over the world in a variety of situations (Jiang et al. 2010).

Despite the fact that most research regarding the need to belong has been conducted in the context of well-developed relationships (i.e. studying the companionship and affiliation sub-components), evidence exists that this need can arise even when people are less familiar with each other (i.e. the social connectedness sub-component). For example, Festinger, Schachter and Back (1950) have found that simply living in close proximity to another person was enough to create a sense of attachment.

Furthermore, while the need to belong has been heavily researched in the reference group literature, it is not restricted to groups (i.e. a person may feel the need to belong and be accepted by society in general, as opposed to specific groups of interest). Evidence in this respect comes from experimental research on social exclusion and rejection, where participants received messages of social exclusion that were not specific to particular groups (e.g. participants were told that their results on a personality test indicate that they were the sort of people

who would end up alone in life; Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco and Twenge 2005), and they were negatively affected by such messages¹³.

3.4.3. The Impact of Social Treatment on Perceived Social Efficacy and Socially-elevating Behavior: Receiving a particular social treatment can influence consumers' perceptions regarding their efficacy in society and their likelihood to satisfy the need for connectedness as follows¹⁴.

When individuals receive friendly social treatments such as compliments, they may think they have a certain positive quality, something likeable that generated the treatment. The fact that another person acknowledged their quality and expressed acknowledgement through social treatment allows individuals to update their beliefs about themselves. Specifically, as friendly treatment signals to individuals that they are appreciated in society, it should improve their perceived social efficacy. Conversely, when receiving hostile treatments such as threat or ridicule from another person, individuals may infer that something in their character or behavior is not appreciated and does not fit in the social environment. As such, their beliefs about self-efficacy in society should be updated in a negative direction.

Perceptions of social efficacy inform individuals about the likelihood of satisfying their need for social connectedness (the need to belong). Specifically,

¹³ Social exclusion messages had negative consequences on individuals, triggering significant and large decrements in intelligent thought (especially in complex cognitive tasks such as effortful logic and reasoning; Baumeister, Twenge and Nuss 2002) and diminishing the capacity for self-control (e.g. individuals quitted sooner on a frustrating task; Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco and Twenge 2005).

¹⁴ Note that not all social treatments can influence perceived social efficacy. Only those treatments with high relevance for self-assessment contain cues that can be used in efficacy evaluations, as will be discussed in the next section.

when individuals believe they are appreciated in society (i.e. they have high social efficacy) as a result of receiving friendly treatment, they can infer that the chance of satisfying their need for social connectedness is pretty good, as other people are likely to seek out and enjoy their company. Conversely, when individuals perceive that their efficacy in society is low as a result of receiving hostile treatment, they can infer that the chances of satisfying their need for social connectedness are not very good. This is an undesirable state, given the importance of satisfying connectedness needs. As a fundamental motivation (Baumeister and Leary 1995), the need to connect with others stimulates goal-directed behaviors (Jiang et al. 2010). For example, to increase their chances of satisfying this need, individuals can attempt to improve their social efficacy by engaging in socially-elevating behaviors (such as helping other people). Various researchers, including Schaller and Cialdini (1990) and Carlson and Miller (1987)¹⁵, have emphasized the fact that people use prosocial behavior as a self-elevating strategy.

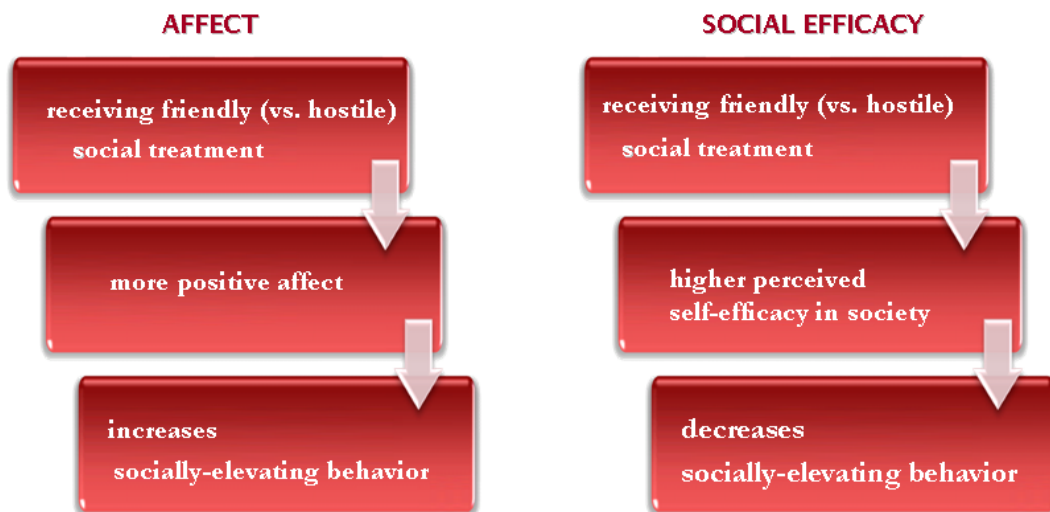
In sum, individuals treated with hostility are likely to update their beliefs about themselves in a negative direction, and to perceive that they have to shape-up their social efficacy in order to satisfy the need for connectedness. Consequently, they have a higher incentive to engage in socially-elevating behavior compared to individuals who receive friendly treatment.

¹⁵ Carlson and Miller (1987) have emphasized the notion of using helping behavior as a self-elevating strategy, because helping has acquired secondary reinforcement value during the socialization process, as a result of its pairing with positive events such as smiles and ‘thank-you’s.

Restating the above argument in terms of friendliness, it can be expected that receiving friendly social treatment will lead to perceptions of high self-efficacy in society and good chances of satisfying the need for connectedness. In this situation, individuals no longer need to act toward improving their social efficacy, so they have a lower incentive to engage in socially-elevating behavior compared to individuals who receive hostile treatment. In fact, individuals treated with friendliness may actually have incentives to *not* engage in socially-elevating behavior. Consider the case of receiving a compliment. Given that satisfying the need for social connectedness implies fitting in, complimented individuals may not want to stand out even more by engaging in socially-elevating behavior and appearing “too good” compared to those around them.

The process mechanisms discussed so far, highlighting how the affiliation (friendliness vs. hostility) of social treatment can influence socially-elevating behavior, are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Affect and Social Efficacy as Process Mechanisms



3.5. Hypotheses

Having explained the affect-based and the social efficacy-based processes, the next step is to specify when these mechanisms can be expected to operate. I propose that the relevance dimension of social treatment plays an important role, especially in dictating whether the social efficacy process will manifest itself or not. This proposition is elaborated below.

Individuals tend to think about the aspect of the world that is most salient to them at a given moment. Suppose someone receives a social treatment with high relevance for self-assessment (e.g. compliment, ridicule). Such treatment conveys cues pertinent to the recipient, directing his/her attention and cognitive inferences to the self. In contrast, social treatments with low relevance tend to convey cues about the person who administered the social treatment (e.g. small-talk or grumbles reveal a talkative or a grumpy person, conveying little or no information about the recipient). Because the recipient's attention is focused on the source of the social treatment, s/he will tend to think about that individual. Furthermore, since that individual is a representation of the social environment, cognitive inferences will be directed toward the environment, as opposed to the self. Consequently, thoughts about self-efficacy are not very likely to occur after receiving social treatment with low relevance for self-assessment, because the recipient will be more focused on the environment and because such treatments do not provide cues for self-efficacy evaluations.

While receiving high-relevance social treatments directs cognitive resources to the self, it does not automatically follow that the recipient will

attempt to evaluate himself/herself and in particular assess his/her efficacy in society. However, based on the motivation literature, there are reasons to believe that the recipient will make such evaluations. Self-assessment in general and social efficacy assessment in particular are important and adaptive goals for individuals, as discussed in previous sections (see pages 51-52 and 62-63, and references to White 1959; Kelley 1971; Bandura 1994; Baumeister and Leary 1995). Thus, individuals are motivated to actually perform self-evaluations and to monitor their efficacy in society whenever a new stimulus (e.g. a social treatment) brings in pertinent information.

In sum, social treatments with high relevance for self-assessments prompt individuals to think about themselves and their social efficacy, whereas social treatments with low relevance for self-assessments prompt individuals to think about the environment. As such, the occurrence of thoughts about self-efficacy in society depends on whether the social treatment received by individuals has high or low relevance for self-assessment.

A2: Receiving social treatment with high relevance for self-assessment is more likely to prompt consumers to think about their efficacy in society than receiving social treatment with low relevance for self-assessment.

The entire exposition of the mechanisms by which social treatment may influence recipients' behavior and the conditions under which these processes can operate leads to a number of formal hypotheses. I present these hypotheses

highlighting first the expected effects of social treatment, and then the reasons why such effects should arise.

H1. The affiliation and relevance of the social treatment received by a consumer will interact to influence the recipient's socially-elevating behavior. Specifically, when the social treatment's relevance is low, friendly (vs. hostile) treatment will increase socially-elevating behavior. When the social treatment' relevance is high differences in consumer's tendency to engage in socially elevating behaviors will be attenuated.

The details of this predicted two-way interaction are explained below, focusing on low-relevance and high-relevance social treatments in turn.

3.5.1. Hypotheses for Low-relevance Social Treatments: When the social treatment received by consumers has low relevance for self-assessment, the process based on perceived social efficacy is not likely to operate because in this case inferences about self-efficacy in society are less likely to occur (i.e. consumers would tend to make inferences about the environment rather than the self). Consequently, I expect that the affect-based mechanism will be left as main driver of the influence of friendly versus hostile social treatment on consumers' socially-elevating behavior.

To recap how the affective influence is presumed to occur, I argued based on the sociometer theory (e.g. Leary and Downs 1995) that the affiliation of a

social treatment received by consumers influences their affective state (i.e. friendly treatment generates more positive affect than hostile treatment), and that affect in turn shapes consumers' socially-elevating behavior (e.g. Berkowitz 1972; Krueger, Hicks and McGue 2001). My prediction is akin to Cunningham's (1979) proposition that affect mediates the influence of the physical environment on helping behavior. Cunningham posited and demonstrated that good/bad weather elicits positive/negative affect and makes people more/less helpful. The social environment is similar to the physical environment, as they are both rich in cues that signal favorable/unfavorable circumstances to the individual. Therefore, the present research transposes Cunningham's framework from the physical to the social environment, proposing that friendly (versus hostile) social treatment elicits positive (versus negative) affect and stimulates consumers' socially-elevating behavior. Formally:

H2. In the case of social treatments with low relevance for self-assessment, the positive effect of social treatments' affiliation (friendliness vs. hostility) on consumer behavior proposed in H1 will be mediated by positive affect.

3.5.2. Hypotheses for High-relevance Social Treatments: When the social treatment received by consumers has high relevance for self-assessment, friendly social treatments are also expected to generate more positive affect compared to hostile social treatments, which in turn will stimulate socially-elevating behavior.

However, in this case, in addition to affect a second mechanism – a negative one driven by social efficacy - is expected to occur. Receiving friendly (versus hostile) social treatment will prompt consumers to believe that they have higher efficacy in society and better chances to satisfy their need for social connectedness; therefore, they will be less motivated to engage in socially-elevating behavior.

H3. When social treatments are high in relevance for self-assessment, differences in socially-elevating behavior will be mitigated regardless of the social treatment's affiliation, due to the influence of perceived social efficacy.

Note that affect and perceived social efficacy exert their influence in opposite directions. Specifically, through the affect mechanism, the friendliness (vs. hostility) of social treatment increases consumers' likelihood to engage in socially-elevating behavior. At the same time, through perceptions of self-efficacy in society, the friendliness (vs. hostility) of social treatment decreases consumers' likelihood to engage in socially-elevating behavior. Since affect and perceived social efficacy are opposing forces, it is not possible to predict a priori whether the overall impact of social treatment's affiliation on consumers' behavior in the case of treatments with high relevance will be negative or neutral. If efficacy in society is a stronger influence than affect, social treatment will have an overall negative effect on socially-elevating consumer behavior. If social efficacy and

affect are equally powerful, they will cancel each other out, leading to no effect of the social treatment's affiliation on consumers' behavior. An interesting theoretical issue becomes identifying the circumstances under which one of these alternatives is more likely to take place. I propose that the salience of the need for social connectedness will play an important part in deciding the outcome.

In the discussion of social efficacy I suggested that the reason why monitoring self-efficacy in society is important for consumers is that it offers indications about the chance of satisfying their need for social connectedness. When consumers do not feel a need for connectedness, having high or low efficacy in society is of little importance for consumers, so their socially-elevating behavior is unlikely to be driven by the social efficacy mechanism.

A3. The social efficacy process will account for socially-elevating behavior only if consumers experience the need for social connectedness.

Because the influence of self-efficacy in society rests on consumers' need for connectedness, making this need more salient should increase the role of social efficacy, rendering it more powerful than the affective influence. This would result in a negative overall effect of social treatment's friendliness on consumers' socially-elevating behavior. Formally,

H4. When consumers' need for social connectedness is made salient and they receive social treatment with high relevance for self-assessments, the

friendliness (vs. hostility) of the treatment will decrease their likelihood to engage in socially-elevating behavior.

The proposed conceptual framework is tested in three studies as follows. Study one investigates how receiving social treatments that differ in terms of affiliation and relevance for self-assessments influence consumers' likelihood to help someone in a subsequent interaction (i.e. likelihood to help a shopper who dropped bags of groceries at a supermarket). The study consists of four experiments that employ shopping scenarios to examine whether the influence of the two dimensions of treatment on consumers' likelihood to help is indeed driven by affect and perceived social efficacy. Study two distinguishes itself through the use of actual social treatments in a field study, and tests the impact of these treatments on whether consumers pick up the tab for the person with whom they eat out. Finally, study three, which is also a field study, tests the generalizability of the framework in the context of honesty to vendors when buying products. The dependent variable is whether consumers return money to the vendor when being given too much cash back for a purchase. This final study not only tests the impact of social treatments on honest behavior, but also examines whether the underlying influence of perceived social efficacy is motivated by consumers' need for social connectedness.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY ONE

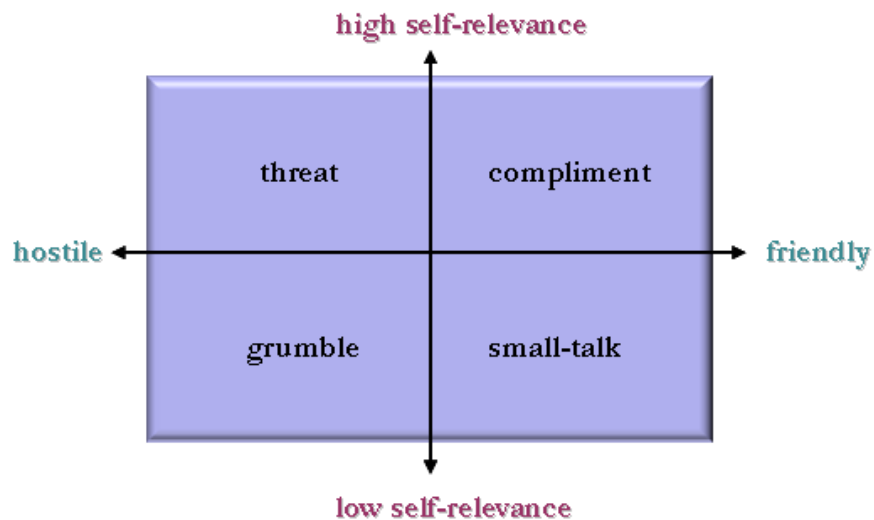
This study examines whether the type of social treatment received by a consumer during an encounter with a shopper influences consumer's subsequent likelihood of helping another person. The impact of social treatment's affiliation and relevance on willingness to help are investigated through a main experiment (experiment 1a). Three follow-up experiments test the proposed roles of positive affect and self-efficacy in society as underlying processes. To facilitate in-depth testing of the hypothesized relationships, shopping scenarios are used.

Throughout the series of experiments which make up this study, a relatively subtle form of help is explored (i.e. helping a shopper pick-up scattered bags of groceries in the supermarket).

4.1. Method - Study 1a

Data were collected from ninety-two undergraduate students (females = 59, males = 33, mean age = 22.5). Each participant was randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions in a 2 (affiliation: friendliness vs. hostility) x 2 (relevance: high vs. low) between-subjects design. The four types of social treatment generated by affiliation and relevance for self assessments were operationalized as compliment, small-talk, threat, and grumble (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Four Experimental Conditions Based on Social Treatment's Affiliation and Relevance (Study 1a)



Participants read and imagined a scenario as if it was happening to them. The scenario described a shopping experience at the check-out of a supermarket (see Appendix A), and indicated that while standing in line, a shopper behind them made a comment directed to them. They then paid for their groceries and headed for the supermarket exit. The scenario ended by indicating that as they stepped into the parking lot, another shopper stumbled and dropped some grocery bags at their feet. All scenarios were identical across conditions, except for one phrase containing the comment of the shopper from the check-out line. This was used to achieve the social treatment's affiliation and relevance manipulations: friendly/high-relevance (the shopper "compliments you"); friendly/low-relevance (the shopper "makes some small-talk"); hostile/ high-relevance (the shopper "makes a threatening comment"); hostile/ low-relevance (the shopper "grumbles at you"). After reading the scenario, participants indicated how likely they would

be to help the shopper pick up the scattered groceries (1 = extremely unlikely to help, 7 = extremely likely to help).

Given prior research findings that a person's perception about his/her ability and responsibility to help, as well as the degree of help needed, influences helping behavior (Batson et al. 1988; Clary and Orenstein 1991; Darley and Latané 1968; Mayer et al. 1985), three items were included as covariates in the analysis. Specifically, participants were asked to consider the scenario and indicate on seven point scales "what was the degree of help needed by the shopper who dropped her groceries?" (1 = extremely low, 7 = extremely high), "what was your personal responsibility to help in this situation?" (1 = extremely low, 7 = extremely high), and "how able were you to help the shopper?" (1 = not at all able to help, 7 = extremely able to help). Finally, participants provided demographic data (e.g. gender, age, and ethnicity). The survey instrument used in this experiment is included in Appendix B.

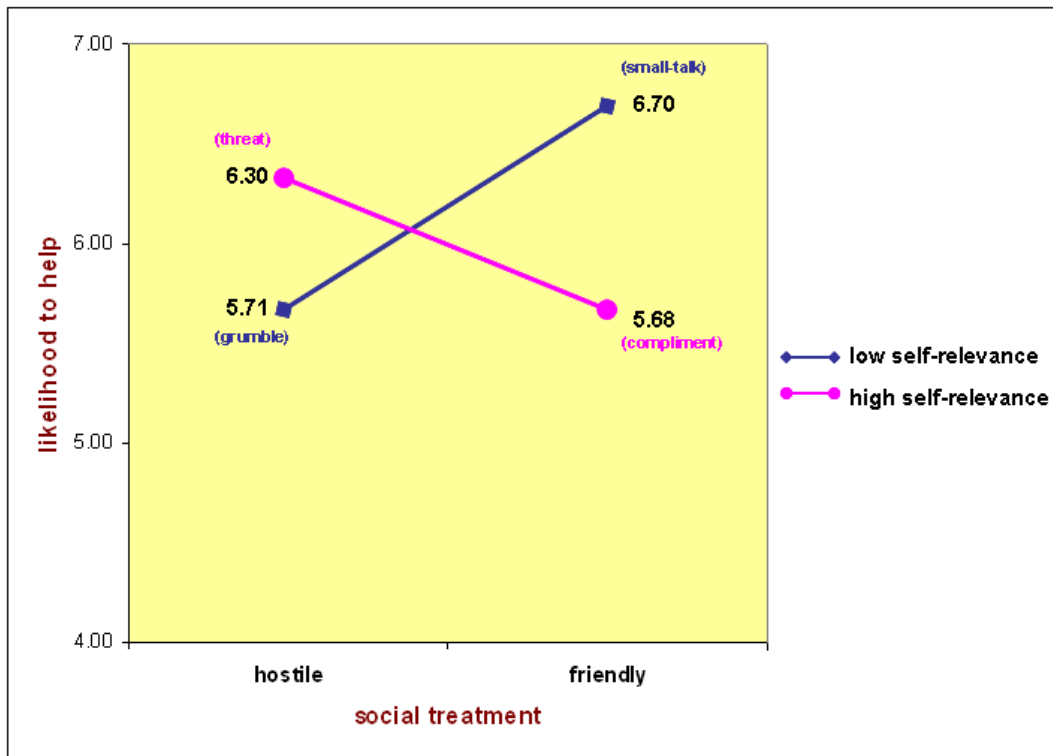
4.2. Results - Study 1a

A 2 (affiliation) x 2 (relevance) analysis of variance (ANOVA) with likelihood to help as the dependent variable revealed a significant two-way interaction ($F(1, 88) = 12.66, p = .001$; see Figure 4 and Table 1 for details).

As predicted, when social treatment had low relevance, the friendly treatment ($M = 6.70$), generated a higher likelihood to help than the hostile treatment ($M = 5.71, p = .002$). In other words, small talk triggered a higher likelihood to help than grumble. When social treatment was highly relevant, the

friendly ($M = 5.68$) versus hostile ($M = 6.30$) treatment did not motivate consumers to be more helpful. In fact, the pattern of effects was in the opposite direction and was marginally significant ($p = .057$). That is, consumers were marginally more helpful after being threatened than after being complimented. All means, standard deviations and contrasts from these analyses are listed in Table 2 and Table 3.

Figure 4: Means for Likelihood to Help Depending on Social Treatment’s Affiliation and Relevance (Study 1a)



Note 1: Operationalizations of social treatment based on affiliation and relevance are shown in brackets.

Note 2: Likelihood to help scale: 1 = extremely unlikely to help, 7 = extremely likely to help

Additional analyses were performed to test whether participants' perceptions of the helping situation influenced their willingness to help. When covariates (need degree, ability to help, responsibility to help) were included in the ANOVA along with the main factors, the interaction between affiliation and relevance remained significant ($F(1,85) = 14.89, p = .000$). Participants' likelihood to help was also significantly and positively influenced by their perceptions of ability ($F(1,85) = 17.87, p = .000$) and responsibility to help ($F(1,85) = 5.36, p = .023$). No other effects were significant ($ps > .20$).

Finally, the influence of demographic factors was assessed. Age was analyzed as a covariate along with the design factors and did not produce a significant effect ($p = .55$). In terms of ethnicity, the sample consisted of 41 Asian participants, 39 Caucasians and 12 participants from other ethnic groups. Along with the design factors ethnicity was analyzed first as a three-level factor (Asian vs. Caucasian vs. Other), which did not produce any significant main or interaction effects ($ps > .20$), and then as a two level-factor (Caucasian vs. Other), which also did not produce any significant effects ($ps > .30$). There was no main effect of gender on likelihood to help ($p = .21$), but gender interacted with affiliation ($F(1,84) = 4.73, p = .033$; $M_{\text{female_friendly}} = 6.43, M_{\text{female_hostile}} = 5.90, M_{\text{male_friendly}} = 6.19, M_{\text{male_hostile}} = 5.82$) and also gender interacted with relevance ($F(1,84) = 4.87, p = .03$; $M_{\text{female_high relevance}} = 5.59, M_{\text{female_low relevance}} = 6.44, M_{\text{male_high relevance}} = 6.25, M_{\text{male_low relevance}} = 6.06$). In these analyses, above and beyond gender effects the predicted interaction between social treatment's affiliation and relevance remained significant ($F(1,84) = 13.33, p = .000$).

4.3. Discussion - Study 1a

The results of experiment 1a indicate an interactive effect of the affiliation and relevance of social treatment received while standing in line at the check-out of a supermarket on the recipient's subsequent likelihood to help another shopper. As predicted by hypothesis 1, when social treatment had low relevance for self-assessments (i.e. small-talk, grumble), participants were more likely to help when they were positively cued by the friendly (vs. hostile) social treatment they received. This positive effect of friendliness was not observed in the case of social treatments with high relevance for self-assessments (i.e. compliment, threat). In fact, participants were marginally *less* likely to help after receiving friendly versus hostile treatment.

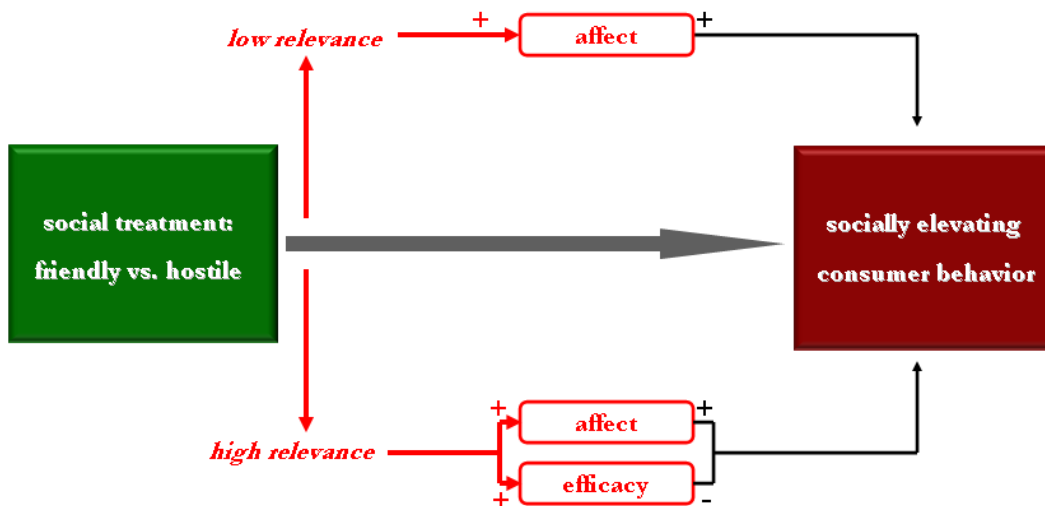
The absence of an overall main effect of affiliation on likelihood to help, and the presence of a two-way interaction between affiliation and relevance supports the proposed theoretical framework, indicating that the friendliness of social treatment does not always have a positive impact on helping behavior. The observed effects are presumed to be driven by the interplay of affect and social efficacy. To test this, follow-up experiments were conducted.

4.4. Method - Study 1b

As a first step toward exploring if affect and social efficacy (not some other mechanisms) are responsible for the impact of social treatments on helping behavior, experiment 1b tests whether social treatment influences the

hypothesized mediators as expected. The theoretical relationships investigated in study 1b are illustrated with red solid lines in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Relationships Tested in Study 1b (red lines)



This study used the same scenario-based social treatments and experimental design as study 1a. The experiment involved sixty-eight respondents (males = 18, females = 50, mean age = 22.0) who did not participate in experiment 1a but were drawn from the same pool (i.e. students from the same university). The procedure followed experiment 1a with two noteworthy differences. First, the dependent variable was no longer likelihood to help. Instead, experiment 1b assessed consumers’ affect and perceived social efficacy after receiving a particular social treatment (see Appendix C). Second, manipulation checks for affiliation and relevance were included in the survey.

Participants’ affective reactions to social treatment were measured using six-point semantic differential items (depressed-contented, unhappy-happy,

unsatisfied-satisfied, annoyed-pleased, and despairing-hopeful). These items, combined in an index of positive affect ($\alpha = .93$), were drawn from the Pleasure scale (Mehrabian and Russell 1974, Russell and Mehrabian 1977). While affective valence (i.e. felt pleasure) was hypothesized to be a main driver of the effect of social treatment on helping, it is possible that other dimensions of affect, such as arousal (i.e. the degree of stimulation caused by the surrounding environment; Holbrook and Batra 1987, Mehrabian 1995, Shaver et al. 2001), might be influential. To test this possibility, the Arousal scale (Mehrabian and Russell 1974, Russell and Mehrabian 1977) consisting of six-point semantic differential items (relaxed-stimulated, calm-excited, dull-jittery, unaroused-aroused, sluggish-frenzied, sleepy- wide-awake; $\alpha = .82$) was also included in the survey.

To assess perceived social efficacy, participants were presented with the following question: “Social efficacy refers to how well we perform during social interactions at a given moment in time. After being [complimented / engaged in small talk / threatened / grumbled at] ¹⁶ by the unknown shopper, how would you rate your social efficacy?” Three semantic differential items (poor – excellent, terrible – spectacular, bad – good) on seven-point scales were used to capture responses, and were combined in an index of perceived social efficacy ($\alpha = .89$). Note that perceived social efficacy is presumed to play a role only in the high relevance conditions. Specifically, in the proposed theoretical framework it was argued that exposure to social treatments will prompt consumers to think about

¹⁶ Each participant was asked solely about the social treatment corresponding to his/her experimental condition.

their social efficacy, but only if those treatments have high relevance for self-assessments (i.e. compliment, threat). To test if treatments with high versus low relevance differ in their ability to trigger thoughts about self-efficacy in society, three items on seven-point scales (1 = not at all, 7 = very much) asked participants to what extent the shopper standing behind them in the check-out line made them think about their efficacy, performance and adequacy in society. These three items were combined and averaged together to create an index of thoughts about social efficacy ($\alpha = .92$).

Manipulation checks were included to ascertain if compliment and small-talk are indeed perceived as friendly treatments (whereas grumble and threat are perceived as hostile), and if compliment and threat are perceived as having high relevance for self-assessments (while small-talk and grumble have low relevance). Participants were asked to rate the behavior of the shopper who addressed the comment (the shopper standing in the check-out line) on a seven-point scale from 1 = not at all friendly, to 7 = very friendly. They were also asked to indicate to what extent the shopper's behavior can be relevant to them in assessing themselves (1 = not at all relevant, 7 = very relevant). Demographic questions regarding gender, age and ethnicity concluded the survey.

4.5. Results - Study 1b

Manipulation checks: Participants' perceptions of the social treatment's friendliness were tested in a 2 (affiliation) x 2 (relevance) ANOVA. As expected, the results produced only a main effect of affiliation (see Table 4), indicating that

the friendly treatments were perceived as significantly friendlier than the hostile treatments ($M_{\text{friendly}} = 5.71$, $M_{\text{hostile}} = 1.50$, $F(1, 64) = 266.1$, $p = .000$). Post hoc comparisons were conducted to examine the details of all social treatments used in the study (see column 2 of Tables 5 and 6). These analyses revealed that small-talk and compliment were perceived as equally friendly ($M_{\text{friendly_low relevance}} = 5.86$, $M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 5.60$, $t = .70$, $p = .49$), and grumble and threat were perceived as equally hostile ($M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 1.65$, $M_{\text{hostile_high relevance}} = 1.29$, $t = .99$, $p = .33$). A second 2 (affiliation) x 2 (relevance) ANOVA with perceived relevance as the dependent variable produced only a main effect of relevance, indicating that participants indeed perceived social treatments with high relevance as having significantly more relevance for their self-assessments than treatments with low relevance ($M_{\text{high relevance}} = 4.09$, $M_{\text{low relevance}} = 2.79$, $F(1, 64) = 11.1$, $p = .001$). Post hoc analyses of means (see column 3 of Tables 5 and 6) indicated that compliment and threat were similar in terms of perceived relevance for self-assessments ($M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 4.20$, $M_{\text{hostile_high relevance}} = 3.93$, $t = .53$, $p = .60$), and small talk and grumble were perceived as equally low in relevance ($M_{\text{friendly_low relevance}} = 3.14$, $M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 2.55$, $t = 1.15$, $p = .26$). Thus, both manipulation checks were successful.

Affect: A 2 (affiliation) x 2 (relevance) ANOVA tested the impact of social treatment on participants' affective state. A main effect of affiliation on the affective valence of participants was expected. This effect of affiliation was indeed observed, revealing that participants who received a friendly treatment from the shopper in the scenario felt a significantly higher level of pleasure

compared to participants who received a hostile treatment ($M_{\text{friendly}} = 4.74$, $M_{\text{hostile}} = 2.63$, $F(1,64) = 126.4$, $p = .000$, see Table 7). A marginal interaction between affiliation and relevance was also observed ($F(1,64) = 3.7$, $p = .06$). Post-hoc analysis of means indicated that grumble and threat generated a similar level of (dis)pleasure ($M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 2.73$, $M_{\text{hostile_high relevance}} = 2.50$, $t = .88$, $p = .38$, see column 4 of Table 6), so the marginal two-way interaction was primarily due to the difference between small talk and compliment ($M_{\text{friendly_low relevance}} = 4.46$, $M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 4.94$, $t = 1.84$, $p = .07$). The fact that compliment generated slightly more positive affect compared to small talk actually strengthens the test of the proposed theoretical framework. The present framework posits that affect is not the only driver of social treatment's influence on helping behavior. If affect were the sole mechanism at play, a higher likelihood to help should be observed for compliment versus small talk, according to the positive mood - increased helping relationship from psychology research. However, experiment 1a showed a significantly *lower* likelihood to help in the case of compliment compared to small talk. Moreover, while compliment generated significantly more positive affect than grumble ($M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 4.94$, $M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 2.73$, $t = 9.29$, $p = .000$), experiment 1a showed the same likelihood to help in the case of compliment compared to grumble. Thus, while results contradict the prior framework from psychology, they provide support to the current conceptual framework which proposes that more positive affect will only increase helping behavior if it was generated by social treatments with low relevance for self-assessments. For these low-relevance treatments (small talk and grumble), as

expected, the friendly treatment generated more positive affect than the hostile one ($M_{\text{friendly_low relevance}} = 4.46$, $M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 2.73$, $t = 6.59$, $p = .000$). For the high-relevance treatments (compliment and threat), the friendly treatment also generated more positive affect than the hostile one ($M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 4.94$, $M_{\text{hostile_high relevance}} = 2.50$, $t = 9.31$, $p = .000$), but this positive effect was not expected to carry over to helping behavior due to the fact that an additional mechanism (social efficacy) presumably counteracts the influence of affect (a proposition that will be tested in the following sections).

The impact of the two dimensions of social treatment, affiliation and relevance, on participants' arousal level was also assessed. ANOVA results produced a main effect of relevance, indicating that social treatments with high relevance for self-assessment are more arousing than treatments with low relevance ($M_{\text{high relevance}} = 4.38$, $M_{\text{low relevance}} = 3.83$, $F(1, 64) = 12.1$, $p = .001$, see Table 8). The means for arousal in each experimental condition were, in descending order: threat ($M_{\text{hostile_high relevance}} = 4.68$)¹⁷, compliment ($M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 4.17$), small talk ($M_{\text{friendly_low relevance}} = 3.85$) and grumble ($M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 3.82$). If one assumes that arousal might have a positive effect on helping behavior such that people help more the more aroused they are, these results for arousal in conjunction with the results for helping behavior from experiment 1a clearly rule out arousal as a possible explanation. However, arousal might have a different type of effect on helping. In fact, in a literature review dealing with the relationship between arousal and helping behavior, Schaller and Cialdini (1990)

¹⁷ Threat was significantly different from the other three conditions, as it generated more arousal than compliment ($t = 2.14$, $p = .036$), small talk ($t = 3.21$, $p = .002$) and grumble ($t = 3.57$, $p = .001$, see Tables 5 and 6).

concluded that “when considered alone, arousal is not a good predictor of helping behavior [...but] a number of factors are likely to interact with arousal in determining one’s behavioral reaction to a helping situation.” For example, according to the mood-enhancement and mood-repair perspective, the role of arousal is contingent on the valence of a person’s affect. Specifically, given two positive affective states, individuals are more likely to help in the situation when they are more aroused, due to their increased stimulation and impulse to preserve their positive state. Given two negative states individuals are more likely to help in the situation when they are more aroused due to the increased pressure of escaping an uncomfortable state. From this perspective, comparisons should only be made within a given valence among different arousal levels. Could this alternative conceptual account explain the effects of social treatments on helping? In the present experiment, compliment was found slightly more arousing than small-talk, but not significantly so ($p = .18$, see Table 6), and both social treatments generated positively-valenced affect. Given this, if arousal were a viable explanation for helping behavior, one would have expected to observe either no difference or a higher likelihood to help after receiving a compliment compared to small-talk. However, experiment 1a revealed a lower likelihood to help in the case of compliment compared to small-talk. Thus, arousal cannot explain the results, neither as a stand-alone factor nor in interaction with affective valence.

Social efficacy: A 2 (affiliation) x 2 (relevance) ANOVA, with the index of thoughts about social efficacy as the dependent variable, was conducted. As

predicted, a significant main effect of relevance was found, such that receiving social treatment with high (versus low) relevance for self-assessments was significantly more likely to trigger thoughts about self-efficacy in society ($M_{\text{high relevance}} = 3.89$, $M_{\text{low relevance}} = 2.80$, $F(1, 64) = 7.16$, $p = .009$). No other significant effects were obtained, as illustrated in Table 7. Post hoc analysis of mean scores on the index of thoughts about social efficacy showed that the compliment condition was similar to the threat condition ($M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 3.95$, $M_{\text{hostile_high relevance}} = 3.81$, $t = .26$, $p = .79$), and small talk was similar to grumble ($M_{\text{friendly_low relevance}} = 3.26$, $M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 2.48$, $t = 1.46$, $p = .15$, see Table 6).

For social treatments with high relevance it was posited that after receiving a friendly treatment participants will perceive their social efficacy to be significantly higher compared to when receiving a hostile treatment. Analyzing the index of perceived social efficacy, this effect was indeed observed ($M_{\text{friendly_high relevance}} = 5.53$, $M_{\text{hostile_high relevance}} = 4.55$, $t = 2.62$, $p = .01$).

Demographics: Participants' gender was introduced along with affiliation and relevance in analyses of variance for each dependent variable. Gender did not have main or interaction effects for perceived friendliness ($ps > .20$) or for perceived relevance ($ps > .20$). The fact that perceptions of a social treatment's affiliation and relevance were the same regardless of perceiver's gender further confirms that our manipulation checks were successful. Gender was not significant as a main factor and did not interact with affiliation or with relevance to influence participants' affective reactions, including felt pleasure ($ps > .20$) and arousal ($ps > .50$). Furthermore, gender did not influence in any way participants'

thoughts about self-efficacy in society ($ps > .10$). Ethnicity was introduced as a two-level factor ($N_{\text{caucasian}} = 35$, $N_{\text{other}} = 32$) along with the design factors in analyses of variance for all dependent variables. Results revealed no main or interaction effects of ethnicity on perceived friendliness and perceived relevance ($ps > .30$). Also, ethnicity did not influence participants' thoughts about self-efficacy in society ($ps > .10$). However, ethnicity had a main effect on arousal ($F(1, 64) = 4.67$, $p = .035$; $M_{\text{caucasian}} = 4.30$, $M_{\text{other}} = 3.90$) and a marginal interactive effect with affiliation on felt pleasure ($F(1, 64) = 3.66$, $p = .06$; $M_{\text{caucasian_friendly}} = 4.91$, $M_{\text{caucasian_hostile}} = 2.50$, $M_{\text{other_friendly}} = 4.58$, $M_{\text{other_hostile}} = 2.83$). Age was introduced as a covariate in analyses of variance for all dependent variables and did not produce significant effects ($ps > .20$).

4.6. Discussion - Study 1b

Experiment 1b shows that the affiliation and relevance of the various social treatments investigated (i.e. compliment, small-talk, threat and grumble) indeed influence affect and self-efficacy in society as expected. Specifically, consistent with the first assumption (A1) of the conceptual framework, study 1b indicates that receiving friendly social treatment generates more positive affect than receiving hostile treatment. The findings also support the second assumption (A2), pointing out that thoughts about self-efficacy in society are less likely to occur after receiving social treatments with low (versus high) relevance for self-assessments. When such thoughts do occur, consumers perceive that their social efficacy is better after receiving friendly (versus hostile) social treatment.

A reasonable methodological question at this point would be why affect, social efficacy and helping were examined in separate experiments (1a and 1b). Why not collect data about all these variables in a single study and run mediation analyses? The simple answer is that the all-inclusive approach could lead to biased responses. For example asking participants questions about their affect could contaminate their answers to the dependent variable, helping behavior (or the other around, depending on the order of including measures in the survey). Specifically, if participants are first asked questions about affect, they would be alerted to their positive/negative emotional state and may be cued to respond to a subsequent request for help accordingly. If affect measures are included in the survey after the help question, it would be unclear what emotional response is actually captured: given that helping (or refusing help) generates its own set of emotions, participants' answers would cumulate emotional reactions to social treatment with emotional reactions after (not) helping another person, making it difficult to interpret results. A similar dilemma is associated with social efficacy measures. Including them in the survey before the help question would signal to participants that social efficacy might influence helping behavior, whereas including social efficacy measures at the end would capture participants' perceived social efficacy as a result of (not)helping another person (instead of perceived efficacy as a result of social treatment).

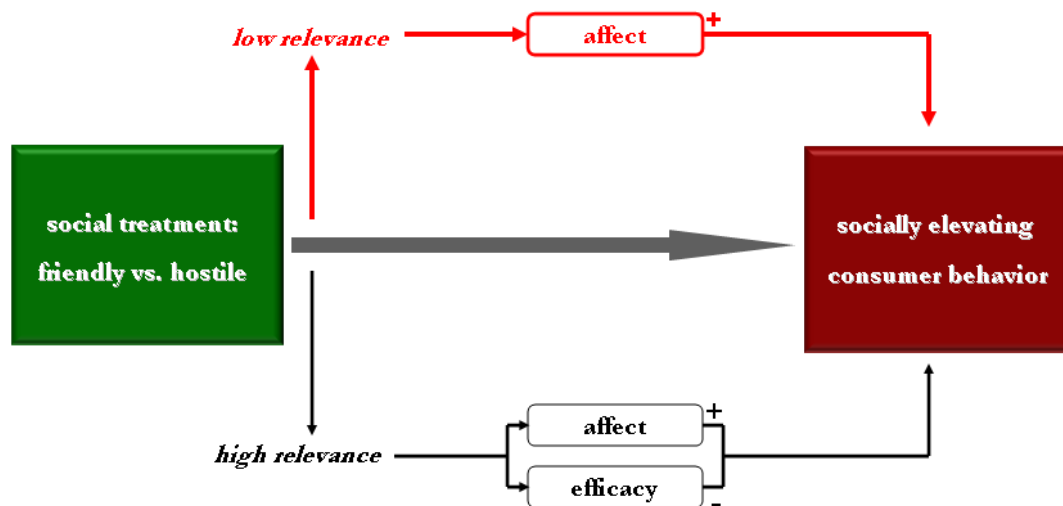
As mediation analyses are not feasible in the present experimental context, I utilize a moderation approach to test the roles of affect and social efficacy. I examine what happens to the relationship between social treatment and

helping when affect (experiment 1c) and social efficacy (experiment 1d) are stimulated or mitigated.

4.7. Method - Study 1c

Study 1c focuses on social treatments with low relevance for self-assessments, to examine the proposition that after receiving such treatments consumers' affect drives their helping behavior. The relationships illustrated with solid red lines in Figure 6 are tested, by investigating what happens if consumers are not allowed to experience their emotions in a natural flow.

Figure 6 – Relationships Tested in Study 1c (red lines)



Research in marketing and psychology suggests that an effective method of illustrating the driving role of affect is to see what happens if affect is interfered (e.g. Argo, Popa and Smith 2010; McFarland, White and Newth 2003). Making people think about their emotions typically eliminates the effects of affect

produced by a prior, irrelevant event (e.g. Beukeboom and Semin 2006; Forgas and Ciarrochi 2002; Schwarz and Clore 2003). For example, McFarland, White, and Newth (2003) showed that although people evaluate other individuals more positively when they feel good than when they are experiencing bad moods, this effect can be mitigated by the capacity to attend openly to one's feelings. Specifically, participants who were encouraged to attend to their emotional state were more likely than their counterparts to prevent positive and negative affect from biasing their judgments of a target person. In the current experiment, affect introspection will be performed by drawing participants' attention to their emotional state after reading the scenario, just before the helping question. It is expected that requiring participants to introspect their emotions should eliminate the effect obtained in study 1a for the low relevance conditions. Specifically, participants who receive social treatment with low relevance should no longer be more likely to help after being exposed to a friendly (vs. hostile) shopper. If, contrary to the proposed theoretical framework, affect is not the underlying driver of helping behavior, manipulating affect should be of no consequence to the results.

Forty-four participants (males = 26, females = 18, mean age = 22) were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions, being exposed to either a friendly or a hostile social treatment with low relevance for self-assessments. The same scenarios for small-talk and grumble used in experiment 1a were presented to all respondents. Participants were first asked to introspect their emotions by completing the 18 affect items of the PAD scale (Mehrabian and

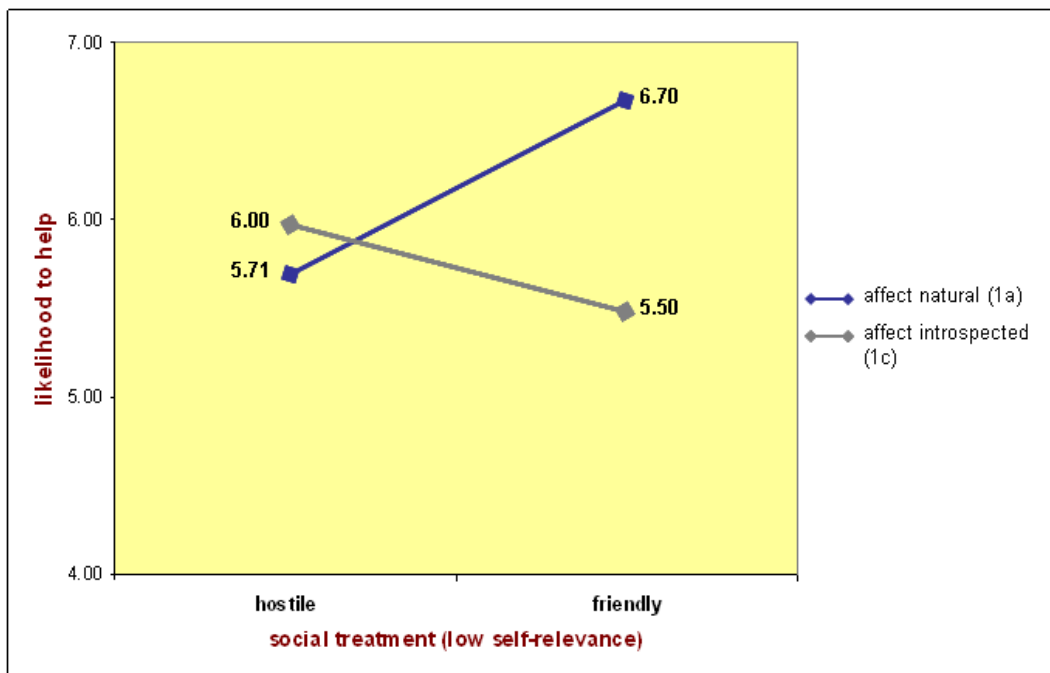
Russell 1974, Russell and Mehrabian 1977), and then indicated how likely they would be to help the shopper pick up the scattered groceries (See Appendix D). Participants also provided information regarding their gender, age and ethnicity.

4.8. Results - Study 1c

As a reminder, in study 1a when participants were exposed to the low relevance treatments and were allowed to experience their affect without interference, they were more likely to help after receiving the friendly (versus hostile treatment). The results of study 1c indicate that under the same circumstances but with affect introspection prior to the helping decision, consumers are equally likely to help regardless of whether they receive friendly or hostile treatment ($M_{\text{friendly_low relevance}} = 5.50$, $M_{\text{hostile_low relevance}} = 6.00$, $F(1,42) = .95$, $p = .34$). The leveling effect of affect introspection is shown in Figure 7.

The alleviating role of affect introspection was not dependent on participants' gender ($p = .50$) or ethnicity ($p = .35$), as these variables did not interact with the affiliation factor. In this experiment the influence of demographic variables on likelihood to help consisted of a marginal main effect of gender ($F(1,40) = 3.34$, $p = .075$; $M_{\text{male}} = 5.38$, $M_{\text{female}} = 6.28$), and a main effect of ethnicity ($F(1,40) = 8.15$, $p = .007$; $M_{\text{caucasian}} = 6.25$, $M_{\text{other}} = 4.88$). Participants' age did not have a significant influence on results ($p = .48$).

Figure 7: Affect Introspection after Exposure to Low-Relevance Social Treatments Changes Likelihood to Help (Study 1c)



4.9. Discussion - Study 1c

In study 1a it was found that consumers are more likely to help after receiving friendly (versus hostile) treatment with low relevance for self assessment. According to the theoretical framework, affective valence was proposed as a mediator for this effect. Study 1c showed that when affect is interfered, the effect of social treatment's friendliness on helping disappears. This finding offers support for the role of affect as the underlying mechanism.

Study 1d tests the remaining conceptual relationships, focusing on the role of social efficacy. Also, study 1d investigates if the influence of various social treatments on consumers' likelihood to help found in 1a can be replicated.

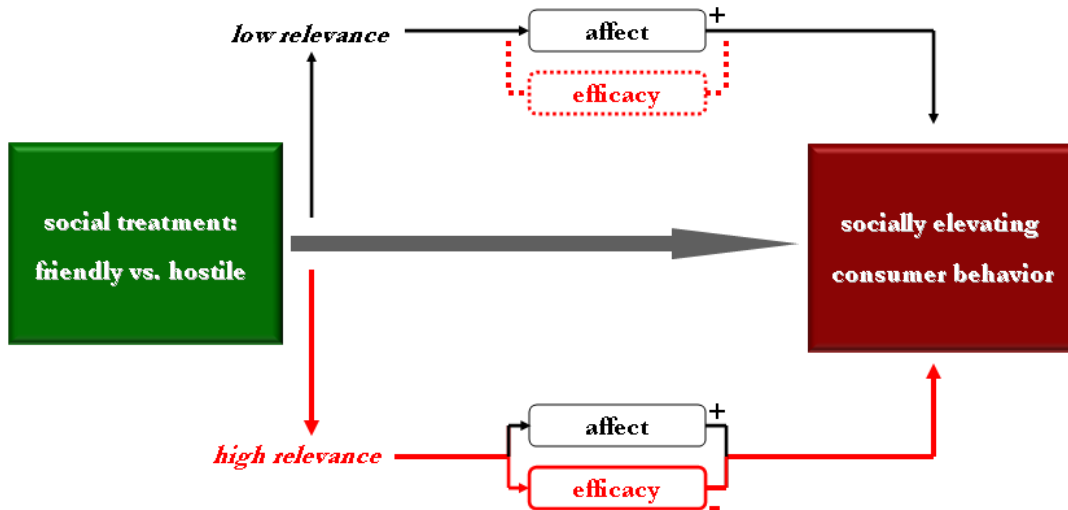
4.10. Method - Study 1d

What may still appear puzzling at this point are the findings for high-relevance treatments from study 1a, where the overall effect of friendliness on helping behavior was definitely not positive. I proposed that thoughts about self-efficacy in society influenced participants' likelihood to help in a negative direction. To test if indeed social efficacy and not some other mechanism is at play, I examine what happens if thoughts about social efficacy are prevented. For example, what happens if consumers who receive a compliment or a threat find out that the person who addressed the comment behaves this way toward everyone (i.e. there is nothing special about them that generated the treatment). In this situation, consumers would have no reason to think that they have lower social efficacy after receiving a threat compared to a compliment. So, if the proposed framework is correct, with social efficacy out of the equation a positive impact of friendliness on helping should be obtained. The relationship investigated through this moderation approach is illustrated with red solid lines in Figure 8.

For a thorough test of the conceptual framework, I apply a similar logic to the other two social treatments, small-talk and grumble. In these low-relevance conditions, social efficacy arguably does not play a role. However, if explicit contextual information is provided to participants, enabling them to make inferences about their efficacy in society (e.g. informing participants that the shopper does not tend to behave that way towards everyone and in fact something about them triggered the shopper's behavior), such information should stimulate

the influence of social efficacy (see dotted red lines in Figure 8). This should change participants' willingness to help after receiving the friendly (versus hostile) treatment, shifting it in a negative direction.

Figure 8 – Relationships Tested in Study 1d (red lines)



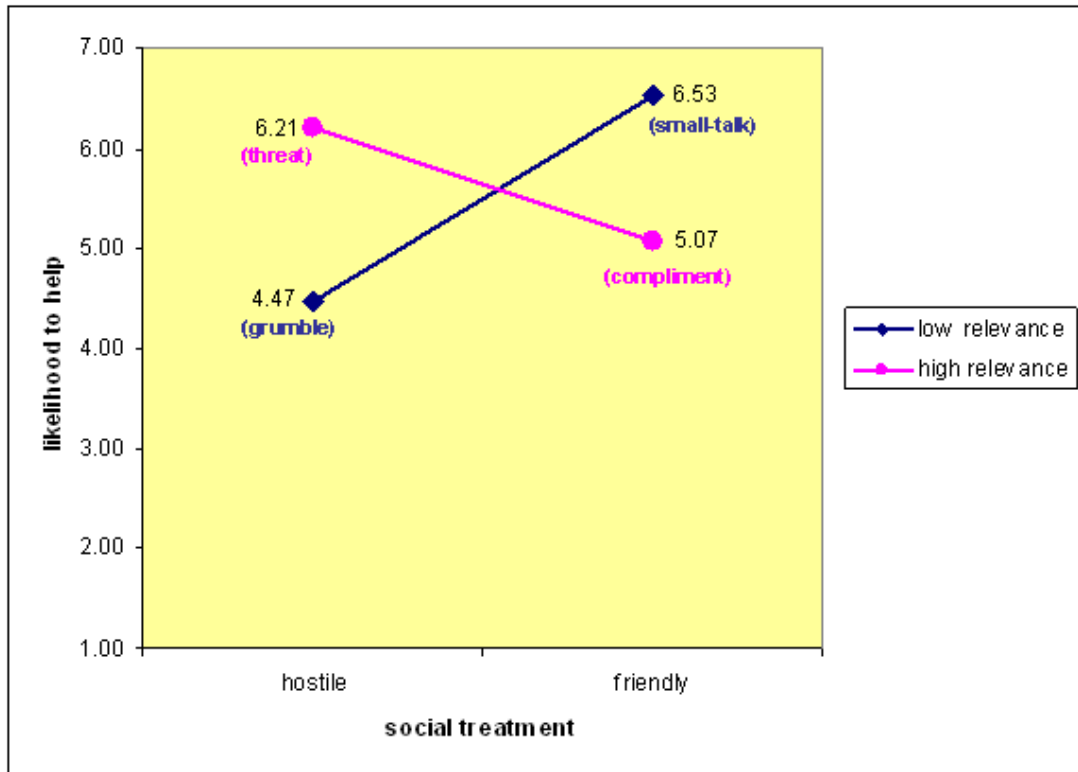
One hundred and twenty four undergraduate students (females = 60, males = 63, mean age = 21) were randomly assigned to experimental conditions in a 2 (affiliation: friendliness vs. hostility) x 2 (relevance: high vs. low) x 2 (additional information for social efficacy: present vs. absent) between-subjects design. In the *absent* conditions where no additional information for social efficacy was provided, participants read the same scenarios as in the previous experiments. In the *present* conditions participants read modified scenarios that contained an added paragraph qualifying the shopper's behavior. The additional information was different for the high and the low relevance social treatments, to allow testing the two separate predictions. Specifically, in the case of compliment and threat the

new information was designed to prevent inferences about self-efficacy in society (“You are convinced that you did nothing special to deserve the comment. The shopper seems like the kind of person who behaves this way towards everybody”). In the case of small-talk and grumble the additional information stimulated social efficacy evaluations (“You are convinced that something about you triggered the comment. The shopper doesn’t seem like the kind of person who behaves this way towards everyone”). No other changes were made to the original scenarios. Participants’ likelihood to help was again the key dependent variable. Demographic data was collected, including gender, age and ethnicity ($N_{\text{caucasian}} = 73$, $N_{\text{other}} = 49$, $N_{\text{undisclosed}} = 2$).

4.11. Results - Study 1d

First, to test if experiment 1d replicates the findings from 1a, I examined only the *absent* conditions where the unmodified scenarios were used. Results of a 2(affiliation) x 2(relevance) ANOVA revealed a significant two-way interaction ($F(1, 54) = 12.38$, $p = .001$; see Figure 9 and Table 9). Replicating the findings from 1a, a positive effect of friendliness was observed when social treatment had low relevance, as small talk ($M_{\text{friendly/low_relevance}} = 6.53$) generated a higher likelihood to help than grumble ($M_{\text{hostile/low_relevance}} = 4.47$, $p = .002$, see Table 10). This positive effect did not occur for social treatments with high relevance. In fact, friendliness tended to have the opposite impact, as consumers were marginally *less* helpful after being complimented ($M_{\text{friendly/high_relevance}} = 5.07$) than after being threatened ($M_{\text{hostile/high_relevance}} = 6.21$, $p = .087$).

Figure 9: Results for Likelihood to Help Depending on Social Treatment's Affiliation and Relevance Replicate Study 1a (Study 1d)

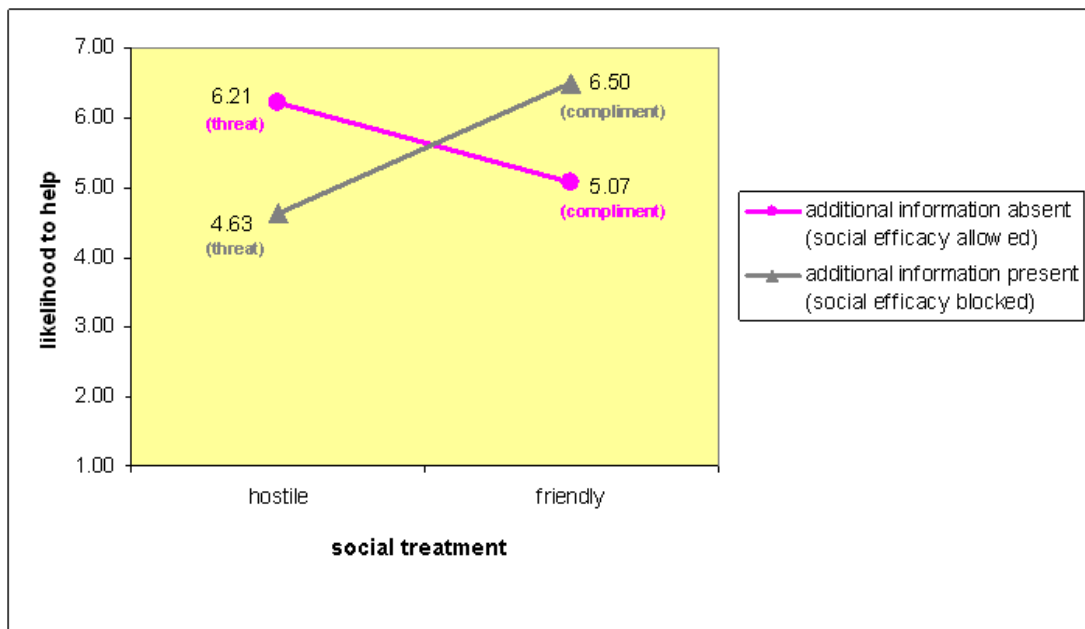


Demographic variables were added one by one to the analysis along with the design factors, and results revealed no main effects or interactions for gender or ethnicity ($ps > .50$). Age was analyzed as a covariate and had a positive main effect on likelihood to help ($F(1, 52) = 5.44, p = .024$).

Next, to examine the role of social efficacy, the impact of presenting additional information that qualified the shopper's behavior was analyzed separately for the high-relevance conditions (compliment and threat) and for the low-relevance conditions (small-talk and grumble).

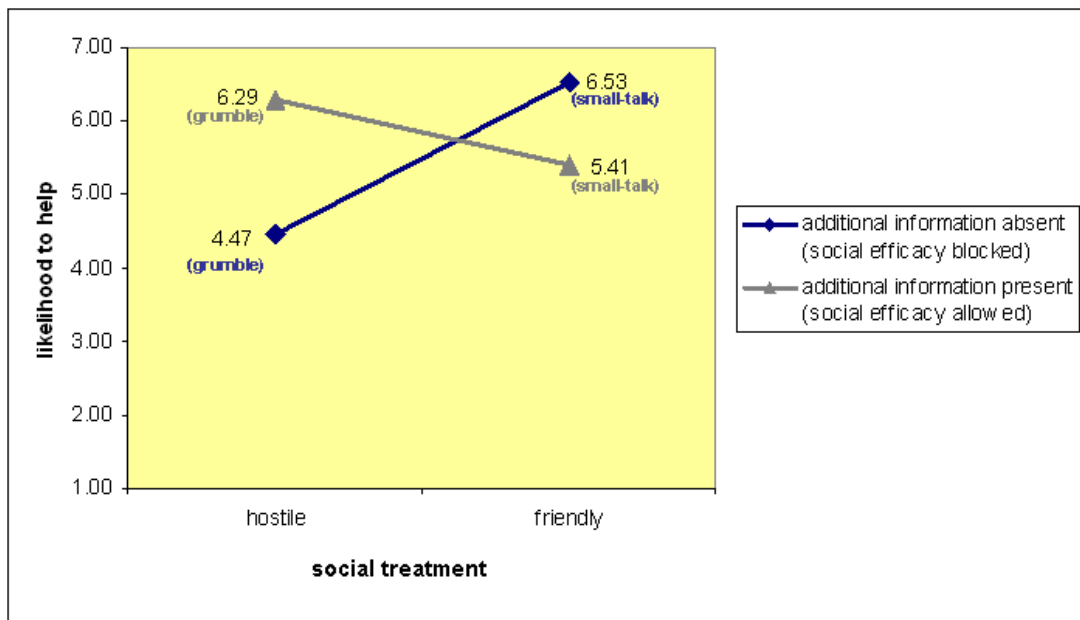
In the compliment and threat conditions, a 2 (affiliation) x 2 (additional information for social efficacy) ANOVA with likelihood to help as the dependent variable produced a significant two-way interaction ($F(1, 56) = 12.13, p = .001$, see details in Table 11). As illustrated in Figure 10, when additional information prevented participants from making inferences about their social efficacy, they become significantly more willing to help after being complimented compared to being threatened ($M_{\text{friendly}/\text{present}} = 6.50; M_{\text{hostile}/\text{present}} = 4.63, p = .002$). In fact and as expected, when social efficacy is blocked, leaving affect as the primary influence, the effect of social treatment's affiliation on likelihood to help becomes similar to that observed in the low-relevance additional-information-absent conditions, where friendliness has a positive impact on likelihood to help.

Figure 10: Preventing Consumers from Making Inferences about Their Social Efficacy after Exposure to Compliments or Threats Changes Their Likelihood to Help (Study 1d)



In the small-talk and grumble conditions, a 2 (affiliation) x 2 (additional information for social efficacy) ANOVA also produced a significant two-way interaction effect on likelihood to help ($F(1, 60) = 15.86, p = .000$, see Figure 11 and details in Table 11). The presence of additional information stimulating thoughts about social efficacy changes the effect of friendliness on helping from positive to negative, as consumers become marginally less willing to help after receiving small-talk versus grumble ($M_{\text{friendly}} = 5.41; M_{\text{hostile}} = 6.29, p = .087$). This negative difference in likelihood to help between small-talk and grumble is similar to that observed in the compliment versus threat conditions when no additional information was provided.

Figure 11: Stimulating Inferences about Social Efficacy after Exposure to Small-talk and Grumble Changes Consumers' Likelihood to Help (Study 1d)



4.12. Discussion- Study 1d

Study 1d achieved a number of purposes. First of all, it offered a replication of the effects from study 1a, showing that the affiliation and relevance of social treatment received from a shopper has an interactive impact on consumers' subsequent likelihood to help another person.

Secondly, this experiment offered process evidence for the underlying mechanism of social efficacy using a moderation approach. The logic behind the moderation approach in the case of social treatments with high relevance was as follows: informing participants that the compliment or threat they receive is due to the other person's character (not to themselves) should prevent them from making inferences about their efficacy in society. If inferred social efficacy is indeed influential in the subsequent decision to help, the manipulation should change the effect of social treatment on helping, resulting into a higher likelihood to help after receiving friendly (versus hostile) treatment. That was exactly the finding of experiment 1d.

For a thorough test of the hypothesized relationships, the low-relevance social treatments were qualified through explicit contextual information designed to allow participants to evaluate their efficacy in society. Informing participants that the small-talk or grumble they received was due to themselves not to the other person's character resulted in a change in subsequent helping behavior, increasing participants' likelihood to help after receiving hostile (as compared to friendly) treatment.

Finally, the reversal effects from study 1d provided evidence that the influence of social treatments on helping behavior was not due to the specific operationalizations used (e.g. compliment, threat) but rather to social efficacy as the underlying driver.

TABLE 1 - EXPERIMENT 1a

ANOVA Results for Willingness to Help Depending on Social Treatment's Affiliation and Relevance

	Willingness to Help		
	Sum of Squares	F- Statistic	Sig.
affiliation	0.76	0.65	.422
relevance	1.00	0.85	.358
affiliation x relevance	14.89	12.66	.001

TABLE 2 - EXPERIMENT 1a

Means and Standard Deviations for Willingness to Help Depending on Social Treatment's Affiliation and Relevance

social treatment:	willingness to help M (SD)
friendly high-relevance [compliment]	5.68 (1.55)
friendly low-relevance [small-talk]	6.70 (.47)
hostile high-relevance [threat]	6.30 (.63)
hostile low-relevance [grumble]	5.71 (1.30)

TABLE 3 - EXPERIMENT 1a

Comparisons of Means for Willingness to Help

contrasts:	willingness to help		
	<i>diff</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
grumble vs. compliment (hostile/low_relevance vs. friendly/high_relevance)	0.03	0.08	0.934
small-talk vs. compliment (friendly/low_relevance vs. friendly/high_relevance)	1.01	3.14	0.002
threat vs. compliment (hostile/high_relevance vs. friendly/high_relevance)	0.62	1.93	0.057
small-talk vs. grumble (friendly/low_relevance vs. hostile/low_relevance)	0.99	-3.12	0.002
threat vs. grumble (hostile/high_relevance vs. hostile/low_relevance)	0.60	1.88	0.063
threat vs. small-talk (hostile/high_relevance vs. friendly/low_relevance)	-0.39	-1.22	0.224

TABLE 4 - EXPERIMENT 1b

ANOVA Results for Social Treatment's Perceived Friendliness and Perceived Relevance (Manipulation Checks)

	Perceived Friendliness			Perceived Relevance		
	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.
affiliation	299.00	266.07	.000	3.08	1.39	.241
relevance	1.59	1.42	.239	24.43	11.11	.001
affiliation x relevance	.05	.04	.838	.43	.19	.662

TABLE 5 - EXPERIMENT 1b

Means and Standard Deviations for Perceived Friendliness, Perceived Relevance, Affect (Pleasure), Arousal and Thoughts about Social Efficacy Triggered by Social Treatments

social treatment:	perceived friendliness M (SD)	perceived relevance M (SD)	affect (pleasure) M (SD)	arousal M (SD)	thoughts about social efficacy M (SD)
friendly high-relevance [compliment]	5.60 (1.47)	4.20 (1.44)	4.94 (.81)	4.17 (.68)	3.95 (1.58)
friendly low-relevance [small-talk]	5.86 (.86)	3.14 (1.66)	4.46 (.98)	3.85 (.77)	3.26 (1.30)
hostile high-relevance [threat]	1.29 (.61)	3.93 (1.33)	2.50 (.48)	4.68 (.51)	3.81 (1.51)
hostile low-relevance [grumble]	1.65 (.93)	2.55 (1.50)	2.73 (.66)	3.82 (.74)	2.48 (1.63)

TABLE 6 - EXPERIMENT 1b

Comparisons of Means for Perceived Friendliness, Perceived Relevance, Affect (Pleasure), Arousal and Thoughts about Social Efficacy

	perceived friendliness			perceived relevance			affect (pleasure)			arousal			thoughts about social efficacy		
	diff	t	p	diff	t	p	diff	t	p	diff	t	p	diff	t	p
A	-3.95	11.78	.000	-1.65	3.52	.001	-2.21	9.29	.000	-.35	1.59	.116	-1.47	3.04	.003
B	.26	.70	.489	1.06	2.05	.045	.48	1.84	.070	-.32	1.34	.184	.69	1.29	.201
C	-4.31	11.68	.000	-.27	.53	.601	2.44	9.31	.000	.51	2.14	.036	-.14	.26	.793
D	4.21	11.39	.000	.59	1.15	.256	1.73	6.59	.000	.03	.12	.903	.78	1.46	.148
E	-.36	.99	.328	1.38	2.67	.010	-.23	.88	.383	.86	3.57	.001	1.33	2.49	.015
F	-4.57	11.41	.000	.79	1.40	.166	1.96	6.89	.000	.83	3.21	.002	.55	.95	.346

Comparisons: A = grumble vs. compliment, B = small-talk vs. compliment, C = threat vs. compliment, D = small-talk vs. grumble, E = threat vs. grumble, F = threat vs. small-talk

TABLE 7 - EXPERIMENT 1b

ANOVA Results for Affect (Pleasure) and Thoughts about Social Efficacy on Exposure to Social Treatment

	Affect (Pleasure)			Thoughts about Social Efficacy		
	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.
affiliation	71.50	126.40	.000	3.48	1.49	.226
relevance	.26	.47	.498	16.71	7.16	.009
affiliation x relevance	2.09	3.70	.059	1.68	.72	.400

TABLE 8 - EXPERIMENT 1b

ANOVA Results for Arousal on Exposure to Social Treatment

	Arousal		
	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.
affiliation	.948	2.010	.161
relevance	5.713	12.112	.001
affiliation x relevance	1.194	2.531	.117

TABLE 9 - EXPERIMENT 1d

ANOVA Results for Likelihood to Help: Replication with the Original Scenarios from 1a

	Likelihood to Help		
	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.
affiliation	3.090	1.025	.316
relevance	.296	.098	.755
affiliation x relevance	37.297	12.375	.001

TABLE 10 - EXPERIMENT 1d

Comparisons of Means for Willingness to Help: Replication with the Original Scenarios from 1a

contrasts:	Likelihood to Help		
	<i>diff</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
grumble vs. compliment (hostile/low_relevance vs. friendly/high_relevance)	-0.60	0.94	0.353
small-talk vs. compliment (friendly/low_relevance vs. friendly/high_relevance)	1.46	2.27	0.027
threat vs. compliment (hostile/high_relevance vs. friendly/high_relevance)	1.14	1.74	0.087
small-talk vs. grumble (friendly/low_relevance vs. hostile/low_relevance)	2.07	3.26	0.002
threat vs. grumble (hostile/high_relevance vs. hostile/low_relevance)	1.75	2.71	0.009
threat vs. small-talk (hostile/high_relevance vs. friendly/low_relevance)	-0.32	-0.49	0.623

TABLE 11 - EXPERIMENT 1d

ANOVA Results for Likelihood to Help When Additional Information for Social Efficacy is Present vs. Absent

	Likelihood to Help Small Talk and Grumble Conditions			Likelihood to Help Compliment and Threat Conditions		
	Sum of Squares	F- Statistic	Sig.	Sum of Squares	F- Statistic	Sig.
affiliation	5.588	2.557	.115	2.001	.714	.402
additional information for social efficacy	1.985	.909	.344	.096	.034	.854
affiliation x additional information for social efficacy	34.651	15.857	.000	34.001	12.125	.001

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY TWO

While study one used a scenario-based methodology to facilitate teasing apart the various components of the conceptual framework and explore process mechanisms, study two is concerned with ecological validity: it employs real social treatments and investigates actual behaviors in a field experiment. Furthermore, while study one used a dependent variable of interest to the psychology field in general (i.e. likelihood to help), study two focuses on a dependent variable strictly linked to consumers. Specifically, the study examines consumers' willingness to pick up the tab for someone else in a social consumption context (i.e., when dining out with others).

5.1. Method - Study 2

Sixty-eight university students¹⁸ (females = 42, males = 26, mean age = 24.7) participated in this 2 (affiliation: friendliness vs. hostility) x 2 (relevance: high vs. low) between-subjects study. The experiment was conducted one respondent at a time. Each participant signed up for the study and arrived at a shopping mall located on university premises, where the experimenter and another participant (in actuality a confederate) were present. Participants were informed that the task is to evaluate a store and its products. They received instructions to go to the retail establishment together (the real participant and the

¹⁸ Six other students participated in the experiment but their responses were not included in the analyses because they failed to follow the experimental instructions.

confederate), and each buy a product (ice cream for the real participant and coffee for the confederate, choosing whichever flavor they wish). They were also instructed to sit together and eat/drink at one of the tables while observing the store (e.g. employees, customers, and traffic flow), then return to the experimenter to answer a questionnaire. Following these instructions, the participant and the confederate received envelopes with more than enough money for the purchase and were told they could keep any leftover money for themselves. On their way out, the experimenter stopped participants and told them that the tables with a clear view of the store tend to be busy, so to ensure they get one, after deciding which products they want it would be a good idea if one of them (i.e. the confederate) would go save a table while the other (i.e. the real participant) stands in line to purchase the products.

At the store, when the vendor was scooping the participant's chosen ice cream, a shopper standing next in line (a second confederate) administered the social treatment. Participants in the compliment condition were told: "You sure know how to pick them! I think I'm going to get an ice cream like that for myself!" Participants in the threat condition were told "Yuck! Bad choice! You'll probably regret it!" In the small-talk condition the comment was "Isn't this the perfect day for an ice cream? Well, any day is a good day for ice cream..." In the grumble condition the comment was "I don't know why it's taking so long to order some ice cream..."

After completing the purchase, participants headed to the table where the first confederate was waiting. This confederate said to them "I think I owe you

some money for the coffee” and waited to see the participant’s reaction. The dependent variable was whether participants told the confederate not to worry about paying for the item. Results were analyzed as percentage of participants who picked up the tab in each experimental condition.

Consistent with the cover story, participants filled out a survey with questions about the product and the store (see Appendix E). For example, they were asked if customers at the store interacted with each other, if and how the store employees interacted with the customers. One question asked participants if any customers (besides the other participant) interacted with them while they were at the store. If the answer to this question was yes, they were also asked to indicate, on 7-point scales, if the customer was friendly toward them, and to what extent the customer’s behavior was useful to them in evaluating themselves. These were manipulation checks for the social treatment’s affiliation and relevance. Demographic variables (gender, ethnicity, and age) were also included in the survey but results indicated that they did not produce any main or interaction effects ($ps > .10$).

A final note is warranted to explain the selection of ice cream and coffee for this experiment. The real participant and the confederate were assigned different products to ensure that when high-relevance social treatments are administered, the second confederate from the line-up comments on a good/bad product choice made by the real participant for himself/herself (otherwise the compliment or threat could be linked to the first confederate’s choice and as such it would not be highly relevant for participant’s self-assessment). Furthermore, ice

cream rather than coffee was assigned to the real participant for two reasons. First, prior research indicates that ice cream is a product category of high interest to the population sampled (e.g. Argo, Popa and Smith 2010; Yorkston and Menon 2004). Second, in the retail setting employed for the current study there were many flavors in this product category to choose from. The limited offer of coffee flavors at the store would have provided an easy excuse for a bad selection, making the treatment less relevant for participants' self-assessments.

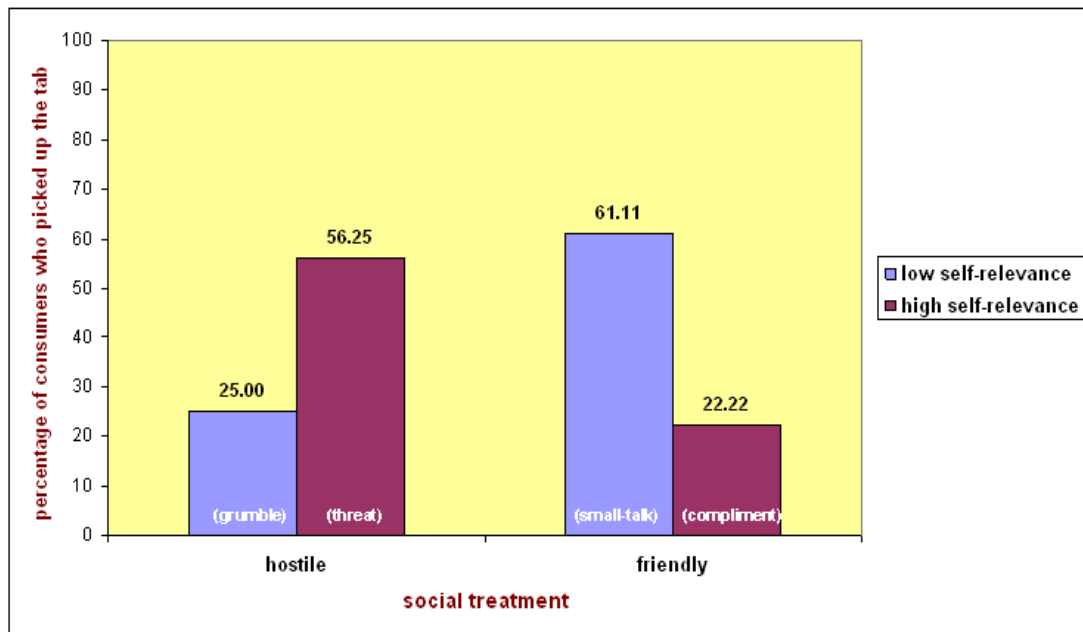
5.2. Results – Study 2

Manipulation checks: Two separate 2 (affiliation) x 2 (relevance) ANOVAs were conducted with perceived friendliness and perceived relevance for self-assessments as dependent variables. The manipulation checks were successful. First, participants perceived the friendly treatments to be significantly friendlier than the hostile treatments ($M_{\text{friendly}} = 6.04$, $M_{\text{hostile}} = 4.48$, $p = .001$, see Table 12 for all ANOVA results). Importantly, small-talk and compliment did not differ in terms of perceived friendliness ($M_{\text{friendly/low_relevance}} = 6.29$, $M_{\text{friendly/high_relevance}} = 5.64$, $p = .28$) and also grumble and threat did not differ from each other ($M_{\text{hostile/low_relevance}} = 4.30$, $M_{\text{hostile/high_relevance}} = 4.60$, $p = .64$). Second, participants perceived the high-relevance treatments to have significantly higher relevance for self-evaluations than the low-relevance treatments ($M_{\text{high self-relevance}} = 4.27$, $M_{\text{low self-relevance}} = 3.00$, $p = .01$, see Table 12). Compliment and threat were perceived as equally high in self-relevance ($M_{\text{friendly/high_relevance}} = 4.36$, $M_{\text{hostile/high_relevance}} = 4.20$, $p = .825$) and small-talk and grumble were perceived as

equally low in self-relevance ($M_{\text{friendly/low_relevance}} = 3.06$, $M_{\text{hostile/low_relevance}} = 2.90$, $p = .83$).

Main Analyses: A binary logistic regression with affiliation, relevance, and their interaction as independent variables, and the dichotomous variable pick up the tab (yes/no) as dependent, revealed that the 2-way interaction between affiliation and relevance was significant ($\beta = 3.1$, Wald $\chi^2(1, 68) = 8.17$, $p = .004$; see Figure 12 and Table 13 for details).

Figure 12: Percentage of Participants Who Picked-Up the Tab Depending on Social Treatment's Affiliation and Relevance (Study 2)



Follow-up tests indicated that when social treatment had low relevance for self-assessments, a significantly higher percentage of participants picked up the tab after receiving the friendly treatment (61.11%) compared to the hostile treatment (25.0%, $\chi^2(1, 34) = 4.48$, $p = .03$). However, the reverse was true when social treatment had high relevance for self-assessments: a significantly lower

percentage of participants picked up the tab after receiving the friendly treatment (22.22%) compared to the hostile treatment (56.25%, $\chi^2(1, 34) = 4.15, p = .04$).

5.3. Discussion - Study 2

Study 2 employed actual social treatments in a field experiment. It studied consumers' tendency to pick up the tab when eating out with someone, and showed that this type of socially-elevating behavior is interactively influenced by the friendliness and relevance of the social treatment received from another shopper prior to the consumption experience. When social treatment had low relevance for self-assessments (i.e. small-talk, grumble), participants were more likely to pick up the tab when they were positively cued by the friendly (vs. hostile) social treatment they received. In contrast, a negative effect of friendliness was obtained when social treatment had high relevance for self-assessments (i.e. compliment, threat). Specifically, in this case participants were significantly less likely to pick up the tab after being complimented compared to being threatened. These findings offer support to the proposed conceptual framework under realistic circumstances, and indicate that the interactive influence of the two dimensions of social treatment applies not only to helping behavior (as shown in study 1) but also to other forms of socially-elevating behavior.

TABLE 12 - EXPERIMENT 2

ANOVA Results for Social Treatment's Perceived Friendliness and Perceived Relevance (Manipulation Checks)

	Perceived Friendliness			Perceived Relevance		
	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.	Sum of Squares	F-Statistic	Sig.
affiliation	29.03	12.08	.001	0.33	0.10	.759
relevance	0.40	0.17	.683	21.44	6.23	.016
affiliation x relevance	2.90	1.21	.277	0.00	0.00	.996

TABLE 13 - EXPERIMENT 2

Binary Logistic Regression Results for Picking up the Tab after Exposure to Social Treatment

	DV = Picking Up the Tab (Yes/No)			
	β	S.E.	Wald χ^2	Sig.
affiliation	1.551	.753	4.240	.039
relevance	1.350	.766	3.103	.078
affiliation x relevance	-3.055	1.069	8.167	.004

CHAPTER SIX

STUDY THREE

Study 3 is another field experiment which extends the generalizability of the theoretical framework by investigating a different type of socially-elevating consumer behavior: returning money after being accidentally overpaid by a service provider. This final study also examines a hypothesis (H4) proposed in the conceptual development but not tested thus far. The hypothesis states that when consumers receive social treatment with high relevance for self-assessments and their need for social connectedness is made salient, the friendliness (vs. hostility) of the treatment will decrease their likelihood to engage in socially-elevating behavior. The assumption underlying this proposition is that the social efficacy mechanism after receiving high-relevance social treatments (i.e. after exposure to threats or compliments) rests on the need for connectedness. When consumers are threatened by other people, they are made aware that they might be in danger of becoming social outcasts; consequently, they try to redeem themselves through helping acts or other socially-elevating behaviors. When they are complimented, consumers infer that the chances of satisfying their need for social connectedness are high, so they are less motivated to improve their performance in society. To test this, study three examines what happens if the goal of satisfying the need for social connectedness is altered. While it is not possible to remove this natural need, experimental procedures are available for mitigating its importance by activating a different need. Specifically, this study employs a priming task to

make salient for consumers either the need for social connectedness or the need for uniqueness.

6.1. Method - Study 3

The study focuses on social treatments with high relevance for self-assessments (threat and compliment), employing a 2 (affiliation: friendliness vs. hostility) x 2 (salient need: social connectedness vs. uniqueness) between-subjects design. One hundred and eight¹⁹ university students (females = 66, males = 42, mean age = 22) were randomly assigned to experimental conditions. They were recruited from a research panel and invited to come to a shopping area located on university premises.

Participants were run individually and told that they would complete two tasks: a warm-up and a consumption experience task. The first step was a scrambled-sentences test used for priming (this methodology has been proven reliable in past research, e.g. Aarts et al. 2005; Srull and Wyer 1979). The test consists of twenty items, each comprised of five words, four of which can be rearranged to make grammatically correct sentences. Participants in the social connectedness condition received ten items associated with this need (e.g. *belong*, *accepted*, *social*; see Appendix F) and ten items containing words that were not associated with any particular need (e.g. mushroom, balcony). The same ten neutral sentences were presented to participants in the uniqueness condition, accompanied by ten items priming the need of being different (e.g. *non-*

¹⁹ Five other responses were not included in the analyses because participants failed to follow experimental instructions.

conformist, independent, unique; see Appendix G). On the next page of the questionnaire, to assess the effectiveness of the priming manipulation participants were asked to characterize themselves in 10 statements beginning with "I am ... " (Ten-Statement Task; Kuhn and McPartland 1954). This task has been used previously to gauge social-focused versus individual-focused descriptions (Brewer and Gardner 1996; Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee 1999; Mandel 2003). Two judges independently coded participants' thoughts into three categories: social connectedness thoughts (e.g. caring, compassionate, helpful, polite, respectful, social), uniqueness thoughts (e.g. unique, different, non-conformist, competitive, independent) and other thoughts (e.g. blonde, bored, hungry). Judges agreed on 97% of the coded items and all disagreements were resolved upon discussion. For the priming manipulation to be successful, the average number (or percentage) of social connectedness thoughts must be significantly higher than the average number (or percentage) of uniqueness thoughts following the social connectedness prime. The reverse should be true in the uniqueness prime condition.

Upon completion of the ten-statement task, participants were told that their second task was to evaluate products offered in the shopping area (e.g. food, clothing, sunglasses, or jewelry). To make their evaluation, participants were to visit a vendor, make a product purchase and then return to the experimenter to fill out a survey. Participants were given \$15 and sent to a small new retailer of

sunglasses²⁰ to try out the different models available and to buy the pair they liked the best. They were informed that they would be able to keep the product and any change remaining from the purchase. The price for sunglasses was \$13.25. Unknown to participants, the vendor was a confederate²¹ and the sunglasses display was set up only for the duration of the experiment. As participants made their choice and were ready to complete the purchase, a confederate disguised as a shopper told them either that “those glasses look really good on you” (compliment condition) or that “those glasses look really bad on you” (threat condition). When giving change back for the purchase, the vendor “made a mistake” and added an extra dollar when counting. The dependent variable of interest was participants’ reaction to the seller who gave them too much change back (i.e. whether they told the vendor about her mistake).

Following the purchase, participants completed a survey containing items similar to those collected in study 2 (including product evaluation and satisfaction questions, consistent with the cover story; see Appendix H). Also, the manipulation check for social treatment’s affiliation used in prior experiments was included (i.e. participants rated the behavior of the shopper who interacted with them on a seven point scale from “not at all friendly” to “very friendly”). Demographic data including gender, age and ethnicity was collected. Both

²⁰ The choice of sunglasses as a product category and the type of retail environment used in this study followed the research procedures of Main, Dahl and Darke (2007), who also explored compliments in experimental settings.

²¹ The confederate was selected to look like a typical vendor in the shopping area of the Student Union Building. Specifically, the confederate was young (an undergraduate student), female, and average in terms of physical attractiveness. Participants’ ratings of the physical appearance of the vendor confirmed that on a scale from 1 (unattractive) to 7 (very attractive) she was average ($M_{\text{vendor_attractiveness}} = 4.19, SD = 1.37$).

confederates - the vendor and the shopper - filled out detailed reports describing the interaction with each participant.

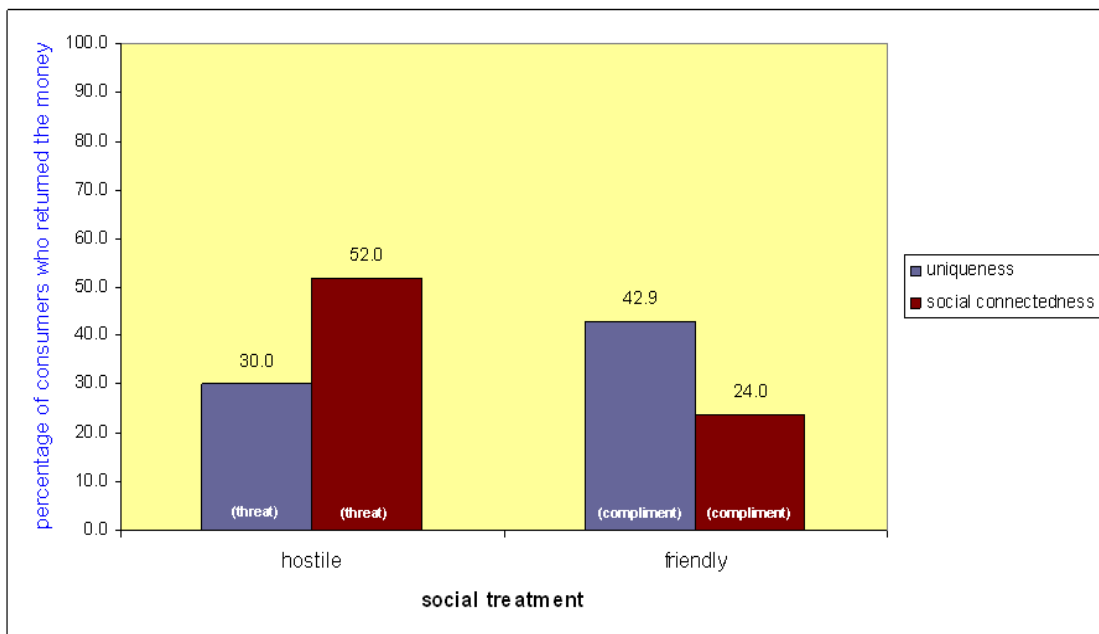
6.2. Results – Study 3

Manipulation checks: An analysis of the 1070 coded thoughts from the self-description task was conducted by creating two count variables, one for social connectedness thoughts and one for uniqueness thoughts. These were used as dependent variables in a multivariate analysis of variance, testing whether they were influenced by priming. MANOVA results indicated, as expected, a significant effect of the primed need ($F(1,104) = 7.72, p = .001$). Follow-up paired-samples tests revealed that participants who received the social connectedness prime had a significantly higher average number of social connectedness thoughts compared to uniqueness thoughts ($M_{\text{social_connectedness}} = 1.65, M_{\text{uniqueness}} = 1.08, t = 2.15, p = .037$). The uniqueness prime, in contrast, resulted in a higher average number of uniqueness thoughts compared to social connectedness thoughts ($M_{\text{social_connectedness}} = 1.48, M_{\text{uniqueness}} = 2.09, t = 2.36, p = .022$). Therefore, the priming manipulation was successful.

Participants' perceptions of the social treatment's friendliness were tested in a 2 (affiliation) x 2 (salient need) ANOVA. As expected, the results produced only a main effect of affiliation ($F(1, 97) = 138.2, p = .000$), indicating that compliment ($M_{\text{friendly}} = 6.15$) was perceived as significantly friendlier than threat ($M_{\text{hostile}} = 3.32$). Thus, the social treatment's affiliation manipulation was successful.

Reactions to the seller: The dependent variable of interest in this experiment was whether or not participants returned the extra dollar to the vendor. A binary logistic regression for this dependent variable indicated a significant interaction between social treatment's affiliation and consumers' salient need ($\beta = -.45$, Wald $\chi^2(1, 108) = 4.696$, $p = .030$, see Figure 13 and Table 14).

Figure 13: Percentage of Participants Who Returned Money to the Vendor Depending on Social Treatment's Affiliation and Primed Need (Study3)



Follow-up tests examined the percentage of participants who returned the dollar in each experimental condition. Consistent with hypothesis 4, when the need for social connectedness was primed, a significantly higher percentage of participants returned the money after receiving the hostile treatment (52%) compared to the friendly treatment (24%, $\chi^2(1, 50) = 4.16$, $p = .04$). This effect was not observed when the need for uniqueness was primed: only 30% percent of

participants returned the money in the hostile condition, compared to 42.9% in the friendly condition ($\chi^2(1, 58) = 1.04, p = .31$).

Analyses of demographic variables revealed no main or interaction effects for age or ethnicity ($ps > .10$). There was a significant main effect of gender ($\beta = 1.27$, Wald $\chi^2 = 6.64, p = .01$), indicating that females were more likely to return the extra money compared to males (45.5% versus 24.4%), and also a marginal two-way interaction between gender and social treatment's affiliation ($\beta = .87$, Wald $\chi^2 = 2.94, p = .087$; $\text{percentage}_{\text{male_friendly}} = 13.6\%$, $\text{percentage}_{\text{male_hostile}} = 36.8\%$, $\text{percentage}_{\text{female_friendly}} = 50\%$, $\text{percentage}_{\text{female_hostile}} = 41.7\%$).

6.3. Discussion – Study 3

Study 3 tested the generalizability of the theoretical framework by examining another type of socially-elevating behavior, consumer honesty toward sellers (i.e. returning money after being accidentally overpaid by a vendor). The study showed that consumers are more honest after being threatened than after being complimented by a shopper in the retail environment. This effect is consistent with the findings of study 2 and with the proposed theoretical framework which argues that perceived social efficacy, motivated by the need for social connectedness, drives consumers' behavior after receiving social treatments with high relevance for self-assessments. Further confirming this proposition, the effect was eliminated when the importance of satisfying the need for social connectedness was down-played by making another need (i.e. the need for uniqueness) more salient.

TABLE 14 - EXPERIMENT 3

Binary Logistic Regression Results for Returning Money to the Vendor after Exposure to Social Treatment

	DV = Returning Money to Vendor (Yes/No)			
	β	S.E.	Wald χ^2	Sig.
affiliation	-.168	.207	.662	.416
primed need	.016	.207	.006	.940
affiliation x primed need	-.448	.207	4.696	.030

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This chapter is comprised of four sections. The first section summarizes the findings from the laboratory and field experiments. The next two sections highlight the theoretical and managerial implications that arise from this research. Finally, the fourth section identifies the limitations of the present investigation and proposes potential avenues for future research.

7.1. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine whether and how the social treatments received by consumers in retail environments influence their socially-elevating behaviors. Further, this research aimed to understand the mechanisms that drive the impact of social treatments on consumers.

The results of three studies demonstrate that two characteristics of social treatment, affiliation (i.e. the friendliness or hostility of a social treatment) and relevance (i.e. the extent to which a social treatment has a high or low degree of usefulness for the recipient in making an evaluation of the self), interactively influence consumers' socially-elevating behavior. This influence is further shown to be driven by consumers' positive/negative affect and perceived efficacy in society.

Study 1 finds through shopping scenarios that the friendliness / hostility of the social treatment received by consumers from a shopper while standing in line at the checkout of a supermarket impacts their subsequent willingness to help

another shopper with bags of dropped groceries. The results reveal two distinct patterns of influence generated by the affiliation of social treatment, indicating that its effect on helping varies depending on the treatment's relevance for self-assessments.

When social treatment has low relevance, consistent with the mood - helping framework from psychology (Berkowitz 1987; Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980; Isen, Clark and Schwartz, 1976; Rosenhan, Salovey and Hargis, 1981; Weyant 1978), the impact of social treatment's friendliness on consumers' likelihood to help is positive and mediated by affect. Indeed, consumers who experience positive affect as a result of receiving friendly social treatment (i.e. small-talk) are more willing to help compared to consumers who experience negative affect as a result of receiving hostile social treatment (i.e. grumble). This effect of the social environment is similar to the documented effect of the physical environment (e.g. weather), whereby individuals experiencing pleasant emotions as a result of a day of sunshine are more helpful compared to people experiencing negative emotions due to bad weather (Cunningham 1979). Both sunny weather and friendly social treatments trigger positive affect because they signal to individuals a rewarding environment in which they can thrive. In turn, positive affect makes individuals more outwardly and socially focused. In sum, when social treatments have low relevance for self-assessments, friendly (vs. hostile) treatments generate more positive affect which prompts consumers to be more helpful.

However, this pattern does not hold when the social treatment has high relevance for self-assessments. In this case, even though consumers do experience positive affect as a result of receiving friendly treatment (i.e. a compliment) and negative affect following hostile treatment (i.e. a threat), they are not more willing to help in the former situation as compared to the latter. In fact, consumers tend to be less helpful after being treated with friendliness (versus hostility). The study indicates that consumers' perceptions of their own social efficacy are responsible for this outcome. High-relevance social treatment provides cues to consumers about how they are viewed in society and prompts them to update their beliefs about their social performance/efficacy. If consumers conclude that they are not appreciated in society and they run the risk of social ostracism, which arises upon being threatened, consumers aim to improve their social efficacy through helping behaviors. In contrast, if consumers conclude that their social efficacy is already high, which happens when they are complimented, they have a lower incentive to help other people. In sum, the social efficacy mechanism motivates consumers to be more helpful after receiving hostile (versus friendly) social treatment with high relevance for self-assessments.

Study 2 finds that the affiliation and relevance of social treatments interact to influence another type of socially-elevating behavior, picking up the tab when eating out with someone. Unlike Study 1, which employed a scenario methodology to better understand the psychological mechanisms driving the influence of social treatment, Study 2 used actual behaviors in a field experiment. Each participant was given money to buy and consume products at a mall together

with another participant (in actuality a confederate). During the purchase, the real participants received a social treatment from a customer standing behind them in the line-up. The results revealed, as hypothesized, that when the social treatments had low relevance for self-assessments (i.e. small-talk, grumble), a significantly higher percentage of participants picked up the tab for the confederate after being treated with friendliness versus hostility. However, when the social treatments had high relevance for self-assessments (i.e. compliment, threat), a significantly lower percentage of participants picked up the tab after being treated with friendliness versus hostility. This latter finding was not part of a formal hypothesis. The reason why no prediction was forwarded pertains to the opposing effects that could be expected. Specifically, considering the affect-based mechanism one would expect a positive influence of friendliness on socially-elevating behavior (i.e. a positive difference between the friendly / high-relevance and the hostile / high-relevance conditions). Conversely, considering the social efficacy mechanism one would expect a negative influence of friendliness on socially-elevating behavior (i.e. a negative difference between the friendly / high-relevance and the hostile / high-relevance conditions). The absence of an outcome prediction reflected the fact that both mechanisms can be expected to operate, but it is not possible to establish a priori which influence would be stronger, the affective or the social efficacy influence. Experimentally, study one suggests that social efficacy tends to be more influential than affect, and study two provides further support in this respect. Theoretically, it was only possible to specify certain circumstances under which the role of social efficacy is likely to be more

prominent. I proposed that the salience of the need for social connectedness (i.e. the need to belong, to establish and maintain interpersonal bonds) is a critical factor to consider. Individuals care about their efficacy in society because having an adequate level of social efficacy translates into a good chance of satisfying their need for social connectedness, which is a fundamental human need. When this need is salient, individuals are motivated to increase their chances of satisfying it, by improving their efficacy through socially-elevating behavior. However, if the need for social connectedness is less salient, the role of the social efficacy mechanism should be mitigated. This proposition was tested in Study 3.

Study 3 was also a field experiment, in which participants were primed with items that made salient either the need for social connectedness or the need for uniqueness. Afterward, participants made a product purchase, at which time they received the social treatment from a customer who was in actuality a confederate. The focus of the study was on treatments with high relevance for self-assessments, so participants were either complimented or threatened by the customer. When receiving cash back from the vendor, participants were overpaid by a dollar. The dependent variable was whether participants would be honest and signal the mistake to the vendor. As expected, consumers primed with social connectedness were significantly more willing to return the dollar after receiving the hostile (versus friendly) treatment. However, differences in the impact of social treatments on participants' behavior were mitigated when the need for uniqueness was primed. The results are consistent with the proposition that the need for social connectedness motivates individuals to monitor their social

efficacy and to take steps toward improving it, when necessary, by engaging in socially-elevating behaviors.

7.2. Theoretical Implications

This dissertation contributes to the literature in consumer behavior, and more generally to social sciences, in a number of ways. Five primary theoretical contributions can be highlighted. First, this research extends the literature on social influences (e.g. Argo, Dahl and Manchanda 2005; Childers and Rao 1992; Park and Lessig 1977) by examining the role of social treatment. Previous research has shown that individuals' actions can be influenced by the people around them, and has identified a number of factors that contribute to this influence. For example, the marketing literature reveals that consumers can be influenced by other consumers, by salespersons and by spokespersons, and this impact depends on characteristics such as the physical attractiveness, expertise and credibility of the source of influence (e.g. Karmarkar and Tormala 2010; Lynn and Simons 2000; Seiter 2004). I propose and demonstrate that the way the source behaves toward the consumer is also important. Thus, I bring into the spotlight the notion that consumers are influenced by the various social treatments they receive in consumption situations. This possibility has only been implied and indirectly examined in prior research (e.g. Campbell and Kirmani 2000).

Second, various disciplines including marketing, management, psychology, sociology and anthropology have produced narrow streams of research on small-talk (Dolinski et al. 2001; Efran and Broughton 1966), flattery

(Hoobler and Swanberg 2006; Main, Dahl and Darke 2007), teasing and ridicule (Keltner et al. 2001; Scambler et al. 2001; Wooten 2006), grumble (McDiarmid 2004; Yuill 1997), insult (Cohen et al. 1996; IJzerman, van Dijk, and Gallucci 2007), and threat (e.g. Baumeister et al. 1996; Heatherton and Vohs 2000). I integrate these separate lines of inquiry under the umbrella of social treatment research, and point out that the context-specific explanations offered by prior scholars can be refined and reformulated in terms of underlying dimensions of social treatment. Furthermore, while prior research has examined the influence of receiving versus not receiving one particular treatment (e.g. being complimented or not), I investigate the impact of receiving one social treatment instead of others (i.e. compliment versus small-talk versus threat versus grumble).

Third, this dissertation studies social impact in a new light. Rather than focusing on dyadic interactions and how consumers react toward the person who administered the social treatment to them, I propose and demonstrate that social treatment has a far-reaching impact, influencing consumers' behavior in subsequent interactions with other individuals.

Fourth, this dissertation contributes to the literature on affect/mood by identifying social treatment as a noteworthy antecedent of affect and by extending sociometer theory (e.g. Leary and Downs 1995). While this theory has been restricted to the negative affect generated by cues of social rejection and disapproval, I demonstrate that positive affect is elicited on exposure to friendly cues (which signal acceptance and approval in the social environment). Another contribution to the affect literature is that while existing theory from psychology

and consumer behavior proposes that positive affect/mood has a positive impact on socially-elevating behaviors such as helping (e.g. Barbee, Rowatt and Cunningham 1998; Berkowitz 1972; Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980; Schaller and Cialdini 1990), the present research shows that consumers who experience positive affect as a result of receiving friendly social treatments (versus negative affect due to hostile treatments) can actually be less likely to engage in socially-elevating behavior. This negative tendency is observed when affect is induced through social treatments with high relevance for self-assessments. Consumers' perceived social efficacy is proposed and shown to account for these results.

Fifth, the manner in which affect interplays with social efficacy is a novel theoretical element that not only contributes to the literature on affect, efficacy (e.g. Bandura 1994; Hochwarter et al. 2004) and prosocial behavior (e.g. Bagozzi and Moore 1994; Benabou and Tirole 2006), but may be applied to a variety of other research domains²² as well.

7.3. Practical Implications

Beyond theoretical contributions, this research also has practical implications, especially since the predicted impact of social treatment often conflicts with common beliefs and business procedures. For example, managers may follow normative guidelines (e.g. Timm 2007), and request that their

²² Affect and social efficacy may interactively influence other types of behaviors beyond those that are socially-elevating in nature. For example, affect and social efficacy could influence what and how much we eat when we go out; our purchases of luxury products and environmentally-friendly behavior. My framework can be used as a conceptual base for studying these various phenomena.

employees be friendly toward potential customers by engaging them in small-talk and complimenting them. However, if the managers' goal is to stimulate socially-elevating consumer behavior, the present research suggests that not all friendly treatments are equally effective in reaching this goal. In fact, if the friendly treatment has high relevance for consumers' self-assessment, it may even backfire. As another example, this research suggests that managers should not focus their training efforts solely on the service providers (e.g. salespersons); instead, they should be mindful of the fact that any person in the company environment, such as secretaries, security personnel, and car drivers, may influence consumers through the social treatment they administer. Furthermore, firms can be adversely affected by employees' transactional errors such as overpaying customers when giving cash back, or errors with checks and credit card transactions. This research points out that firms can recover some of the losses simply as a result of consumers' social consciousness. Therefore, encouraging socially-elevating consumer behavior can be a worthy pursuit for businesses that conduct their activity for profit as well as for non-profit organizations.

My research is of particular relevance to non-profit foundations, which are keenly interested in influencing socially-elevating consumer behavior (e.g. encourage potential donors and volunteers). This research offers them insights into an aspect that was under-investigated and may bring substantial rewards: specifically, that the social treatment received by consumers goes a long way in influencing their behavior. Although the present dissertation examined situations when the source of social treatment is a consumer rather than a company

employee, and firms have little control over how their customers treat other customers, the findings of this research can nevertheless be useful to organizations. Specifically, while the social treatments investigated here (i.e. small-talk, compliment, grumble and threat) may be interpreted differently when they come from a salesperson or fundraiser instead of a consumer, as discussed in the next section, the overarching dimensions of affiliation and relevance should have the same impact on consumers' socially-elevating behavior regardless of the source of social treatment. That is, the fundraiser can expect that treating potential donors with friendliness versus hostility will have a positive impact when the treatment has low relevance for donors' self-assessment (e.g. when the treatment does not convey cues to the donor regarding personal qualities or flaws), and will have a negative impact when the treatment has high relevance for donors' self-assessment.

At a more general level, this research provides knowledge that can be useful for the management of human resources and workplace relationships. In today's cut-throat business world, it may be surprising how the competitive colleagues within firms co-exist in relative harmony, although many times threats and rude behavior may escalate. My research sheds some light on the matter. Because threats do not necessarily carry-over to interactions with other people (they can actually have positive outcomes), there are cycles of good and bad behavior which overall create a delicate balance, keeping everyone afloat. Also, knowing that some social treatments (namely those with low relevance for self-assessments) do carry over to subsequent interactions allows managers of human

resources to use this knowledge in improving the workplace environment. For example, although firms typically discourage chit-chat among employees thinking it is a waste of time, in fact encouraging small-talk to a certain degree may be a good idea. Since small-talk generates a helpful orientation, it may be able to enhance teamwork, stimulate employees to help each other on projects, and exchange information or ideas, all of which can actually increase productivity. Furthermore, in the case of service providers, small-talk among employees may influence them to subsequently be more helpful with their customers, which is obviously a desirable outcome from the firm's standpoint.

In the introduction of this research I indicated that 'Pay-It-Forward' has generated real-life social movements. Realizing the potential of the pay-it-forward idea, companies have also adopted it in marketing campaigns. For example, the financial institution Servus Credit Union has launched the "Feel-Good-Ripple" campaign in 2009 in Canada (see <http://www.feelgoodripple.ca/>). The essence of this campaign is that the firm gives out \$10 to their customers with the request of using the money to help another person, and encouraging the beneficiary to pay-it-forward in turn. The campaign is advertised as follows: "Has somebody ever done something unexpectedly nice for you? Remember how good that felt? That's exactly the feeling we want to ripple [...]. We're asking you to make someone's day. Anyone's day. All in the spirit of community. Help a stranger carry groceries to their car. Give a calling card to someone far from home. Volunteer to walk dogs for an animal shelter. Do something. Anything! Make someone feel good and inspire them to do the same for someone else." The firm's

website includes testimonials from customers who got involved in the feel-good-ripple, and the local radio advertisements of the company are focused on customers reporting how their small acts of kindness have rippled into the community and changed the lives of others. Whether Servus Credit Union is genuinely interested in enhancing the welfare of the community or it simply launched the campaign attempting to increase good will toward the company (or attract and retain customers) is beyond the scope of this research. What is important to acknowledge is the taken-for-granted assumption that the consequences of pay-it-forward are positive. However, this research points out that negative consequences may arise: individuals treated well by one person may actually be less willing to do good deeds for another person.

This research provides insights not only for companies but also for consumers, as it helps enhance their awareness and vigilance of the way they can be influenced in social circumstances, and the way they influence other people. For instance, the present research informs consumers that the way they are treated by other customers when dining out can influence their likelihood of picking up the tab. Understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying social behaviors can arguably be useful to consumers above and beyond the specific circumstances investigated in this research. For example, while driving a car on overcrowded roads it is not uncommon to be yelled at or honked by angry drivers. Whether consumers perpetuate these behaviors toward other drivers, and whether they politely signal to the toll-collector that they got too much change back, will depend on how consumers feel and how they perceive their social efficacy at the

time. As other illustrations of how social treatments can affect daily life, when parents return home from work they are sometimes asked by their children to buy a hedonic item that can offer pleasure but is unhealthy or unsafe. In such situations, parents may want to think back to what happened before coming through the door: did their colleague or neighbor treat them particularly hostile that day, pointing out how clumsy they are? If so, parents may ironically be more willing to give in to their children's request (although 'common-sense' would suggest that the bad mood would make parents uncooperative). In married life, the "Honey, I'm home" phrase can build suspense for the wife/husband who wants to ask the spouse for help with moving the furniture around or to buy an energy-efficient appliance. The wife/husband may secretly hope that her/his spouse had a good day, thinking this would improve the chances that the request would receive a favorable response. Hearing that the neighbor just yelled at the incoming spouse criticizing the way the sidewalk has been shoveled might cause the wife/husband to 'wait for a better time' to make the request. Ironically, that may have been the perfect time to speak up.

Overall, the important implication to remember from this research - whether we are academics, managers, marketers, or consumers - is that the little things we say or do can have big trickle-down effects on those around us.

7.4. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As with any research endeavor there are several limitations to this work. The primary limitations stem from necessary decisions to narrow down the scope of the research to a reasonable / manageable proportion, but also result from experimental constraints. A number of future research avenues can be pursued to address such limitations and to extend the contributions of the present dissertation.

7.4.1. Developing a Taxonomy of Social Treatments: While the present work is a first step toward synthesizing the different domains of social treatment, future research should seek to understand how other types of treatment beyond small-talk, compliment, grumble, and threat, might impact consumers. The focus of this research was on the underlying dimensions of social treatment, and the methodology used (e.g. the moderation approach from studies 1c, 1d, and 3, the manipulation checks and the generalizability of findings to various behaviors as evidenced in studies 1, 2 and 3) offer clear indication that what influenced socially-elevating behavior was the affiliation and relevance of social treatment, not the specific operationalizations used. It would be interesting to find out how other types of social treatment (e.g. ridicule, insult) map onto the affiliation and relevance dimensions. To this end, a comprehensive inventory of social treatments, highlighting the similarities and differences between the various exemplars, is needed. A detailed taxonomy of social treatments would be useful not only for gauging the generalizability of the present research, but also in

establishing whether the two dimensions proposed herein (i.e. affiliation and relevance) adequately and sufficiently characterize social treatments. Each dimension may have important sub-components, and other dimensions of social treatments may exist. These possibilities are discussed below.

7.4.2. The Affiliation Dimension: In the current research, small-talk and compliment were used as friendly social treatments, while grumble and threat were employed as hostile treatments. However, at each level of affiliation, social treatments may differ in terms of the extent to which they convey friendliness/hostility (i.e. they may vary in the intensity of affiliation). During the stimuli selection process, efforts were made to hold the intensity of affiliation constant. Specifically, it was considered that small-talk and compliment convey an equal amount of friendliness, and that grumble and threat are relatively equal manifestations of hostility. Manipulation checks for affiliation in studies 1, 2, and 3 confirmed this intuition. However, these operationalizations might be context-specific. For example, I investigated social treatments received from strangers, but in the context of treatments received from friends or family the intensity of affiliation might be different for each treatment. Thus, if the context is changed, or if other social treatments beyond compliment, small-talk, threat and grumble are used as representations of friendliness/hostility and do not have equivalent intensity, it is possible that some of the findings may change. Specifically, in terms of the influence of affiliation on socially-elevating behavior, changes may occur in the statistical significance of effects, but the direction of results should

remain unaffected. For example, suppose that insolence is used instead of grumpiness, and that insolence is perceived as less hostile than grumble (this is strictly hypothetical, as research on such factors is not available). According to the current theoretical framework, small-talk should trigger a higher likelihood to help compared to insolence, but the difference between these conditions may be less prominent than the difference observed in Study 1 between small-talk and grumble.

7.4.3. The Relevance Dimension: This research has shown that social treatments such as compliments and threats are perceived to have high relevance for self-assessment, while treatments such as grumble and small-talk are perceived to have low relevance. However, it is important to remember the context in which these treatments were studied. Specifically, to allow for clean and unconfounded tests of the conceptual framework, the experimental context was simple, stripped down of redundant information, and the social treatments were administered by strangers. In more complex situations a variety of other factors beyond the treatment itself can be expected to influence perceptions of relevance. These factors include consumers' familiarity with the source of social treatment (i.e. the relationship closeness factor, which will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section of this dissertation) and the history of prior social treatments from the source. To illustrate, while a stranger's grumble can be attributed to the character of that person and as such have low relevance for the recipient of social treatment, a colleague's grumble might have high relevance if

the recipient knows that the colleague is a cheerful individual who does not express dissatisfaction without reason. Similarly, while a stranger's threat may have high relevance for the recipient, the same threat coming from a colleague who is always bullying those around him/her could have low relevance for the recipient's self-assessment. Also, the way the recipient has been treated by the source of social treatment in the past can be important, because if the history of interactions include mostly friendly treatments, a sudden hostile treatment might be perceived as more relevant (i.e. compared either to the situation when no prior interactions occurred or to the case when the relationship history includes friendly and hostile treatments in relatively equal proportions).

The causality of social treatment is another important antecedent of relevance for self-assessment. The notion of causality refers to the reasons why an event or action has occurred (Folkes 1984, 1988; Weiner 1985, 1986; Weiner and Handel 1985). When exposed to a particular social treatment, the recipient can infer either that the treatment has been caused by himself/herself or that it has been caused by something in the environment (including the character or the mood of the person who administered the treatment). When the recipient attributes the cause to himself/herself, that treatment would be perceived as highly relevant for self-assessment. Otherwise, the treatment would be perceived as having low relevance for self-assessment. Yet, attributions of causality are highly sensitive to contextual factors. For example, suppose an individual receives hostile social treatment from someone and attributes the cause of hostility to the self. Would the attribution be different if the recipient found out that the other

person was just fired? I believe that the attribution could change dramatically, as the recipient may infer that the person had a bad day and simply lashed out at him / her. This would conceivably diminish the relevance of the treatment for recipient's self-assessment. A related factor to take into account is the existence of ulterior motives for the treatment. For example, in this research participants perceived a compliment from another consumer as highly relevant for self-assessments. However, if the same compliment would have been offered to them by the salesperson before the purchase, the treatment could have been perceived to have low relevance (as consumers tend to attribute such treatments to the salesperson's ulterior motive of closing a sale; e.g. Campbell and Kirmani 2000).

Beyond environmental factors and characteristics of the source of social treatment, perceptions of relevance can also depend on characteristics of the recipient. For example, past research has pointed out that individuals differ in their sensitivity to the expressive behaviors of others (e.g. Lennox and Wolfe 1984). Individuals with low sensitivity can be expected to pay less attention to social treatments and be less able to interpret such treatments compared to individuals with high sensitivity. If this is true, the perceived relevance of a social treatment may differ depending on whether individuals have low or high sensitivity.

7.4.4. Beyond Affiliation and Relevance: Social treatment may be a multi-dimensional rather than two-dimensional construct. The present research has focused on affiliation and relevance because based on existing research these

dimensions could be theoretically linked to the dependent variables of interest (e.g. socially-elevating behaviors). The conceivable existence of additional dimensions of social treatment creates opportunities for future research. For example, one dimension of interpersonal behaviors that could be transferred to the study of social treatments is control: dominance versus submission (e.g. Carson 1969; Kiesler 1983; Wiggins 1979 and 1982; Wish, Deutsch, and Kaplan 1976). Establishing which social treatments can be perceived by the recipient as dominant and which social treatments can be interpreted as submissive, what affective, cognitive and behavioral reactions could be generated by the control dimension, and whether other dimensions must be taken into account in order to understand social treatment, are all worthy directions for further research.

7.4.5. Non-verbal Social Treatments: The experiments of the present research used social treatments expressed verbally. However, social treatment can be expressed non-verbally, through such acts as smiling or frowning at another person, and caressing or pushing another person. The primary reason why non-verbal forms of social treatment were not investigated in this dissertation was the difficulty of classifying non-verbal behavior based on relevance for self-assessments. For example, the interpretation of a smile can vary greatly depending on the person who smiles, the person who interprets the smile and situational circumstances. Nevertheless, using non-verbal behaviors as instances of social treatment seems to be a logical and interesting extension of the current work.

7.4.6. The Closeness of the Source-Target Relationship: Although this research showed how consumers are influenced by social treatments received from a stranger, it is conceivable that they may react differently to social treatments administered by friends or family. I have already mentioned that relationship closeness (i.e. the familiarity of the recipient with the person who administers the social treatment) might factor into the perceived friendliness and perceived relevance of a social treatment. Above and beyond that, there are other aspects that could be influenced by the fact that the source of social treatment is a stranger versus friend/family. Specifically, the importance of relationship closeness rests on whether consumers experience more intense affective reactions to friends/family compared to strangers, and whether the treatment of a friend/family member (vs. a stranger) has a bigger impact on perceived self-efficacy in society.

How would a stranger's hostility trigger different affective reactions from a friend's hostility? Leary et al. (1998) argued that several factors may increase the perceived hurtfulness of an act if the perpetrator is a friend/family member. First, since people expect to be treated with friendliness by friends, anything that contradicts this expectation is more noticeable and salient (Taylor 1989; Vangelisti 1994). Thus, while a stranger's hostility may produce a slight disturbance in the affective state of the target, the same hostile act coming from a friend would be more unexpected and hurtful. Second, a person treated with hostility by a stranger is, to some extent, protected against hurt feelings by the "defence of unfamiliarity" (Leary et al. 1998). Specifically, the target may try to

find excuses for the offensive treatment so as not to find himself/herself responsible, and a ready excuse in this context is unfamiliarity (e.g. “if the other person only knew me better, s/he would not devalue me”). The shield of unfamiliarity disappears when the perpetrator and the target know each other. Consequently, individuals may take hostility more personally if it comes from those who know them well. Third, many treatments may not be hostile per se, but they could be perceived by the target as hostile because they press on a personally sensitive area or taboo topic (i.e. “a raw nerve”). Strangers can be forgiven for the blunder as they had no way of knowing the hurtful potential of the treatment, but friends may be viewed as inconsiderate or intentionally hurtful, as they were well aware of touchy topics and were expected to avoid them. Finally, the hostility of friends and family members may be more hurtful because the treatment’s implications are more serious. Targets may not care so much if a stranger is hostile toward them, but they may care a great deal about hostile treatments from friends/family, as these could signal trouble in a valued relationship. In sum, hostile social treatments may trigger more negative feelings if they come from a friend or family member compared to a stranger.

Because friendliness is expected from close others, a friendly treatment from friends/family could elicit less positive feelings compared to a friendly treatment from strangers (i.e. when friendliness is the norm, the likelihood of a positive disconfirmation of expectations is lower). Overall, friends/family (vs. strangers) would trigger more negative affect when they are hostile but also less positive affect when they are friendly. If this is true, the magnitude of the

difference between affective reactions to friendly versus hostile treatments remains unchanged, but the space of affective reactions to social treatment would be scaled downward in the case of friends/family compared to strangers. To illustrate predictions in terms of helping, individuals are generally more helpful after receiving friendly versus hostile social treatments with low relevance for self-assessment. The difference in helping between friendly/low-relevance and hostile/low-relevance conditions should be the same regardless of source type (i.e. whether the source is a stranger or a friend). However, overall people would be less helpful when the source of social treatment is a friend versus a stranger. Such predictions rest on the assumption that friendly social treatments coming from friends (vs. strangers) trigger less positive feelings because they are less unexpected.

Yet, friendly social treatments coming from friends (vs. strangers) could trigger more positive feelings according to the theorists who proposed that all emotions are stronger the closer is the relationship between the people involved (Berscheid 1983; Fitzpatrick and Winke 1979). That is, friendly treatments would trigger more positive feelings and hostile treatments would trigger more negative feelings when the source is a friend compared to when the source is a stranger. If so, social treatment's effects on affect and helping should be more pronounced in the case of friends/family (vs. strangers) as sources of social treatment.

7.4.7. Characteristics of the Source of Social Treatment: The literature on social influence indicates that the outcomes of an influence process are shaped by

characteristics of the source, such as the attractiveness, credibility or power of an influencer (e.g. Friestad and Wright 1994; Reingen and Kernan 1993). As such, it is possible that the effect of social treatment on affect, cognitions and socially-elevating behavior will be moderated by attributes of the influencer. For example, highly attractive people may elicit more positive feelings when they behave friendly toward the target and more negative feelings when they are hostile toward the target, compared to sources of moderate or low attractiveness. If this is true, using highly attractive sources might enhance the magnitude and significance of the effects of social treatment on the dependent variables studied in this research. However, research regarding the impact of attractiveness suggests that another effect is also possible. For instance, Argo and Main (2008) showed that highly attractive people are immune to the stigma-by-association effect of coupon redemption on person perception. Transferring this insight to the context of social treatments, it is conceivable that receiving hostile treatments from highly attractive people may not elicit negative feelings at all, because the target may think that attractive people are allowed to behave outside typical norms of conduct. This is also suggested by research showing that individuals react differently to insults administered by highly prestigious (vs. low-prestige) perpetrators since high-status individuals are allowed to deviate from norms (e.g. Brown, Schelker and Tedeski 1972; Hollander 1958; Orbach 1978). Based on this logic, the effect of social treatment's affiliation on helping behavior may be diminished or even annihilated if the source is a highly attractive (or high-status) individual.

The link between the literature on social influences and the present research is a two-way street. That is, social treatment as identified in this proposal may moderate the relationships obtained in prior social influence research. In particular, while research on persuasion and sales force management found positive effects of a salesperson's attractiveness, credibility, and expertise on the effectiveness of the persuasion attempt (Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Carli et al. 1991; Doney and Cannon 1997; Lynn and Simons 2000; Friestad and Wright 1995; Reingen and Kernan 1993; Sternthal, Dholakia and Leavitt 1978), social treatment could enhance or diminish these effects.

7.4.8. Characteristics of the Recipient of Social Treatment: A limitation pertaining to the generalizability of current findings is related to the participants recruited in this research. Their relative homogeneity in terms of age, education, and income did not allow a thorough assessment of the potential moderating role of demographic variables. Although university students were an ideal sample given the location of the experimental lab and the shopping malls (on campus), it is possible that participants' responses may differ from those of other samples of population. For example, an older population may be less concerned with self-efficacy in society, because mature individuals may have a more established identity compared to teenagers and young adults.

The effects obtained in the present research could also be moderated by individual differences in responses to affective and cognitive stimuli, and in consumers' level of social consciousness. To illustrate, the elicitation of affective

reactions through social treatments could depend on the *affect intensity* of each person. Affect Intensity (Larsen and Emmons 1986) is a trait that reflects the extent to which individuals experience their emotions. Larsen and Diener (1987) showed that when people are exposed to a given affective stimulus, some individuals consistently respond with high levels of emotional intensity, while others respond with only moderate levels. The differential emotional reactions generalize across positively- and negatively-valenced states (Larsen and Emmons 1986; Moore and Harris 1996). Thus, individuals high in affect intensity can be expected to have more intense positive/negative affective reactions to friendly/hostile social treatments compared to individuals low in affect intensity. This may have interesting implications for socially-elevating behavior, especially in the case of treatments with high relevance for self-assessment. In particular, for individuals high in affect intensity, the affective influence of social treatment may be stronger than the social efficacy influence and as such, these individuals may be more likely to engage in socially-elevating behaviors after receiving friendly/high-relevance versus hostile/high-relevance treatments (recall that average people tend to be less likely to engage in socially-elevating behaviors under the same circumstances).

Finally, individual differences in empathy (Batson and Schoenrade 1987), or public self-consciousness (Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss 1975) may impact the effects obtained in the present research. Such variables may conceivably have a main effect on consumers' socially-elevating behavior (i.e. the higher the empathy, the higher the likelihood to help; the higher the public self-

consciousness, the higher the likelihood to help). However, there is no reason to believe that these variables would interact with social treatment's affiliation and relevance to influence consumers' behavior in a significant or conceptually interesting way.

7.4.9. Influence of Social Treatment on Other Behavioral Variables: In the present research, three types of socially-elevating behavior were selected for investigation. However, the theoretical framework could be tested with various other forms of socially-elevating behavior, including charitable donations, volunteering, gift giving, offering advice to other consumers about products or consumption practices, and behaving politely toward service providers when being put on hold.

While encouraging consumers' socially-elevating behavior is a worthy goal for profit and non-profit organizations, another goal could be to discourage socially-aversive behaviors such as shoplifting or carelessly throwing around merchandise while trying it out in stores. Such consumer behaviors negatively impact the welfare of other individuals (e.g. other consumers, the store employees who have to account for and display the merchandise), and potentially decrease the perpetrators' social efficacy. Avoiding such behaviors may be conceptually similar to engaging in socially-elevating behaviors. Hence, by extension, the conceptual framework proposed in this research could also apply to the domain of socially-aversive behaviors.

Beyond this, social treatment could influence how much food a person is going to eat when dining out with colleagues, what type of products/brands and what price a consumer will be willing to pay for them in a retail environment, how much the consumer is going to use a gym subscription, or how many books the person will read. For example, consumers who consider themselves to be chubby might tend to eat less after being threatened (vs. complimented) by someone in a restaurant. In contrast, consumers who consider themselves to be skinny might tend to eat more after being threatened (vs. complimented) by someone. The logic forwarded in the present theoretical framework can be applied to understanding the impact of social treatment on a wide range of dependent variables. The key issue in each case is to determine whether and how the dependent variable may be related to self-efficacy in society and to affect. Obviously, a host of other mediating processes and moderators may be at work depending on the focal outcome investigated. This research only begins to chart the field of social treatments, a domain full of exploration opportunities in consumer behavior and beyond.

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Appendix A

Main Scenarios (Study 1)

We would like you to imagine the following situation as if it is happening to you.

After reading each sentence, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TRY TO VISUALLY IMAGINE AND EXPERIENCE THE EVENTS IDENTIFIED:

You are standing at the cash register of a supermarket. Your groceries have been checked and bagged by an employee.

You hand the cashier a credit card to pay for your items and wait for the receipt to sign.

While you are waiting, a shopper standing right behind you in the check-out line empties out some groceries onto the check-out counter.

The shopper looks at you and compliments you²³.

The shopper looks at you and makes some friendly small-talk²⁴.

The shopper looks at you and makes a threatening comment.²⁵

The shopper looks and grumbles at you²⁶.

You sign the receipt handed over by the clerk. Then, grabbing the two light bags of purchased groceries, you head for the supermarket exit.

As you step into the parking lot, another shopper who is walking by stumbles and drops her bags of groceries right at your feet.

²³ Only visible to participants in the *Compliment* condition.

²⁴ Only visible to participants in the *Small-Talk* condition.

²⁵ Only visible to participants in the *Threat* condition.

²⁶ Only visible to participants in the *Grumble* condition.

Appendix B

Survey Instrument (Study 1a)

Please answer the following questions:

1. Considering the situation described in the scenario, how likely would you be to help the shopper pick up her scattered groceries?

Extremely unlikely to help 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely to help

2. Why did you respond the way you did to the previous question?

3. In your opinion, what percentage of other people would have responded the same way to that question?

4. Considering the scenario:

a) What was the degree of help needed by the shopper who dropped her groceries?

Extremely low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely high

b) What was your personal responsibility to help in this situation?

Extremely low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely high

c) How able were you to help the shopper?

Extremely unable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely able

Please indicate your:

1. Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

2. Age: _____

3. Ethnicity:

_____ Caucasian

_____ Asian

_____ East Indian

_____ Black

_____ Other

4. What do you think was the purpose of this survey?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix C

Survey Instrument (Study 1b)

Please answer the following questions:

1. How would you feel if the situation described in the scenario happened to you and the shopper [complimented /engaged you in small-talk /threatened/ grumbled at you]?

Depressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Contended
Unhappy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Happy
Unsatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	Satisfied
Annoyed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Pleased
Bored	1	2	3	4	5	6	Relaxed
Despairing	1	2	3	4	5	6	Hopeful
Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Stimulated
Calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	Excited
Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	Jittery
Unaroused	1	2	3	4	5	6	Aroused
Sluggish	1	2	3	4	5	6	Frenzied
Sleepy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Wide-awake

2. Considering the situation described in the scenario, how would you describe the person standing behind you in the check-out line?

Not at all friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very friendly
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3. Please think about the scenario and the shopper in the check-out line who [complimented /engaged you in small-talk /threatened/ grumbled at you]. To what extent can the shopper's behavior be relevant to you in assessing yourself?

Not at all relevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very relevant
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4. Social efficacy refers to how we perform during social interactions at a given moment in time. After being [complimented /engaged in small-talk /threatened/ grumbled at] by the unknown shopper, how would you rate your social efficacy?

Poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Excellent
Terrible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Spectacular
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good

5. To what extent did the shopper standing behind you in the check-out line make you think about:

a) Your efficacy in society

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very much
------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

b) Your performance in society

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very much
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c) Your social adequacy

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very much
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Please indicate your:

6. Gender: _____Male ___Female

7. Age: _____

8. Ethnicity:

- _____Caucasian
- _____Asian
- _____East Indian
- _____Black
- _____Other

9. What do you think was the purpose of this survey?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix D

Survey Instrument (Study 1c)

Please answer the following questions:

1. How would you feel if the situation described in the scenario happened to you and the shopper [complimented /engaged you in small-talk /threatened/ grumbled at you]?

Depressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Contented
Unhappy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Happy
Unsatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	Satisfied
Annoyed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Pleased
Bored	1	2	3	4	5	6	Relaxed
Despairing	1	2	3	4	5	6	Hopeful
Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Stimulated
Calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	Excited
Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	Jittery
Unaroused	1	2	3	4	5	6	Aroused
Sluggish	1	2	3	4	5	6	Frenzied
Sleepy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Wide-awake
Controlled	1	2	3	4	5	6	Controlling
Influenced	1	2	3	4	5	6	Influential
Cared for	1	2	3	4	5	6	In control
Awed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Important
Submissive	1	2	3	4	5	6	Dominant
Guided	1	2	3	4	5	6	Autonomous

2. Considering the situation described in the scenario, how likely would you be to help the shopper pick up her scattered groceries?

Extremely unlikely to help 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely to help

3. Why did you respond the way you did to the previous question?

Please indicate your:

4. Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

5. Age: _____

6. Ethnicity:
___ Caucasian
___ Asian
___ East Indian
___ Black
___ Other

7. What do you think was the purpose of this survey?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix E

Survey Instrument (Study 2)

Retail Establishment

1. What retail establishment did you just complete a shopping task at?

Please respond to the questions in this survey based on that retail establishment.

2. What is your overall impression of the retail establishment you visited?

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Good							
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Positive							
Undesirable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Desirable							
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Favorable							
Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Like							

3. How satisfied are you with the retail establishment?

Not at all satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very satisfied
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4. What is your impression of the way the retail establishment looks like?

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like

5. How would you describe the service provider who handled your order?

Not at all friendly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely friendly

6. How did the service provider make you feel?

Depressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Contented
Unhappy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Happy
Unsatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	Satisfied
Annoyed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Pleased
Bored	1	2	3	4	5	6	Relaxed
Despairing	1	2	3	4	5	6	Hopeful
Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Stimulated
Calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	Excited
Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	Jittery
Unaroused	1	2	3	4	5	6	Aroused
Sluggish	1	2	3	4	5	6	Frenzied
Sleepy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Wide-awake

7. Did the service provider treat you with respect?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very much so

8. In your opinion, was the service provider competent for the job?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very much so

9. About how many customers were at the retail establishment when you visited it (from your arrival until you made your purchase)?

- a. 0 customers
- b. 1-3 customers
- c. 4-7 customers
- d. more than 7 customers
- e. I don't remember

10. Did you have to wait in a long line before getting your order placed?

Yes _____ No _____

11. Excluding the participant who accompanied you at the store, did any other customer(s) of the store interact with you?

Yes _____ No _____

If you answered *yes* to the previous question, please complete the following two questions. If you answered *no* to the previous question, please go directly to question 14.

12. How would you describe the customer(s) who interacted with you?

Not at all friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Extremely friendly
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

13. To what extent can the shopper(s)' behavior be useful for you in evaluating yourself?

Not at all useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very useful
----------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

14. If other shoppers were present at the retail establishment, did they interact with each other?

Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable _____

15. If other shoppers were present at the retail establishment, did they interact with the service provider beyond ordering products?

Yes _____ No _____ Not applicable _____

21. When deciding which product to buy, did you consult with the other participant?

Yes _____ No _____

22. At approximately what time of the day did you visit the retail establishment to complete the shopping task? (e.g. 9:30am) _____

Product Questionnaire (Ice Cream)

23. Which flavor of ice cream did you purchase from the retail establishment?

24. To what extent did you enjoy the product you purchased from the retail establishment?

Did not enjoy it at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enjoyed it very much
Did not like it at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Liked it very much
Not fond of it at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very fond of it

25. What did you think of the product's quality?

Very low quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very high quality
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------

26. How much do you like ice cream in general?

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very much
------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

27. How often do you eat ice cream?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

28. What frequency best describes how regularly you eat ice cream?

___ every day ___ several times a week ___ once a week ___ once every two weeks ___ once a month ___ once every couple months ___ once every six months ___ once a year ___ less than once a year

29. Have you ever purchased products (any product, not necessarily ice cream) from this retail establishment before today's research study?

Yes ___ No ___

30. How often do you buy products from this retail establishment?

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

31. What frequency best describes how regularly you buy products from this retail establishment?

___ every day ___ several times a week ___ once a week ___ once every two weeks ___ once a month ___ once every couple months ___ once every six months ___ once a year ___ less than once a year

32. If an attractive person of the opposite sex would ask you now if you're single, what would you answer?

I'd definitely say "no" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I'd definitely say "yes"

33. To what extent is the idea of meeting a new person with whom you could flirt appealing to you?

Definitely appealing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely not appealing

Please indicate your:

34. Gender: Male Female

35. Age: _____

36. Ethnicity:

Caucasian Asian East Indian Black Other

37. Is English your first language? Yes No

38. Language most commonly spoken at home with your family:

39. Do you have a speech impediment? Yes No

40. Do you have any hearing problems? Yes No

41. What do you think was the purpose of this study?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix F

Priming Task: Social Connectedness (Study 3)

SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

Instructions: For each set of words below, make a grammatical four-word sentence and write it down in the space provided. Because there are five words in each item, one word will be left out of the sentence. Thus, do not use all five words when forming your sentence -- only four words. If multiple sentences are possible to create for any given item, write down any sentence that is grammatically correct. If you get stuck on any one particular item, you may skip it. Do not spend too long on any one item -- the idea is to work through these items rather quickly.

For example:

flew eagle the plane around

The eagle flew around.

1. the over car reliable is

2. are blooming flowers him the

3. belong I mechanical to them

4. friends accepted beach unconditionally her

5. him cat before they met

6. was he flight sociable very

7. white a sofa below it's

8. wants everybody you around domestic

9. him needed pen there they

10. washing she over dishes is

11. we to like fit in umbrella

12. going bench there the is

13. event social it's sunshine a

14. balcony stars left they the

15. fan is broken the sport

16. time left they on potatoes

17. team mates runs together celebrated

18. their asks group united is

19. tree an it's mushrooms old

20. shared similar they values plate

We would like to know how **difficult and effortful** you found the unscrambling task to be. Please circle your response to the scales presented below.

The task of unscrambling the sentences was:

Easy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Difficult
Effortless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effortful
Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Tough

There are ten numbered blanks on the page below. Please write ten answers to the simple question “Who am I and what characterizes me?” in the blanks. Just give ten different answers to this question.

Answer as if you were giving the answers to yourself, not to somebody else.

Write the answers in the order that they occur to you. Don’t worry about logic or “importance”. Go along fairly fast, for time is limited.

1. I am

2. I am

3. I am

4. I am

5. I am

6. I am

7. I am

8. I am

9. I am

10. I am

Appendix G

Priming Task: Uniqueness (Study 3)

SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

Instructions: For each set of words below, make a grammatical four-word sentence and write it down in the space provided. Because there are five words in each item, one word will be left out of the sentence. Thus, do not use all five words when forming your sentence -- only four words. If multiple sentences are possible to create for any given item, write down any sentence that is grammatically correct. If you get stuck on any one particular item, you may skip it. Do not spend too long on any one item -- the idea is to work through these items rather quickly.

For example:

flew eagle the plane around

The eagle flew around.

1. the over car reliable is

2. are blooming flowers him the

3. non-conformist he a is mechanical

4. are very they beach independent

5. him cat before they met

6. unique her style flight is

7. white a sofa below it's

8. their son domestic rebellious was

9. stands out her achievement sunshine

10. washing she over dishes is

11. he umbrella challenges norms always

12. going bench there the is

13. personal respected values are pen

14. balcony stars left they the

15. fan is broken the sport

16. time left they on potatoes

17. individual runs effort pays off

18. asks her different approach is

19. tree an it's mushrooms old

20. that plate autonomous person succeeded

We would like to know how **difficult and effortful** you found the unscrambling task to be. Please circle your response to the scales presented below.

The task of unscrambling the sentences was

Easy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Difficult
Effortless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effortful
Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Tough

There are ten numbered blanks on the page below. Please write ten answers to the simple question “Who am I and what characterizes me?” in the blanks. Just give ten different answers to this question.

Answer as if you were giving the answers to yourself, not to somebody else.

Write the answers in the order that they occur to you. Don’t worry about logic or “importance”. Go along fairly fast, for time is limited.

1. I am

2. I am

3. I am

4. I am

5. I am

6. I am

7. I am

8. I am

9. I am

10. I am

Appendix H

Survey Instrument (Study 3)

1. Which product type did you purchase? (*please indicate the product category only – e.g. bracelet*) _____

2. To what extent do you like the specific product you purchased?

Do not like it at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like it very much

Not fond of it at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very fond of it

Do not enjoy it at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Enjoy it very much

3. What do you think of the product's quality?

Very low quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very high quality

4. How would you describe the salesperson who handled your order?

Not at all friendly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely friendly

5. How did the salesperson make you feel?

Depressed 1 2 3 4 5 6 Contended

Unhappy 1 2 3 4 5 6 Happy

Unsatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 Satisfied

Annoyed 1 2 3 4 5 6 Pleased

Bored 1 2 3 4 5 6 Relaxed

Despairing 1 2 3 4 5 6 Hopeful

Relaxed 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stimulated

Calm 1 2 3 4 5 6 Excited

Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	Jittery
Unaroused	1	2	3	4	5	6	Aroused
Sluggish	1	2	3	4	5	6	Frenzied
Sleepy	1	2	3	4	5	6	Wide-awake

6. Did the salesperson treat you with respect?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very much so

7. In your opinion, was the salesperson competent for the job?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very much so

8. How would you describe the salesperson in terms of physical appearance?

Unattractive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very attractive

Unlikeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likeable

9. Did you have to wait in a long line before getting your order placed?

Yes ____ No ____

10. About how many customers were at the retail establishment when you visited it (from your arrival until you made your purchase)?

- a. 0 customers
- b. 1-2 customers
- c. 3-5 customers
- d. more than 5 customers
- e. I don't remember

11. If other shoppers were present at the retail site, did any of them interact with the salesperson beyond ordering products?

Yes ____ No ____ Not applicable ____

12. If other shoppers were present at the retail site, did they interact with each other?

Yes ____ No ____ Not applicable ____

13. If other shoppers were present at the retail site, did any of them talk to you?

Yes ____ No ____ Not applicable ____

If you answered *yes* to the previous question, please complete the following (question 14). If you answered *no* to the previous question, please go directly to question 15.

14. How would you describe the shopper(s) who interacted with you?

Not at all friendly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely friendly

15. How easy was it for you to locate the product that you went to buy?

Not at all easy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely easy

16. Did you like how the product you purchased was displayed?

Did not like at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Liked very much

17. How clearly were the prices of the products displayed?

Not at all clear 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very clear

18. What was the price of the product you bought? \$ _____

19. When purchasing the product, did you pay cash? Yes ____ No ____

20. If your answer to the previous question is “yes” (i.e. if you used cash for your purchase), please indicate how much change you received from the vendor:

21. At approximately what time of the day did you visit the retail site to complete the shopping task? (e.g. 9:30am) _____

22. If an attractive person of the opposite sex would ask you now if you’re single, what would you answer?

I’d definitely say “no” 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I’d definitely say “yes”

23. To what extent is the idea of meeting a new person with whom you could flirt appealing to you?

Definitely appealing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely not appealing

Please indicate your:

24. Gender: __Male ___Female

25. Age: _____

26. Ethnicity:

____Caucasian _____Asian _____East Indian _____Black _____Other

27. Do you have a speech impediment? Yes _____ No _____

28. Do you have any hearing problems? Yes _____ No _____

29. What do you think was the purpose of this study?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!