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Relational communication and personality traits: Effects on telemarketing sales success

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Relational Communication and Personality Traits:

Effects on Telemarketing Sales Success

By

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Business in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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Abstract

Relational Communication and Personality Traits:
Effects on Telemarketing Sales Success

by

Carolyn E. Predmore

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Traditionally, sales research has taken two approaches. One focused on the measurement of personality traits to indicate future sales success and the other suggested that process methods should be used to examine sales interactions in progress. Previous sales studies have not used any process tools to measure sales interactions as they proceed. Previous theoretical research from communications studies and one theoretical sales discussion on process methodology had suggested the use of a relational coding scheme to assess the behaviors manifested during sales interactions. Traditional sales research had used self-report measures of personality traits such as adaptability and dominance which had equivocal results.

The primary purpose of the paper was to examine sales interactions using a process approach, relational communication coding, which had been suggested previously, but never studied empirically. Additionally, this study has tried to provide a link between the personality research and

process measurements of behavior by exploring the relationships between dominance and adaptability as measured by both methods and the dependent measure of sales success experienced during the sales interactions.

Ten sales conversations for each of fifty-two telemarketers were tape recorded. Each of the conversations was an actual business sales call. Conversations of two of the telemarketers could not be used due to electronic interference obliterating the conversations. Fifty telemarketers, fifteen male and thirty-five female telemarketers, were usable subjects. A total of 500 conversations were coded using the Rogers, Courtright and Miller coding scheme (1979) which involves a three digit code to denote the speaker, the type of grammatical response and the type of relational control embodied in the response.

The California Personality Index was used to get a self-report measure of dominance. The self-monitoring scale developed by Snyder (1972) was used as a self-report measure of adaptability as suggested by Weitz (1981).

It was found that the self-report personality measures and the process measures did not measure the same things as there was no relationship between the two types of adaptability and dominance.

There was a significant relationship between the self-report measure of self-monitoring used to determine one form of adaptability and sales success. High self-monitoring salespeople have significantly more sales success than low self-monitoring salespeople (Wilcoxon rank sum statistic with the normal approximation; $Z = 2.252$, $p = .0059$).

It was also found that low self-monitoring salespeople complete sales calls more quickly than do high self-monitoring salespeople (Wilcoxon rank sum statistic with the normal approximation; $Z = 6.667$, $p<.001$).

These results support the literature that calls for the use of process measures to study sales interactions as the information gained from the two types of measurement tools had no relationship to each other. In order to achieve a better understanding of what happens in a sales interaction, process measurement techniques need to be used.

Secondly the results supported the research of Weitz (1981) and Weitz, Sujan & Sujan (1986) in that high self-monitoring salespeople did have significantly more sales success than did low self-monitoring salespeople. Unfortunately, relational adaptability did not have a significant relationship with sales success. There was some evidence that longer sales conversations were more successful. Further research on what type of relational response helps to extend the conversation may be quite useful.

As a practical application, the self-monitoring scale could be used to test prospective salespeople to see if they are high self-monitoring people and therefore more likely to have sales success. Additionally, the job interview itself could be tape recorded and the length of the responses and conversation could be analyzed to see if the candidate has an ability to elongate the conversation. Training costs are continually increasing and these tools could be used to eliminate those candidates who have lower aptitudes for sales.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

From the moment businesses began to sell goods and services to others, there has been a desire to predict sales success. Researchers have tried to measure a variety of demographic and psychological characteristics before and after a sales interaction in order to determine a factor or factors which aid sales success. The pre- and post- sales interaction measures have indicated a few characteristics that were thought to be important, but empirical results have been mixed (Churchill,Jr., Ford, Hartley & Walker, Jr., 1985).

Researchers have also looked at the attributes of the products and services sold for predictability of sales success. However, as McMinnamin (1990) concludes, examination of product attributes does not help predict consumer response. Reider (1990) concurs and suggests that the way a product is sold is the critical issue.

Since the question of what leads to sales success has not been answered by characteristics of the merchandise nor personal traits, sales researchers have suspected that the critical clues for sales success have been contained in the interaction. Chapple & Donald, Jr., in 1947, used a measure of a general action component (talking, nodding, smiling or gesturing) during interviews to predict sales success. They found that the more active the saleswoman was, the more likely she was to be a successful salesperson. Chapple & Donald, Jr. took this to indicate that there was something in the active saleswomen's interactions that helped precipitate sales. However, the interactive measure was never used to monitor and/or categorize saleswomen's behavior during actual sales encounters in this study or others.

In fact, interest in the sales interaction led to continued attempts to examine interactional phenomena by looking at personal characteristics (Weitz, 1981). The work of F. B. Evans (1963) is an example. He called for a dyadic approach to selling. He noted "the sale is a product of the particular dyadic interaction of a given salesman and prospect rather than a result of the individual qualities of either alone" (Evans, 1963). What he examined was individual characteristics of both the salespeople and the customers to see if similarity played a part in sales success. He continued the use of pre- and post- sales interaction measures. He did not use any measure to view the actual interaction process, although his stated purpose was to study the interactive component of the two participants.

In fact, although many studies since 1947 have acknowledged that there is something that occurs during the sales interaction stemming from the responsive behaviors of the salesperson and customer, the major problem is that no one has measured the behavior during the actual interaction and its effect on sales success (Weitz, 1981; Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986). Pennington (1968) and Olshavsky (1973) seem to have come the closest of any empirical researchers to an examination of behavior during a sales interaction. They examined the different types of questions asked during a sales interaction and established that there are three phases of an interaction; orientation, evaulation and consummation. They did not make predictions about sales success.

Neither of these two researchers looked at the actions of either the buyer or seller in response to one other. Although the approach taken was a step towards a process examination of the sales interaction, it did not actually employ process measurement techniques. Interestingly, none of the sales studies, even those that advocate an examination of adaptivity during a sales interaction which, of itself, should lead one to consider process dimensions, have relied on a transactional or process approach rather than static measures.

1.1 Study Objectives

The purpose of this study was to look at sales interactions using a dynamic/process approach in which one interactant's behavior is considered as a reaction to or a function of the other interactant's behavior. Although this type of analysis of sales interactions has been suggested in previous theoretical work (Soldow & Thomas, 1984), it has not yet been studied empirically.

This omission in the body of research is important now considering the present emphasis on the idea of salesperson adaptability (Weitz, 1981; Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986; Spiro & Weitz, 1990, Szymanski & Churchill, Jr., 1990). Despite the inherently dynamic nature of this adaptability construct, it has been studied from a static perspective - as an ability/knowledge characteristic of the salesperson (Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986; Spiro & Weitz, 1990; Szymanski & Churchill, Jr., 1990). The purpose of this study was to examine adaptability as a dynamic process using the transactional measures of relational communication.

1.2 Relational Communication

Relational communication has been a topic of study since the early 1930's in anthropological/sociological research and has been found to exist in many divergent cultures using different forms of oral communication (Bateson, 1958). It looks at how each interactor defines his/her role in the interaction in response to the responses of the other participant as the interaction is occurring. According to Millar & Rogers (1976)

> "people become aware of themselves only within the context of their social

> relationships...through communicative behaviors. Message exchanges have both content and relational characteristics. Roughly the former refers to the object or referent specified in the message and the latter refers to the reciprocal rules of the interdependence that combine the persons into an interactive system."

The assumption is "that interpersonal relationships are emergent patterns; they are redundant, interlocked cycles of messages, continually negotiated and co-defined rather than unilaterally caused by personal qualities and/or social prescriptions" (Millar & Rogers, p. 118, 1987).

There has been extensive work in communications theory to develop a coding plan to categorize and define behaviors as they emerge. A number of different coding schemes can be used to categorize behaviors in any interaction using vocal behavior including sales interactions. The Rogers, Courtright and Millar relational coding scheme provided the process measure in this study (Rogers, Courtright & Millar, 1980).

In order not to lose sight of the emphasis in most previous research regarding personal characteristics of the salesperson, this study will link those concerns to process concerns by examining the relationship between static characteristics and corresponding interactive behaviors, i.e. self-monitoring and adaptability as well as trait dominance and behavioral dominance.

1.3 Dominance

The personality trait of dominance has been suggested as being important for sales success by several studies over several decades (Mayer & Greenberg, 1964; Greenberg & Greenberg, 1976, 1986). In a meta-analysis of salesperson traits and sales success, the empirical results for dominance have been equivocal (Churchill,Jr., Ford, Hartley & Walker, Jr., 1985). Yet, dominance remains on lists of important traits for salespeople to have (Stone & Wyman, 1986). Accordingly, one objective of this study was to see if there is a relationship between the personality trait of dominance and the behavioral manifestation of dominance as indicated by relational communication measures.

It may be that dominant people do not always exhibit dominant behavior during different sales interactions. Snyder (1974) held that some people react differently with different people and in different situations while others respond in a consistent manner regardless of the change in conversants or situation. That difference in behavior was said to be due to how much a person monitored his/her own behavior and compared it with the behavior that was expected. Varying levels of self-monitoring on the part of salespeople might explain the previously inconsistent research findings concerning dominance as a trait.

1.4 Self-Monitoring

A second objective of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between the personality trait of self-monitoring and the behavioral manifestation of adaptability as indicated by relational communication measures. High self-monitoring people allow situational and interpersonal cues to have a large impact on their behavior. Often there is little correlation found between their privately held attitudes and their behaviors. Low self-monitoring people are much less influenced by situations and interpersonal cues and have substantial correlation between their attitudes and behavior (Snyder & Cantor, 1980). It has been suggested by Weitz (1981) that salespeople who are adaptive would also be high self-monitoring people.

Weitz (1981, p.89) believed that "salespeople have the opportunity to match their behavior to the opportunity and situation they encounter." It is generally held that each sales interaction should be evaluated on its own merits. The salesperson should examine the situational cues and adapt the sales interaction so as to present the product in the best match with the customer's needs (Weitz, 1981). The ability to adapt the sales presentation to the requirements of each customer and company remains critically important.

A third objective of this study was to see if dominant, low self-monitoring salespeople manifest more dominance in sales interactions than do dominant, high self-monitoring salespeople. High self-monitoring people change their behavior to fit the situation depending on their evaluation of social cues. Low self-monitoring people try to respond to different people and different situations in the same manner (Snyder, 1974). It would be expected that a low self-monitoring, dominant person would try to remain dominant during any and all sales interactions. A high self-monitoring, dominant salesperson would be expected to have less consistent dominant behavior due to an effort to be responsive to the variations in different sales situations and differences in his/her customers' behaviors.

1.5 Adaptability

According to Weitz (1981) adaptability in a sales situation is exemplified by "salespeople [who] can engage in a unique behavior pattern oriented to each customer" (p.92). The process view of relational communication goes a step further to address adaptation within each sales interaction. Specifically, relational communication which holds that "A's behavior affects person B's behavior, B's response affects A which in turn affects B" (Ericson & Rogers, 1973). Indeed, "people become aware of themselves only within the context of their social relationships" (Millar & Rogers, 1976).

Relational communication is a process in which every behavior functions as a response to the preceding behavior messages of the other person/people involved. A measure of adaptability would be looking to see if one speaker responded to the other/others in an accommodating fashion.

According to relational communication theories (Rogers, Courtright & Millar, 1980) these response couplets can be categorized according to the relationship between the individual messages. Specifically, a couplet is viewed as symmetrical when each person gives the same type of response; as complementary when one person gives a dominant response and the other person gives a submissive response; as transitional when one person gives a dominant or submissive response and the other gives a neutral response; or as neutral when both conversants give neutral responses. An accommodating response pattern could be indicated by complementary couplets.

As mentioned previously, there has been a great deal of emphasis on the desirability of salesperson adaptability (Weitz, 1981; Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986; Spiro & Weitz, 1990). A fourth objective was to see if a salesperson with more adaptable responses would close more sales than a salesperson with less adaptable responses using both self-monitoring and relational measures.

1.6 Phases of a Sales Interaction

There have been only few sales studies that have examined the process of a sales interaction. Unfortunately, these studies used static measures to evaluate the process. Olshavsky (1973) continued the work of Pennington (1968) in looking at the types of questions the customer asked during the process of a sales interaction. Olshavsky was able to categorize the progress of a sales interaction into three phases; the orientation phase, the evaluation phase, and the consummation phase.

Olshavsky (1973) defined the orientation phase as the part of the sales interaction when the salesperson "determined the type and level of the customers' desires" (p.208). Some sales interactions never leave the orientation phase as the salesperson determines that the product is not useful to the customer or the customer comes to the same conclusion.

The evaluation phase is defined as the part of the sales interaction when "the exchange of information pertained primarily to the specific alternatives evaluated" (Olshavsky, 1973, p. 208). Therefore questions about size, color, and content would indicate movement from the orientation phase. The consummation phase is the part of the sales interaction when the customer indicates that he is interested in purchasing the product. Olshavsky defined the consummation phase as "the exchange of information [focused] primarily to nonproduct attributes such as delivery schedules. The consummation phase typically begins with an announcement by the customer the he will purchase" (1973, p.208).

Just as high self-monitoring salespeople are supposed to use situational cues to help determine the appropriate behavior in sales situations, it would seem that use of interpersonal cues would help them have a better understanding of how the sales interaction is progressing. A high self-monitoring salesperson would seem to be better able than a low self-monitoring salesperson to pick up the cues from a customer's questions as to which phase of the sales interaction the customer is in. A high self-monitoring salesperson should be better able to note when the customer has moved from one phase to the next. A sales interaction may not go to completion if the salesperson cannot easily tell when the customer is ready for different types of information. High self-monitoring people are supposed to be more responsive to the actions of the people they interact with. Therefore, a high self-monitoring salesperson should be better able to judge when a customer has moved to the next phase of the interaction rather than continuing with the same sales phase. In the same way a high self-monitoring salesperson should be better able to recognize that a customer is interested in the product/service and should be better able to close the sale.

Accordingly, a fifth objective of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between high and low self-monitoring and success in moving through the three phases of a sales interaction: orientation, evaluation,and consummation entailing a completed sale.

1.7 Questions To Be Examined

There are six major research questions presented by these objectives. First, is the trait measure of dominance significantly related to a behavioral manifestation of dominance?

Second, is a dominant low self-monitoring salesperson more likely to manifest dominance across sales interactions more than a dominant high self-monitoring salesperson?

Third, does the trait measure of self-monitoring correlate well with a behavioral manifestation of adaptivity?

Fourth, is a high self-monitoring salesperson more likely to move through the three phases of the sales interaction more quickly than a low-self-monitoring salesperson?

The fifth research question pertains to the consummation phase of the sales interaction. Is a high self-monitoring salesperson more likely to close the sale than a low self-monitoring salesperson?

Sixth, since adaptivity is presently thought to be an advantage in achieving sales success, we can ask whether a salesperson who is high in adaptability is more likely to close a sale than a salesperson who is low in adaptability.

1.8 Study Rationale

Up to the present there seem to be two avenues of study concerning sales. Traditional sales research has been focused on individual personality traits or merchandise properties and characteristics while trying to make some predictions about the sales interaction. The other focus has been on trying to discover methods to measure what occurs during the sales interaction process (Olshavsky, 1973). Although Soldow & Thomas (1984) have suggested the use of relational communication, no empirical study has used an interactive measure to examine sales interactions. This dissertation has attempted to empirically examine sales interactions through the use of a process measure derived from relational communication and then provide some linkages from the relational measures to previous trait research on dominance and adaptability.

1.9 Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter Two reviews the relevant sales, psychology and communications literature pertaining to the topics of relational communication, dominance and self-monitoring.

Chapter Three is a discussion of the sample, relational communication measures, and other aspects of the methodology.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the results of this study.

Chapter Five presents a disucssion of the findings, practical applications and future research topics.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter examines the avenues of research described in the introduction. First the contributions of relational communication as a process approach to understanding interactions are discussed. As discussed in the previous chapter, sales interactions have been studied for years to try to determine what capabilities may make the difference between sales success and sales failure. All of the studies have relied on static measures to identify possible traits, knowledge and/or behaviors that may contribute to sales success with conflicting results. Thus far, none of the sales research has used a process approach to examine the sales interaction as it occurs. Relational communication can be used to examine verbal, nonverbal and environmental information. The present study focuses on the verbal information available for use in the sales interaction.

Second, dominant behavior in the context of a dyadic interaction is one of the behavior patterns that is measurable using relational communication coding plans and that has been studied empirically to some extent in sociological research. Sales studies, on the other hand have focused on static personality traits such as dominance to try to explain sales success with varying results. A review of the sales literature will be introduced to note the impact of dominance on sales success.

Third, relational communication measures can also be used to ascertain a measure of adaptivity. Studies of sales approaches and their effect on sales success have suggested that adaptivity may be an important characteristic of a successful salesperson (Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986). Weitz (1981) suggested that salespeople who are high self-monitors would likely be adaptive salespeople and be better able to respond to their customers. High self-monitoring people are "very sensitive to the expression and self-presentation of others in social situations and use these cues for managing their own behavior" (Snyder, 1974, p.637). The literature on adaptability and self-monitoring will be discussed later on in more detail.

Fourth, it would seem that salespeople who are high self-monitors would try to garner cues from customers as to the type of response the customer required at various times during the sales interaction. Olshavsky (1973) determined that there were three phases of a sales interaction that the customer went through before purchase. Each phase is indicated by the salesperson or customer asking for different types of information about the product/service under discussion. High self-monitoring salespeople may be able to move through the three phases of a sales interaction faster than low self-monitoring salespeople and have more completed sales since it is likely that the high self-monitors would be looking for situational cues from the customers. Accordingly, the literature on the phases of sales interactions will be discussed.

2.1 Relational Communication

In the past, studies of one person's predominant manner of interacting with another, the concept of control or dominance was thought to be an individual personality trait. However, control or dominance does not exist in a vacuum. Each demonstration of the trait requires the presence of at least two people, the actor and the reactor (Watzlawick, Bevalas, Beavin & Jackson, 1967; Mohr & Peter, 1988). Relational communication is a process approach to assessing each person's behavior as a function of the other's behavior. In order to accurately portray a person's experience, the description must include some indication of the social group or social environment in which the person had the experience (Bateson, 1958 as cited by Williamson & Fitzpatrick, 1985).

Relational communication seems to be particularly appropriate for use in studying sales interactions since it focuses on dominance, control and response change. "Relational analysis focuses on communication properties that exist only at the dyadic system level; relational variables do not lie within individual interactors, but rather exist between them" (Rogers & Farace, 1975).

Each communicated message contains, in addition to its informational message, a command aspect which describes the type of reaction the communication is as well as describing and defining the relationship between communicants (Watzlawick et al. 1967; Mark, 1971). By examining the relational aspect of a message, one is focusing on the command information contained in the message rather than the report or content information contained in the message (Courtright, Millar & Rogers-Millar, 1979; Rogers, Courtright & Millar, 1980). Burgoon & Hale (1984) have found that relational communication is used to "indicate how two or more people regard each other, regard their relationship and/or regard themselves within the context of that relationship" (p. 193). It is the "consistent use of certain message pairs (Millar & Rogers, 1976) [that] defines the relationship between the communicants (Williamson & Fitzpatrick, 1985).

Within the command language information category, there are two sub-categories, complementary and symmetrical messages. In complementary message exchanges, one person is primary or superior while the other person is secondary or inferior. In symmetrical message exchanges, each person sends an equivalent type of message to the other, be it submissive (also known as one-down), one-across ("non demanding, nonaccepting, leveling movements"; Courtright et at., 1979), or dominant (also known as one-up; Watzlawick et al., 1967). "Every message in an interaction serves as either the definition, reinforcement or redefinition of the nature of a relationship" (Mark, p. 222-223, 1971). A one-up message following a one-up message indicates an escalation of exertions for control and can indicate a path to dyad fighting and breakup if that symmetrical pattern continues (Bateson, 1958). A one-across message following a one-across message indicates neutrality and extension. A one-down message following a one-down message indicates "mutual coalescence and surrender" (Williamson & Fitzpatrick, p. 240, 1985).

2.1.1 Control

Control is of concern in sales interactions. If the salesperson is in control of the interaction, s/he should be better able to direct the exchange to a completed sale. Soldow & Thomas (1984) believe that, in a sales situation, the salesperson and the buyer are competing for control. The buyer is trying to either terminate the sales call without purchasing anything if that best suits his/her goal or trying to purchase the product/service at the best terms. The salesperson is trying to arrange a sale with the best terms for the manufacturer and this can be best accomplished by the salesperson being the dominant person in the interaction.

"Relational communication refers to the control aspects of message exchanges that define an interactor's relationships with others" (Ericson & Rogers, 1973). Ellis (1979) found that control is one dimension of the command structure which focuses on the messages indicating "the right to direct, structure or dominate the interpersonal communication system" (Ellis, p. 154, 1979). Each interactor can send one of three basic messages: exertion of control,a one-up maneuver ↑ ; neutral information, a one-across maneuver → or submission or relinquishment of control, a one-down maneuver ↓ (Williamson & Fitzpatrick, 1985). There can be a variation of intensity within these control maneuvers (Ellis, 1979, Rogers et al., 1980).

Relational communication looks at how the interaction relationship is defined by the messages sent in the exchanged statements in addition to the meaning of the words (Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979). As an example, Rogers (Note 1) gives the following statements, "I think we should take this now" as a dominant or one-up communication. The statement is coded as an assertion and an instruction which is a dominant message. An assertion is any complete referential statement. The response of "OK, I guess so..." is given as an example of a submissive or one-down message. The response is an assertion of support for the instruction which is a submissive statement. A response of "Oh I don't know" in response to the assertion of "Well, as a family we don't do very much." is given as an example of a leveling or a one-across message.

One of the biggest problems in studying relational communication within any context, including sales, is deciding when or where in the dyadic paradigm to start measuring the interaction since each action is a reaction to one before it. The choice is often arbitrary. The first message in any given interaction may have been a reaction to a previous meeting or other source of information for the two people involved. The only time where this is not arbitrary in the study of sales interactions is the first statement of a cold call.

2.1.2 Relational Communication and Dominance

In the previous section, both the salesperson and the customer were said to be looking to control the exchange primarily through the use of dominant behaviors as bids for control. However, all dominant behaviors may not have the same effect on control in the interaction. Courtright, Millar & Rogers-Millar (1979) made a distinction between domineeringness and dominance. Domineeringness was used to describe individual behaviors that were one-up ("a statement that attempted to assert definitional rights", p. 180) in nature. Dominance was described as interactional behaviors with the first person sending a one-up statement and the second person reacting to that message by sending a one-down message ("a message that requests or accepts the other's definition", p. 180).

This distinction between dominance and domineeringness, with the former proposed as a dyadic behavior and the latter proposed as an individualistic behavior, appears to be a singular instance of a process approach coding a behavior as individualistic instead of responsive. In fact, the study categorized domineeringness as an individual message as the other interactant's response did not change the control attempt. Dominance (A↑ and B↓) became the bid for control realized.

The interactional control pair described by a definitional message (one-up) followed by a neutral message (one-across) is not defined in any of the Millar and Rogers-Millar studies. In their study of husband and wife interactions (1979), a one-across message was defined as a nondemanding, nonaccepting or leveling movement. If that is a response to a definitional message, the first speaker's definition is not refuted, but just not supported. This category of interactional message has not yet been addressed.

Ellis (1979) found that, in a group discussion, a cyclical pattern was established in which a one-up informational assertion is followed by a one-across support statement or extension. The next set of responses were additional support statements generating much continued discussion. Someone would break that chain and offer some new information, a new one-up, and the process would begin again.

Fisher & Drecksel (1983) found that long-term relationships settle into a cyclical pattern that seems to have an objective of maintaining the relationship. They found that "maintenance is achieved not by a steady-state condition of 'no change', but by continuous and cyclical change" (Fisher & Drecksel, p. 76, 1983).

This continuous cyclical change may also be indicative of relational flexibility (Millar & Rogers, 1976). This same type of cyclical pattern has been found by Roger et al. (1980) concerning intensity patterns within specific relationships. Each relationship appears to have its own message intensity pattern and level to which each partner returns within an interaction.

2.1.3 Relational Communication and Adaptability

Millar & Rogers (1976) noted that in addition to the dominance/submission aspect of control, there was a consideration of rigidity/flexibility in the definition of the relationship. This rigidity/flexibility was measured by the number of times the control of the relationship changed during the interaction. The more change in control, the more flexibility contained within the relationship.

It should be noted that in all discussions of this rigidity/flexibility measure, the measure examines the behavior in only one conversation, not the aggregate behavior over several conversations with possibly several different conversants. It is a look at how the control of a conversation is balanced between the two speakers. It is measured by comparing the dominant control behaviors of one speaker with the dominant control behaviors of the other. As the comparison of the two speakers nears equalization, the conversation is judged to be more flexible.

This relational rigidity/flexibility measure has quite a different focus than a measure of adaptability and appears not to be comparable. It would seem that adaptability would examine how one speaker would change his/her behaviors to complement the behaviors of the other. Rather than changing control back and forth, adaptability would seem to be trying to avoid a spiral of continuing control efforts. Bateson (1958) found that a continual play for control lead to ever more dominant responses which leads to a breakdown of the interaction. This would seem to be the antithesis of adaptability.

Soldow & Thomas (1984) discuss a concept of adaptability of "recognizing and manipulating relational communication" (p. 88, 1984). Salespeople who are good at adapting their relational communication control are hypothesized to be more effective or successful than poor adapters (Soldow & Thomas, 1984). To this point there has been no specific measure of adaptability in relational communication measures used in an empirical study.

One measure of how one speaker would change his/her verbal behaviors to coordinate with the other interactor would be a count of the paired responses that are complementary pairs (up-down or down-up). In the present study, a count of the complementary responses given by the salesperson with the conversation length taken into accout should give a value for behavioral adaptability.

2.1.4 Sales Interactions and Use of Relational Communication

Most of the relational communication research investigates relational communication in intimate dyads such as married couples or recently formed dyads such as training dyads or larger groups such as consciousness-raising groups. All of these groups rely on members influencing other members to complete various tasks. However, studies have not really dealt with the question of business relationships and influence as reflected in relational patterns. One reason that this type of study has not been done is the difficulty in gaining the cooperation of companies to allow the collection of tape recorded data. There is an inherent belief of many businesses that this type of study would lead to poor sales (Sproviero, Note 2). Salespeople themselves often believe that research studies are an excuse to spy on their work habits, that the records will be used to illustrate their poor performance at evaluations, and/or that management does not trust them in their jobs. One salesperson said she would not participate because she did not want her most effective sales secrets made known to anyone else (Tobin, Note 3). Additionally, management is often leery about allowing business interactions to be recorded for fear that customers will react adversely (Sproviero, Note 2).

Many of the business studies use game play, simulation or self-report surveys to gather information and therefore cannot evaluate the relationship between salesperson and customer. Donohue (1981) found that negotiation and sales literature set out examples of important contextual issues to be aware of and to manipulate, rather than examining the control messages which may be sent in command language. The difficulties in getting salespeople to cooperate may have raised too imposing a barrier for earlier studies to try to use a process approach.

2.2 Personality Traits in Traditional Sales Literature

Over the years there have been many personal attributes that have been investigated to determine if they had a positive influence on sales. Anecdotal stories and some research studies (Lamont & Lundstrom, 1977) have suggested that tall salesmen of average weight would be more successful than short men, fat men, or women of any description. This has not been found to be consistent when examined. Some of the demographic factors that have been examined and found not to increase sales have been the age, sex, height, weight, race, appearance, education, marital status, number of dependents, and club memberships of the salesperson. The amount of performance variation accounted for by these traits was only 16% or equal to the variance accounted for by a measure of sales aptitude (Churchill et al., 1985).

2.3 Dominance

Dominance as an important personality trait for a successful salesperson has had many supporters over time. Watson (1971) defined dominant people as those "prone to influence, direct and control the behavior of others; to enjoy arguing to their own point of view; and to enjoy guiding and supervising the activities" (p. 182, 1971). He found that dominant people sent more messages to others involved in their interactions than they received. This was due to their desire to guide the outcome of the group's behavior, similar to the interest a salesperson has in the progress and outcome of a sales situation.

Intuitively, it would seem that a dominant salesperson would have an advantage over a submissive salesperson. Many studies have looked at aspects of dominance and evidence of sales success and have found that dominance does have a positive effect (Lamont & Lundstrom, 1977; Weitz, 1981). However, empirical results can only be described as equivocal as a smaller number of studies have found that dominance did not seem to be related to sales success (Weitz, 1981). Although the importance of dominance for sales success has not been unanimously supported by empirical research (Weitz, 1981), lists of important characteristics to be looked for in prospective salespeople continue to include dominance (Stone & Wyman, 1986; Corwin, 1987).

Interestingly, although it would seem plausible that dominance as a trait measured by a personality test would correlate well with behavioral expressions of dominance in sales interactions, in none of these studies were the behaviors during the sales interactions monitored or measured. In fact, the equivocality of the findings concerning dominance may be due to the lack of a dyadic perspective and an interactive measure of behavior during the sales interactions. Behavioral manifestations of dominance may be found to be better predictors of sales success as they are part of the response patterns of the interaction.

2.4 Adaptability

Weitz, Sujan & Sujan (1986) believed that the major problem with the previous research examining personality traits of salespeople to predict sales success was that the empirical studies, even those which purported to be studying dyadic qualities, were trying to examine dyadic or interactive components using static personality measures. This problem continues even in very recent research. Szymanski & Churchill, Jr. (1990) examined cognitive abilities to try to determine differences presaging sales success. It was thought that successful salespeople would have more customer evaluation cues available for use in adapting the salesperson's behavior to "differences at the succeeding stages of the selling process" (Szymanski & Churchill, Jr., p.164). They found no difference in the amount of cues used by successful and unsuccessful salespeople. Again, researchers were using static measures (numbers of evaluations) to evaluate a sales process.

Weitz et al. (1986) believed that it was critical to study sales interactions using some dynamic measure of the interaction. Some method was needed to better study "adaptive selling" rather than using "a static ...model that does not include this aspect [of altering sales approaches both within and across sales interactions in] personal selling" (Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986).

Weitz (1981) believed that salespeople had a unique opportunity to adapt to each customer and sales situation so that the product/service for sale and the salesperson were presented in the best manner. He (1981) found that "effectiveness in sales interactions is related to the salesperson's ability to develop accurate impressions of customer beliefs about product performance; the salesperson's ability to use these impressions in selecting influence strategies and the salesperson's ability to detect the impact of influence strategies and make adaptations" (p. 87, 1981). Weitz identifies these sales strategies as contingency sales strategies since the sales behavior varies according to the needs of each sales interaction.

Weitz, Sujan & Sujan (1986) evaluated the stream of salesmanship research and proposed a "framework for selling effectiveness." They saw adaptability as perhaps the most important factor in sales success.

> "Though ability related to adaptive selling is only one element of the ability component, we believe it is a crucial aspect because it indicates the degree to which salespeople are able to take advantage of the unique communication elements associated with personal selling (Weitz et al., 1986, p. 174).

The unique communication elements are the ability to adapt a sales presentation to the individual needs of the customer. This ability to adapt to different customers over different situations was viewed as the most effective form of salesmanship.

One serious problem has been that there have been no scales to measure adaptivity in sales interactions until Spiro and Weitz (1990) developed the ADAPTS survey. Weitz (1981; Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986) had proposed for several years that a measure similar to that developed by Snyder (1974) for self-monitoring would be helpful in determining the level of adaptivity of a salesperson. A highly adaptive salesperson should also be a high self-monitoring person (Spiro & Weitz, 1990). In the ADAPTS questionnaire, five personality trait scales are combined to form the entire survey. One of the tested traits is self-monitoring. There would be no reason to use another survey for sales situations except that the ADAPTS scale is inappropriate for all levels of sales experience and there may be a confound between product knowledge, sales experience and adaptivity (Spiro & Weitz, 1990).

2.5 Self-Monitoring

In order to eliminate the problems with experience levels, a further examination of the original self-monitoring scale seems appropriate. Snyder (1974) defined the difference between high self-monitors and low self-monitors. High self-monitors are "very sensitive to the expression and self-presentation of others in social situations and use these cues for managing their own behavior" (p. 637, 1974). As a result their behavior may vary from one situation to another. Low self-monitors "seem to be guided from within by dispositions and traits and not situations. These people should be relatively consistent across situations"; (p. 638, 1974) there is some support for this (Snyder & Monson, 1975). Snyder developed the Self-Monitoring Scale, which is a self-report scale consisting of 25 items. In comparing scale results with results for sociability, inner-outer directedness, extroversion-introversion and neuroticism, self-monitoring appeared to measure an entirely separate construct.

High self-monitoring people are very concerned with social and situational appropriateness and therefore try to extract cues for appropriate behavior from the situation (Snyder & Monson, 1975; Allen, 1986; Lindsey & Greene, 1987). High self-monitoring people can have their behavior predicted by examining the situations in which they will be placed. " The high self-monitoring person asks - who does this situation want me to be and how can I be that person? The high self-monitoring person identifies the type of person called for, constructs a mental image of that person and uses that prototypic person's self-representation and expressive behavior as a guideline" for his/her own behavior (Snyder, p. 102, 1979; Snyder & Cantor, 1980). High self-monitoring people not only glean situational cues from the interaction, but they also observe and control their own behavior in order to provide expressions of appropriate behavior (Gundykunst & Nishida, 1984; Allen, 1986).

It is not sufficient to be able only to extract information from the occasion, additionally, one must be able to assess one's own expressions and modify them where appropriate. "High-self-monitoring people regard themselves as rather flexible and adaptive people who shrewdly and pragmatically tailor their social behavior to fit situational and interpersonal specifications of appropriateness" (Snyder, p. 101, 1979; Rhodewalt & Comer, 1981). Low self-monitoring people can have their behavior predicted by an examination of their personality traits and character (Snyder & Monson, 1975; Snyder & Cantor, 1980; Rhodewalt & Comer, 1981). "The low self-monitoring person asks who am I and how can I be me in this situation?" (Snyder, p. 103, 1979). "Low self-monitoring people seem to cherish images of themselves as rather principled individuals who wish to live their lives according to the maxim 'believing means doing'" (Snyder, p. 101, 1979). It has been found that low self-monitoring people try to maintain similar behavior patterns across situations in trying to remain true to their inner values (Snyder & Monson, 1975).

A high self-monitoring person placed in a myriad of situations uses a wide range of social skills. Although it has been stated that high self-monitoring people are flexible in adapting to situational cues, only a few studies have been done on situational adaptability of specialized behavior (Turner, 1980).

Snyder (1974) found that high self-monitors did modify their expressive behaviors (both vocal and nonverbal) to coincide with the social differences found in various situations. Snyder & Monson (1975) found that high self-monitors varied their behavior greatly from situation to situation in contrast to low self-monitors. Specifically, they found that high self-monitors were able to vary their vocal behaviors according to the requirements dictated by situational variables in social encounters.

Berger & Douglas (1981) found that a high self-monitoring person will actively try to seek out information from other sources if that other is perceived to have some impact on the information seeker's life in terms of a future interaction or in terms of power to reward or punish. In a sales interaction, the buyer certainly has an impact on the life of the seller by being able either to buy or reject the product/service offered. The seller is then interested in gaining information about the buyer and would likely rely on some of the situational data examined during the sales interaction in the same way that high self-monitors have been found to do in social situations (Berger & Douglas, 1981).

To pursue this, it is necessary to look at the sales encounter as an interactive process. Therefore, a relational communication perspective and associated measurements may be an appropriate avenue to explore in order to obtain a suitable interactive behavioral measure.

2.6 Behavioral versus Trait Analysis

It is not uncommon to have prospective employees take one or more personality tests to see if they have an appropriate psychological balance to perform the expected task. What has not been done is to test if the employee exhibits the traits while engaged in interactions on the job. By using relational communication, it should be possible to obtain a measure of the salesperson's dominance. If this measure coincides with similar results obtained from standard personality tests, interactional behavior may be predicted from trait measures.

2.7 Phases of a Sales Interaction

Olshavsky (1973) extended the work of Pennington (1968) both of whom studied the type of bargaining behavior operative in retail appliance sales. Pennington explored different predictors of a successful sale including the types of questions asked of the salesperson. Olshavsky (1973) has found that there are three phases of a sales interaction that can be differentiated on the basis of the type of consumer question. The three phases are orientation, where the salesperson tries to uncover the customer's needs while the customer asks about general product types; evaluation, where there is a discussion of the attributes of a specific product; consummation, where the customer is interested in the terms of the sale as well as availability, start-up or delivery date and return policy. The beginning of the consummation phase is noted when the salesperson asks for the sale or the customer asks for the product (Olshavsky, 1973).

According to Olshavsky (1973), customers are usually interested in considering at least one evaluation topic before a determination to buy is reached. Pennington (1968) found that the customer's switch from attribute evaluation questions to nonattribute questions or the salesperson's movement of the customer to nonattribute questions was the most appropriate time to try to close the sale. If high self-monitors do gather situational cues from the customers, then the high self-monitoring salesperson should be able to pick up this cue when the customer has moved to this different type of question. Thus high self-monitoring salespeople should be better able to close a sale than low self-monitoring salespeople.

2.8 Hypotheses

The review of the literature has raised several research questions. The first is what factors make one salesperson more successful in sales than another.

Hypothesis 1

Reject H_0; accept H_1: high self-monitoring salespeople should be able to get to a consummation phase more quickly in sales interactions than low self-monitors.

Hypothesis 2

Reject H_0; accept H_1: high self-monitoring salespeople should be better able to close a sale than low self-monitoring salespeople.

Olshavsky pioneered examination of the three phases of a sales interaction: orientation, evaluation and consummation as an extension of Pennington's research into customer and salesperson bargaining behavior. Both researchers noted that the customer gives cues as to when he/she is interested in buying a specific product. Since high self-monitors are supposed to utilize social cues to fit their behavior to the situation, the high self-monitoring salespeople should be able to get to the consummation phase faster than low self-monitoring salespeople. The high self-monitoring salespeople should also be able to close more sales than the low self-monitoring salespeople again due to their ability to use situational cues.

Hypothesis 3

Reject H_0; accept H_1: self-monitoring will be significantly correlated to a relational communication measure of adaptability.

Self-monitoring is supposed to be a measure of how well a person notices cues from other interactors and the environment and incorporates that information in appropriate behavior. High self-monitoring people should vary their behavior across situations and in the same way as a person who manifests adaptable behavior in an interaction. Weitz (1981) stated that self-monitoring appeared to be closely related to adaptability. He included self-monitoring questions as a part of his ADAPTS scale in order to capture a measure of adaptive salesmanship (Spiro & Weitz, 1990). In fact, self-monitoring was supposed to capture three aspects of adaptive selling, "(a) ability to modify self-presentation,(b) sensitivity to expressive behavior in others" and (c) "adaptation during interactions" (Spiro & Weitz, p.63)

Hypothesis 4

Reject H_0;accept H_1: a salesperson who manifests a high level of adaptability will have more sales success than a salesperson who manifests a low level of adaptability.

Weitz (1981) posited that the more adaptable a salesperson is, the more effective that person would be in closing sales. The personal selling interaction sets the stage for the most immediate feedback between buyer and seller for uncovering needs and objections from the buyer. With that information, an adaptable salesperson should be able to modify his/her sales information to answer objections and better match the needs of the buyer and thus close the sale than a less adaptable salesperson.

Hypothesis 5

Reject H_0; accept H_1: a dominant, low self-monitoring salesperson is more likely to manifest dominant behavior across sales interactions than a dominant, high self-monitoring salesperson.

Low self-monitoring people strive to remain consistent with their perceptions of themselves and their values across different situations, whereas high self-monitoring people look at the situation to see what demands are being made and adapt to try to meet those demands (Snyder, 1974). It would seem that a dominant, low self-monitoring salesperson would display a consistent level of dominant behavior across several sales interactions while a dominant, high self-monitoring salesperson would change his/her behaviors in response to the actions of the customer and would display less consistently dominant behavior across several sales interactions.

Hypothesis 6

Reject H_0; accept H_1: given that the relational measure of domineeringness is an incidence of individual behavior; domineeringness will correlate better with the self-report measure of dominance than the relational measure of dominance.

Another research question raised by the literature is whether the self-report trait personality tests will correlate with relational communication measures of behavior in a sales situation. Typically personality traits have been measured through the use of self-report tests. Those scales generally report assessments of long-term personality characteristics but give only indications of what an individual may do on any given occasion. The literature of relational communication has developed methods (Park, 1977; Burgoon & Hale, 1984; Burgoon et al. 1987) to measure behavioral expressions such as dominance and rigidity/flexibility from dyadic or group interaction.

In self-report surveys, dominance is a static personality characteristic. In viewing relational communication, the dominant-submissive continuum is a control dimension that may exist for each person within that dyadic relationship and nowhere else (Millar & Rogers, 1976). Trait theory would suggest that a person who scores high on dominance would likely have more behaviors in a variety of situations expressing dominance than a person who scores low on dominance. If it can be found that a dominance personality measure correlates with the domineeringness behavior as measured by relational communication, prediction of sales behavior may be derived from personality trait tests. On the other hand, it may be found that dominance is manifest behaviorally even when one does not have the trait of dominance.

There has been some discussion of separating dominance into two constituent parts, dominance and domineeringness. Courtright, Millar & Rogers-Millar (1979) proposed that dominance was expressed when the dyadic partner accepted the control message by responding with a submissive response. Domineeringness was expressed when the speaker issued a one-up statement. It had been proposed that domineeringness was "an aspect of individual behavior [while] dominance [was] an aspect of dyadic relationship." (Courtright et al., p. 181, 1979). Therefore, relational domineeringness should have a significantly closer relationship to a trait measure of dominance than a relational measure of dominance.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter discusses the methods of measurement for the personality trait of dominance and the behavioral measure of dominance, the subject pool, the type of sales interactions, definitions of sales success and the methods of analysis.

3.1 Data Collection

The data were collected from telemarketers of a large Fortune 500 company in the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut tri-state area at two of the company's telemarketing facilities. Data collection encompassed several modes of information gathering. Self-report surveys were used to ascertain personality trait measures of dominance and self-monitoring. The Rogers, Courtright and Millar relational coding plan was used to measure behavioral manifestations of dominance and adaptability.

3.1.1 Use of Telemarketing

The reason telemarketers were chosen as the sample population for this study was due to the special circumstances surrounding the process of telemarketing. Telemarketers must capture and hold the interest of their customers solely through the use of their voices. Therefore it eliminates information coming from all nonverbal channels of communications except for that information contained in vocal nonverbal communication such as tone, pitch, and speech rate among others. By using telemarketers, the behavior under consideration is limited to vocal behaviors and fits the relational communications coding schemata very well.

It is also easier to record the sales conversations of the telemarketer as they remain in one circumscribed area while selling unlike other salespeople who may sell in more than one area of a store or go to the customers' offices. Additionally, telemarketers are speaking into the telephone to the customer which facilitates the technical set up of recording procedures.

Ten sales interactions of each telemarketer were audio tape recorded while being monitored on another telephone to insure that the sales interactions were occurring and a correct count of sales interactions was kept. A total of 500 sales interactions were recorded for use in this study.

3.1.2 Dominance

The personality trait of dominance was measured using a published self-report scale, the California Psychological Inventory. The first form of the CPI was published in 1956. It was conceived of as a test that could have subscales removed when no longer applicable and new sections added when appropriate. The latest revision was done in 1987 and presently has 20 subscales. The major change was the removal of several redundant questions and the removal of sexist terms in the remaining questions. It is appropriate for ages 13 and over. It has general male and female norms as well as norms for several different occupations although none for salespeople specifically. This test was chosen because it had the best reliability (.79) of the various tests for dominance available (Gough, 1987). It also had a response validity measure to help determine if any of the respondents was likely to be lying in his/her responses.

In this study the raw dominance scores for the salespeople were divided into low, medium and high dominance groups. A raw score below 22 indicated a low dominant salesperson. A raw score above 28 indicated a high dominant salesperson. This division had been recommended in order to use people who were at the more extreme values of dominance. The scores ranged from 2 to 32 with a median score of 25.

3.1.3 Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring was measured using the self-monitoring scale developed by Mark Snyder (1972). This twenty-five item scale has an internal reliability of .7032 and a test-retest reliability of .828. The average score for adults of 21 years or over is 12. In this study, high self-monitors were those individuals scoring above the median score of 13. Low self-monitors were those individuals scoring below the median score of 13. In this study the scores ranged between 3 and 20.

3.1.4 Relational Communication

In order to collect the data for relational communication analysis, the sales conversations of the telemarketers were tape-recorded. The taped conversations were scored using the Rogers, Courtright and Millar (1980) coding schemata. This coding includes measurement of response categorization, transactional categorization and message control intensity categorization for each interaction. Each conversation was then scored for dominance or adaptability by tabulating the symmetrical, complementary or transitory transaction types. Of the various coding schemes, this is the one used at present by L. Edna Rogers (Note 1). The next section on coding will explain in detail the coding processes.

3.1.4.1 Coding

In order to study relational communication, several coding systems have been suggested. Mark (1971) set up a coding plan using the information of who stated the message, what kind of grammatical form of speech it was and what type of message it was in response to the stimulus message. This coding plan uses a three digit code, each digit column corresponding to the above categories as follows:

First Digit Code
1 - 9 number of each speaker or 1 = male and 2 = female.

Second Digit Code
1 = question
2 = assertion
3 = instruction
4 = orders
5 = talking over
6 = assertion & question
7 = question & assertion
8 = other, usually filled hesitation pauses such as well, um, ah, eh, etc.
9 = laughter

Third Digit Code
1 = agreement
2 = disagreement
3 = extension
4 = answer
5 = disconfirmation
6 = topic change
7 = agreement & extension
8 = disagreement & extension
9 = other
0 = laughter

All silences over 2 seconds were to be coded 000 and another 000 would be coded for each additional 5 seconds of silence.

From this numerical coding, it is possible to derive a relational pattern for the communication by combining pairs of the three digit codes.

Rogers & Farace (1975; O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1981) used a much simpler coding plan with only three message categories specified: one-up, one-down and one across. Mark's coding scheme was intended to "provide an alternative to clinical assessment" (Parks, P. 373, 1977) and allow study of dyadic communication in normal dyads rather than those involved in a clinical setting. The later coding schemes such as Ericson & Rogers (1973) and Rogers & Farace (1975) have refined and extended Mark's coding plan (Parks, 1977) to include measures of flexibility and rigidity. Soldow & Thomas (1984) have suggested a variant of the Rogers & Farace coding scheme. They utilize a matrix of dominant, deferent and equality messages. Pairs of dominant messages are postulated to be the least supportive of a continuing interaction while deferent responses to a dominant message should extend the interaction as should equality responses since those control statements indicate room for negotiation and compromise.

Courtright et al. (1979) used a relational coding plan that has three steps. As in Mark's scheme, each message is assigned a 3-digit code to indicate the speaker, grammatical form, and the type of response made in reaction to the stimulus message. In this plan, the grammatical codes are simplified and the response codes differ as follows:

First Digit Code
1 - 9 number of each speaker

Second Digit Code
1 = assertion
2 = question
3 = talk-over
4 = noncomplete
5 = other

Third Digit Code
1 = support
2 = nonsupport
3 = extension

4 = answer
5 = instruction
6 = order
7 = disconfirmation
8 = topic change
9 = initiation - termination
0 = other

There is no special coding for laughter. In order to help coders determine the grammatical form of a statement, Dr. Rogers has given a cascading order to follow as shown in Figure 1 (Note 1). For example, first the coder examines the statement to see if it is a talkover or interruption. If not, then the coder determines if the statement is a question. If not, then the coder determines if the statement is an incomplete statement. If the statement cannot be categorized as one of the preceding types of statements, it is coded as an other. Similarly, Dr. Rogers has given directions for categorization of the response type of the statement as shown in Figure 1 (Note 1).

Figure 1

1st digit indicates which speaker is talking and can be from 1 to 9.

2nd Digit

Assertion	Question	Talkover	Non-Complete	Other
Subject/verb declarative imperative Yes, no, mmm uh huh, sure right	Interrogative	(un) [successful] interruption	incomplete	not 1- 4 indistinguishable
3	**2**	**1**	**4**	**5**

3rd Digit

Support	Non-Support	Extend	Answer	Instruct	Order	Discon	Topic	Initiat	Other
seeking agree accept approve encour age	disagree rejection demand challenge resist	continue flow of message I dont know	definite response to a question	suggest contains explana- tion	command no explan ation	ignore passes by request of previous message	little contin uity	begin or ends	unclear
7	**8**	**9**	**2**	**6**	**5**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**0**

Numbers in bold indicate the order of coding consideration for each digit.

These three digit numerical codes are redefined into relational control directions.

> "Messages attempting to assert definitional rights are coded one-up. Requests or acceptances of the other's definition of the relationship are coded one-down. Non-demanding, non-accepting, leveling movements are coded one-across." (Courtright et al., p. 180, 1979).

For each response, the grammatical code and the response code are used to determine the control directions by using the information contained in Table 1. For example, if a statement is coded 212, the speaker is speaker 2 and the control direction of the statement is one-up.

Table 1

Response

Format		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Assertion	1	↓	↑	→	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	→
Question	2	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
Talk-over	3	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
Non-Complete	4	↓	↑	→	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	→	→
Other	5	↓	↑	→	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	→

↑ indicates a one-up statement.
→ indicates a one-across statement.
↓ indicates a one-down statement.

Note 1

The last step is to combine the pairs of relational control directions to see the pattern of this relational interaction. There are 9 different combinations:

"one-up, one-down complementarity
Competitive
Submissive
neutralized symmetry
one-up transitory
one-down transitory" (Note 1)

Table 2

Relational Control Transactional Types

Control Direction of Speaker A's Message	Control Direction of Speaker B's Message		
	One-Up	One-Down	One-Across
One-Up	1. Competitive Symmetry	4. Complementarity	7. Transition
One-Down	2. Complementarity	5. Submissive	8. Transition
One-Across	3. Transition	6. Transition	9. Neutralized

Note 1

Rogers-Millar and Millar (1979) amended the last step to categorize the nine possible combinations into three categories. Complementary interaction pairs have control directions that are different and diametrically opposed (one-up and one-down in some combination). Symmetrical interaction pairs have control directions that are the same. Transitional interaction pairs have control directions that are different but not opposed. For example, one of the speakers offers or responds with a neutral control definition (one-across).

Rogers, Courtright & Millar (1980) updated their coding scheme by incorporating a more continuous measure for control intensity. Previous coding systems (Ellis, 1979) had designated a five point intensity scale with dominance indicating a strong up, structure, a weak up, equivalence was one-across, deference was a weak down and submission was a strong down. Rogers et al. (1980) determined that, by increasing the categories of message control, they could account for significantly more of the relational meaning of the interaction.

It was decided to create a "hypothetical intensity space from the existing measurements" (Rogers, et al., p.203, 1980) The categories of grammatical codes and response codes are used to "operationalize a continuum called 'message control intensity'" (Rogers et al., p. 203, 1980). "Given the fifty message types identified in the coding scheme (using the grammatical codes as the vertical axis and the response codes on the horizontal axis), [it was] assumed that the height of the vertical axis would be fifty 'units' or some fraction thereof." (Rogers et al., 1980). The greater the distance between the first speaker's message and the response, the greater the intensity (see Table 3). Accordingly the disconfirmation category was assigned the maximum value of ten while the support category was given a weight of one. The remainder of the categories were given weights according to the distancing effects of each of the response modes.

Table 3

Message Control Intensity Scores

	Discon- firmation	Order	Topic	Non - support	Instruction	Answer	Initiates Terminates	Extension	Other	Support
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Talkover 5	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5
Assertion4	40	36	32	28	24	20	16	12	8	4
Other 3	30	27	24	21	18	15	12	9	6	3
Question 2	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	2
Non - Complete 1	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Note 1

3.1.4.2 Coder Training

Two coders coded the interactions and were trained according to guidelines set forth by Dr. Rogers. The training took place over a three and a half week period with practice coding sessions occurring after review of the coding schemata. The coding scheme has been put onto a flow chart with the types of conversation to be considered first, second, etc. as shown in Figure 1. The order of consideration has been decided by Drs. Rogers, Millar and Courtwright (Note 1). The coders took conversations that had been given by Dr. Rogers and coded them. The given coding was then compared with the training coding and differences were discussed until understood as per Dr. Rogers' instructions.

In a departure from Dr. Rogers' methodology, ten sales conversations were coded by both coder instead of using the training conversations as a measure of inter-coder reliability. Each statement code for each of the ten conversations as evaluated by each coder was used for this evaluation. Inter-coder reliability of this study's coding was measured using a Spearman Rank correlation procedure (.9929, $p<.001$).

3.1.5 Behavioral Adaptability Measure

The measure of behavioral adaptability coded from relational communication patterns was a count of the complementary paired responses of the salesperson to each of the customers divided by the total number of statements in each sales interaction. This ratio measure should account for differences in sales interaction length. The average adaptability score was .0469 and ranged from .0139 to .1274.

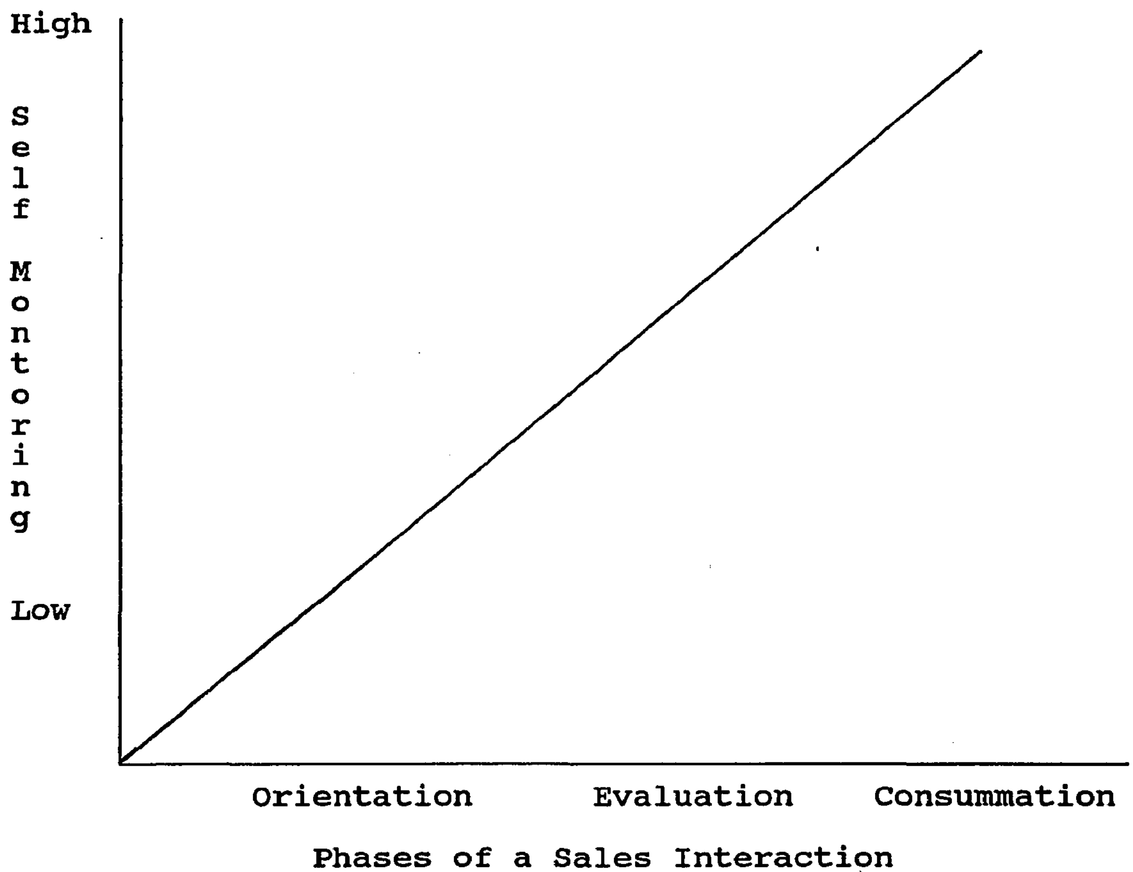
3.1.6 Behavioral Dominance Measure

The measure of behavioral dominance was a count of the dyadic exchanges where the salesperson gave a one-up statement and the customer responded with a one-down statement. This count was then divided by the total number of statements in each sales interaction. This ratio measure should account for differences in sales interaction length.

3.2 Model

The model for hypotheses one and two indicates that there should be a linear relationship between low to high self-monitoring and the ability to move a sales interaction from orientation to evaluation to consummation (See Figure 2).

Figure 2


High
Self Montoring
Low
Orientation
Evaluation
Consummation
Phases of a Sales Interaction

3.2.2 Phases of an Interaction Measurements

The orientation phase begins with the start of a sales interaction and is characterized by an exchange of information relating to general product category to determine the customer's desires. The evaluation phase begins with the exchange of information pertaining to "the specific alternatives evaluated" (Olshavsky, p. 208, 1973). The consummation phase begins "either with an announced decision by the customer that he would purchase (e.g., 'I'll buy this one') or when the salesman exhausted his possible alternatives (e.g., 'That's all I have in RCA') (Olshavsky, p. 208, 1973).

In order to measure how quickly a salesperson moved through the various stages of an interaction, a count was made of the words spoken to the beginning of the consummation phase. The fewer the number of words spoken, the more quickly the salesperson moved through the phases of an interaction.

3.3 Sample

As mentioned earlier, the subjects were 52 of 95 telemarketers from a telemarketing division of a Fortune 500 company. The president of the company volunteered two telemarketing sections in his company. Cooperation was then sought from the vice presidents of each section. Within each section, each telemarketer was given the opportunity to volunteer for inclusion in the study. The telemarketers were told that this was a study on sales techniques and that there was no academic study that had been done on successful telemarketing. At that time there was a great deal of negative publicity surrounding telemarketing and they were told that this was an opportunity to show what a reputable telemarketing business could do. Each telemarketer was promised an opportunity to read the finished paper.

Fifteen men and thirty-seven women volunteered for the study after assurances were made that the information gained would not be used for personnel evaluation. The male/female ratio was proportional to the number of men and women employed. The respondents were given the self-report tests to complete before taping. After completing the questionnaires, each telemarketer had a tape recorder attached to his/her telephone and the researcher or an assistant listened on a monitoring telephone to try to ensure a good taping and a complete count of conversations.

Each telemarketer was tape recorded during 10 routine sales calls and given a thank you gift for participation upon completion. A total of 50 telemarketers' tape recordings or 500 sales interactions were used for the basis of this study. Two of the tape recordings had interference noise when replayed which prohibited coding of the conversations. This noise was not noticeable when the recording was being done. It seems that there must have been some type of feedback in the electronic connections. The two telemarketers who had unusable tape recordings were women. The final sample included fifteen men and thirty five women.

3.4 Sales Success

The dependent variable for this study was the sales success of each telemarketer. Both divisions sell industrial trade magazine and book subscriptions to business people during work hours. One division, however, gives partial sales credit to sending out information and for sending out material for review as well as giving credit for sales of the materials themselves. Therefore two definitions of sales success were used. A strict definition of sales success was the sale of any of the books or magazines. The broader definition of a sales success was if the telemarketer was able to send literature or brochures on the services, sent books/magazines for review or sold one or more subscription.

3.5 Statistics

The data in this study was either ordinal or nominal in nature therefore nonparametric statistical tests were used. These tests are also particularly appropriate for situations with small sample sizes which occurred in this study. Nonparametric tests are not as strict with their assumptions and can be used with all levels of data (Berenson & Levine, 1979).

The data for hypothesis one were analyzed using a one-tailed Wilcoxon Rank Sum test (whose statistic follows a normal distribution with a large sample size) to evaluate the ability of high versus low self-monitors to move customers from evaluation to consummation phase.

The data for hypothesis two were analyzed using a one-tailed Wilcoxon Rank Sum test to evaluate the ability of high versus low self-monitors to close the sale.

The data for hypothesis three, self-monitoring self-report scores and relational adaptivity were analyzed using a Spearman Rank correlation coefficient.

The data for hypothesis four were analyzed using a one-tailed Wilcoxon Rank Sum test (with the normal approximation) to evaluate the sales success of salespeople with high levels of behavioral adaptability versus the sales success of salespeople with low levels of behavioral adaptability.

The data for hypothesis five concerning the manifestation of dominant behavior by high and low self-monitoring salespeople were analyzed using the exact Wilcoxon rank sum statistic due to the small sample size.

The data for hypothesis six, self-report dominance as measured by the CPI scale and relational domineeringness and relational dominance were evaluated using a Spearman Rank correlation coefficient.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings of this study. First, the results concerning high and low self-monitoring salespeople and the rapidity with which they get to the consummation stage of a sales interaction will be presented. Second, the results focusing on the ability of high or low self-monitoring salespeople to close a sale will be examined. Third, the findings concerning the relationship between self-monitoring and a relational measure of adaptability will be noted. Fourth, the findings on the ability of salespeople with high adaptability and salespeople with low adaptability to close a sale will be discussed. Fifth, the results of the comparison between dominant high self-monitoring salespeople and dominant, low self-monitoring salespeople and the level of behavioral dominance exhibited in sales interactions will be considered. Lastly, the results of the comparisons between domineeringness, dominance and a self report level of dominance will be noted.

The results of the statistical analyses used a 0.05 level of significance throughout unless otherwise noted. Additionally, in order to coordinate the information coming from the two telemarketing divisions, changes were made to the measurement of the dependent variable of sales success. Originally three categories of consumer commitment responses were measured: sending literature about the product, trial review and product sales. Results have been analyzed using both a strict definition of sales success which is selling at least one of the products and a broader definition of sales success, customer commitment. The broader definition combines sending literature, trial review and product sales into a sale measure.

The reason for using the broader definition is that one of the sales divisions gave sales incentive points for sending literature and sending trial reviews as well as for product sales and the other division did not. In order to have parity for the sales goals between divisions, the three categories of sending literature, trial review and sales were collapsed into a customer commitment category of sales. The broader measurement of sales success in this study, therefore, is the number of customer commitments occurring during the sales interactions that were tape recorded. Sales successes occurring during other interactions were not considered as a part of this study.

4.2 Inter-Coder Reliability

The two coders were trained according to the suggested outline sent by Dr. L. Edna Rogers. The training occurred over three and a half weeks with practice coding sessions coming after reviews of the coding schemata. Dr. Rogers had provided sample conversations with the correct coding which were compared with the training coding until both coders understood the correct coding. The inter-coder reliability was measured using a Spearman's Rank correlation as the coders were working with categorizing various parts of the conversations. Spearman's Rank correlations are used with categorical data. The inter-coder reliability table is as follows:

Table 4

Coder Reliability Table

	Coder 1	Coder 2
Coder 1	1.000	.9929**
Coder 2	.9929**	1.000

** is significant at the .001 level.

This high level of agreement was probably due to the intensive weeks of training and the use of only two coders.

4.3 Findings Related To Stages Of A Sales Interaction

H-1 High self-monitoring salespeople should be able to get to the consummation phase more quickly in a sales interaction than low self-monitoring salespeople. The data was divided into high and low respondents using the score of

13 for the median split. For this sample of salespeople, the median response was 13 and therefore was used as the dividing line between high and low self-monitors. A one-tailed Wilcoxon Rank Sum test was used to test this hypothesis.

Surprisingly, in direct opposition to the stated hypothesis, low self-monitoring salespeople were able to get to the consummation phase of the interaction more quickly than high self-monitoring salespeople. This result was not significant for the broad definition of sales success (Normal approximation to Wilcoxon Rank Sum Statistic; $Z = -1.36$, $p=.0889$), nor for the stricter definition of sales success ($Z = -6.667$, $p>.999$), although if stated in the opposite direction, the Z-test results would be significant using the strict definition of sales. The fact that the direction of the result is opposite to that stated in the hypothesis is worthy of discussion.

This would seem to indicate that low self-monitoring salespeople do not take time to reflect on cues coming from the buyer, but go forward in their goal of a completed sales call. That should take less time than for a high self-monitoring salesperson who is looking for and using social cues in order to choose the most correct behavioral response for the situation. This does seem to be in agreement with Snyder (1974), who said that low self-monitoring people pride themselves in remaining the same regardless of the situation while high self-monitoring people look for cues from the other for indications of appropriate behavior in the situation. In the sales situation, it would seem that the more self-monitoring a salesperson does, the searching for cues should be greater, requiring additional conversation to elicit those cues and therefore a slower progression through the different phases of a sales interaction.

H-2 High self-monitoring salespeople should be better able to close a sale than low self-monitoring salespeople. A one-tailed Wilcoxon Rank Sum test was used to test this hypothesis. The salespeople were divided into high and low self-monitors using the median score of 13 as the dividing point. The hypothesis was supported in that high self-monitoring salespeople closed significantly more sales than did low self-monitoring sales people using the broader definition of sales success (Normal approximation to Wilcoxon Rank Sum Statistic; $Z = 2.252$, $p = .0059$). When the stricter definition of sales success is employed the results are no longer significant, but the direction of the results remains the same ($Z = .4359$, $p = .6636$). It seems apparent that high self-monitoring salespeople of all levels are more successful than low self-monitoring salespeople (i.e., high self-monitoring salespeople get more customer compliance than do low self-monitoring salespeople, although they have longer conversations in doing so).

4.4 Findings Related To Comparison Of Self-Monitoring and Relational Adaptability

H-3 Self-monitoring will be significantly correlated with a relational communication measure of adaptability. The measure of adaptability was a count of the complementary paired responses of the salesperson to each of the customers divided by the total number of statements given in the interaction. A Spearman's rank correlation was used to test this hypothesis. The relationship between the self-monitoring and a relational measure of adaptability was not significant as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5

	Self-Monitoring	Relational Adapt
Self-Monitoring	1.0000	.0017
Relational Adapt	.0017	1.0000

These two measures are apparently examining different aspects of the salesperson. That is not surprising since one is a static personality trait measure and the other is a process measure of behavior exhibited during the interaction. This finding reinforces the need for the use of process measures in examining sales interactions or any type of interaction. The previously used static measures do not appear to capture the same behavior. A respondent may believe that overall, he/she consistently displays that type of behavior and responds that way on a self-report survey.

However, the process measure is a picture of what occurs during each interaction, therefore each behavior in that situation is captured. Research on personality has found that behaviors representing personality traits are not exhibited in all situations. This research has shown that certain situations or environments encourage the manifestation of various behaviors. Kenrick, McCreath, Govern, King & Bordin (1990) examined the manifestation of several types of behaviors in a variety of social situations. They found that "some traits that were relatively high in visibility in one type of setting were relatively unlikely to be shown in other settings" (Kenrick et al., p. 697). For example, "self-control was seen as more likely to show up in a religious setting" whereas social inclination was readily observable in a fraternity or sorority environment but least likely to be seen in a religious setting (Kenrick et al., p. 694).

Sales interactions may not be the proper environment for the manifestation of some behaviors while encouraging the manifestation of other behaviors. There may be certain situations, business or other environments, which would encourage the exhibition of a behavior that would correlate well with self-monitoring. The use of process measures would help to ascertain which behaviors are exhibited during specific interactions.

4.5 Findings Related to Relational Adaptability and Sales Success

H-4 A salesperson who manifests a high level of adaptability will have greater sales success than a salesperson who manifests a low level of adaptability. A one-tailed Wilcoxon Rank Sum Statistic (with the sample size large enough for the normal approximation) was used to test this hypothesis. To count the levels of relational adaptability, a count was made of the complementary responses (one-up given in response to a one-down or a one-down given in response to a one-up) given by the salesperson in each interaction. These responses were then averaged over all of the salesperson's conversations to arrive at a personal average relational adaptability score for each salesperson since the unit of analysis was the salesperson. That score was then divided by the average number of statements in the interactions to account for differences in length of sales interactions between the various salespeople. The levels of relational adaptability were divided into high and low level groups using the median score of .042 as the dividing point. The hypothesis was not supported with either a strict definition of sales (Wilcoxon Rank Sum Statistic with normal approximation; $Z = -.12909$, $p = .8966$) or with a broad definition of sales

(Wilcoxon Rank Sum Statistic with normal approximation; $Z = -.35266$, $p = .7264$).

Although the results are not significant, it is interesting that the direction of the results is opposite to the stated hypothesis. These results may indicate that relational adaptability is not an important constituent for sales success. Another possibility is that longer sales interaction seem to be the more successful interactions. Behaviors which serve to lengthen the conversation would be important modifiers of sales success. Relational adaptability may modify the length of a sales interaction and indirectly have an effect on sales success.

4.6 Findings Related to Self-Monitoring and Relational Dominance

H-5 A dominant, low self-monitoring salesperson is more likely to manifest dominant behavior across sales interactions than a dominant, high self-monitoring salesperson. A Wilcoxon Rank Sum Statistic was used to test this hypothesis. It was found that there was no support for this hypothesis. Once the effect of the longer conversations by high self-monitoring salespeople was factored out, there was no significant difference in the manifestation of dominant behaviors between dominant high and dominant low self-monitors.

4.7 Findings Related to Domineeringness and Trait Dominance

H-6 If the relational measure of domineeringness is an individual or monadic behavior, domineeringness will correlate better with the self-report measure of dominance than the relational measure of dominance.

As seen from Table 6, the relational measure of domineeringness did not correlate with the self report measure of dominance. The hypothesis that domineeringness was conceptually the same as a trait measure of dominance was not supported. Although they are both defined as measured of individual traits or behaviors, they appear to measure different things.

Additionally, there is a significant correlation between the relational measures of domineeringness and dominance. This probably occurs because salespeople who give one-up responses may give a majority of those responses in many conversations and therefore have a much better chance of having domineering statements matched with more one-down responses from the customer, consequently having the dyadic exchange categorized as dominance. It is interesting, however, that the relational communication literature focuses on dyadic response patterns and this categorization of a relational behavior seems to be a return to something similar to trait analysis. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Table 6

Spearman Rank Correlation of Domineeringness

And Two Forms of Dominance

	Domineer-ingness	Relational Dominance	Dominance
Domineer-ingness	1.000	.4843**	.2198
Relational Dominance	.4883**	1.000	.2537
Dominance	.2198	.2537	1.000

**Significant at the .001 level

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses in greater detail the findings noted in chapter four. Traditionally, sales research has taken two paths. One focus has been on the use of static measurements to indicate some future sales success (Weitz, 1981; Szymanski & Churchill, 1990). The other focus has been a search for methods appropriate to measure the interaction dynamics as they occur. The purpose of this paper was to study sales interactions using a process approach that allowed the dynamics within the sales interaction to be examined while the interaction was in progress. Previous theoretical discussion by Soldow & Thomas (1984) had suggested the use of the transactional measures available from relational communication to code and categorize the behaviors manifested during sales interactions.

Previous research on sales interactions and indicators of sales success had used self-report measures of static characteristics. This paper tried to provide a link between process measures of adaptability and dominance using actual recordings of sales interactions and previous studies focusing on the same traits measured by self-report surveys. It was found that the information gleaned from self-report measures of adaptability and dominance did not correlate with the information gleaned from the process measures.

The previous research stream that had come closest to using a process measurement technique was the research of Olshavsky (1973) and Pennington (1968). Both studies tape recorded the sales interactions of appliance salespeople. The research categorized the sales interactions into three phases (orientation, evaluation and consummation) and analyzed the type of information being exchanged during each phase of the sales interaction.

This study tried to link the sales abilities of high and low self-monitoring salespeople with the speed of going through all of the phases of a sales interaction as well as the ability to close the sale. It was found that there were differences between the high and low self-monitoring salespeople with regard to both sales interaction speed and sales closures, with high self-monitoring salespeople taking longer to go through the sales phases, while at the same time, successfully closing more sales.

5.2 Stages of a Sales Interaction

Pennington (1968) and Olshavsky (1973) tried to look at what occurs during an interaction by examining the types of questions the customer asks. They recorded sales conversations and categorized the type of information the customers were interested in. Olshavky found that certain types of information were requested routinely in various parts of the sales interactions. He defined three stages in a sales interaction: orientation, evaluation and consummation based on the customer's information preference.

In this study it was originally thought that, since high self-monitoring people use cues from social situations, they should be able to pick up cues from the customer concerning the type of questions the customer had. In turn, the high self-monitor would be able to spend less time in each section of the sales interaction and reach the consummation phase of an interaction sooner. However, the hypothesis that high self-monitoring salespeople would get to the consummation phase of a sales interaction faster than low self-monitoring salespeople was not supported. The high self-monitoring salespeople took longer to reach the consummation phase than did low self-monitoring salespeople.

Reconsidering the description Snyder (1974) gives of high self-monitoring behavior, it is possible to see why it might be the case that looking for cues from social interaction would encourage longer conversations. The categorizing of the newly found cues would take some time to process and an extended conversation would give an opportunity for gathering additional cues while processing cues already obtained. More importantly, simply by virtue of attending to cues of the customer, the high self-monitor would likely allow the customer to talk more rather than insisting upon his or her own agenda as might be the case for a low self-monitor. Therefore, a high self-monitoring salesperson would be slower to move through a sales interaction than a low self-monitoring salesperson since more time would be spent in interpretation of and responding to the customer cues.

Consequently it would seem that, since a low self-monitoring salesperson would not be looking for situational cues, he/she can more quickly reach the consummation phase of a sales interaction since the prospect's cues are less relevant. Thus a low self-monitoring salesperson would be able to make more sales calls than a high self-monitoring salesperson in the same time span. Often sales managers encourage the making of more sales calls in the belief that a certain average success rate will engender a certain number of sales out of the total number of customers called (Savage, Note 4). In fact, in one of the telemarketing sales divisions which was studied, management noted telephone calls lasting more than five minutes with the implication that the salesperson was wasting time (Savage, Note 4). One manager believed that out of every 130 calls made the salesperson should connect with 30 decision makers. From those 30 decision makers, she expected her salespeople to make 20 sales (O'Connor, Note 5). Certainly the success rate for each of the salespeople should be considered. The implicit question is whether longer calls lead to greater (or fewer) sales. High self-monitors, who have longer sales calls, may also be more likely to successfully complete them. That was the basis of the next hypothesis.

The hypothesis that high self-monitoring salespeople would be better able to successfully close a sale than low self-monitoring salespeople was supported. This finding primarily supports the research of Weitz (1981; Spiro & Weitz, 1990) who believed that a high self-monitoring salesperson would be likely to be an adaptable person and have a better success rate than an unadaptable salesperson. The high self-monitoring salesperson was more successful than the low self-monitoring salesperson in closing sales interactions. However, the relational measure of adaptability and the self-monitoring measure did not correlate. The two measures seem to be looking at two different aspects of adaptability.

Weitz (1981) proposed the usage of self-monitoring as a measure of an ability to be flexible in behavior responses in a sales situation. He thought that the ability to adapt the sales pitch to the individual situation of the customer would enhance sales success. Indeed, high self-monitoring salespeople seem to be more effective on their sales calls than low self-monitoring salespeople. The ability to garner cues from the customer and the social/sales environment may give an advantage to the high self-monitoring salesperson by prompting the salesperson to give the customer the type of information the customer is interested in learning. High self-monitoring salespeople spend more time with each customer and have higher numbers of completed sales calls per customer called. So the practice of using a tally of long telephone calls as an indication of poor sales technique may be misleading. The longer telephone calls may likely be a preponderance of the division's sales successes.

Longer sales conversations may also allow the customer to explain his/her situation in more detail. Thus more of the problems of the customer may be uncovered as well as the type of information desired. This allows the high self-monitoring salesperson an opportunity to show how his/her product can solve the customer's problems.

This is not to say that the longer sale conversation imply greater relational adaptability. As previously discussed in chapter 4, the longer conversation should allow the high self-monitoring salesperson the opportunity to garner more social and situational cues to the appropriate behavior. The high self-monitoring salesperson may decide that the appropriate behavior may call for manifest dominance, submission or mere extensions of the conversation which may not necessarily be the same behavior as manifest relational adaptability (a one-up response to a one-down statement or a one-down response to a one-up statement).

5.3 Comparison of Self-Monitoring and Relational Adaptability

Adaptability as an important component of sales success has been stressed for decades (Chapple & Donald, 1947; Weitz, 1981). It seemed appropriate to compare a proposed self-report measure of adaptability and a relational measure of adaptability to see if a relationship existed between the two. In this study, no such relationship was found to exist. The problem may be the difference in comparing a process measure with a static measure which relies on the respondent's perception of him/herself. This result supports the many researchers who have been calling for the use of process measures to examine sales interactions (Chapple & Donald, 1947; Evans, 1963; Szymanski & Churchill, 1990).

Szymanski & Churchill (1990) for example, found differences between successful and unsuccessful salespeople using static measurement tools but wondered if the differences were due to different client contacts. Process measures such as the relational coding scheme allow for the examination of the interaction as the interaction proceeds and could help to answer questions concerning differing responses with different customers.

Prior studies have shown that something seems to occur in interactions that is not measurable either before or after using static tests (Evans, 1963; Weitz, 1981). The results of the present study indicate that the static measure (self-monitoring) used did not appear to measure the same thing as the process measure (relational adaptability). Therefore additional information concerning exhibited behavior is available from interactions using process measures that is not retrievable using self-report surveys. Further research will undoubtedly uncover other behaviors related to sales success and other goals by using process approaches.

Another problem with comparing static measurement techniques with process techniques is that the behavior may not be manifested in all situations and thus is not always available for examination. In fact, Kenrick et al. (1990) found that "some settings are more appropriate for manifesting some personality dimensions than are others" (p. 693). In answering a self-report survey, a person may give a general assessment of his/her behavior, but the process measure examines specific actions in specific interactions. Further research could examine sales behavior over a longer time frame to see if behavior comparable to the self-reported predisposition emerges over time.

5.4 Relational Adaptability and Sales Success

The hypothesis concerning salespeople with high levels of relational adaptability and salespeople with low levels of adaptability and sales success was not supported when the effect of longer conversations was factored out.

Relational adaptability was defined as making a complementary response to the customer's statement; either a one-up response to a one-down statement or a one-down response to a one-up statement divided by the number of statements in the interaction. Fisher and Drecksel (1983) found that "cycling in and out of periods of competitive interactions (one-up responses to one-up statements or one-down responses to one-down statements) may allow the social system to maintain itself" and prolong the interaction (p. 66). They found it was the use of relational adaptability responses that served to bring conversations out of competition. Perhaps salespeople who have higher levels of relational adaptability also engage in longer conversations since those responses would tend to extend the conversation. It may be that a strategy that lengthens a sales conversation and increases the customer's responses also increases the opportunities for sales success. Future research could examine conversation length, relational adaptability and sales success.

5.5 Self-Monitoring and Relational Dominance

The hypothesis that dominant, high self-monitoring salespeople would exhibit less relational dominance than dominant low self-monitoring salespeople was not supported. There was no significant difference in the manifestation of dominance once the effect of conversation length was factored out.

5.6 Self Report Personality Traits and Relational Communication Traits

Courtright, Millar and Rogers-Millar first proposed in 1979 that there was a difference in the relational meanings between a directional one-up assertion not followed by a submissive response and a one-up assertion that is followed by a submissive response. The assertion that is followed by a submissive response was labeled dominance. The one-up assertion followed by another one-up assertion or a neutralizing response was labeled domineeringness. Domineeringness was termed an individual act. If it was indeed a monadic measure of an assertion of control then it should correlate well with a self report measure of dominance. In fact, this study shows that neither relational measure of assertion of control correlates well with the self report measure.

It is interesting to see domineeringness labeled an individual act considering the relational research. The manifestation of the behavior is an individual behavior, however, it is in response to a previous behavior. Relational communication defines all communication as a response to a previous behavior. Watzlawick et al. (1967) contend that even a catatonic schizophrenic's nonresponse to all stimuli is a response that elicits other responses from those around him/her. Therefore the one-up assertion is a response to the previous statement. Perhaps a more apporpriate focus would be to examine the previous statement as well as the statement that follows a domineeringness behavior.

It is fascinating that the dyadic measures do not correlate well with the monadic self-report tests. If anything, this again lends weight to the argument that salespeople need to be measured during the sales interaction rather than tested alone either before or after a sales interaction. Apparently the process measures capture a part of the interaction that is not measured by the self-report tests and may remain hidden until stimulated by the actions and reactions of another.

5.7 Limitation

A limitation of this study is that the telemarketers were instructed to perform their sales duties as normal. Those duties included calling on new accounts as well as servicing existing accounts. It is likely that there was a difference in approach to the new accounts than for the existing accounts as the existing accounts had some basis for a relationship between customer and seller. It would be interesting to separate the new account sales calls from the existing account sales calls and determine if the effects found in this study remain the same in each of the subsets. The effects of high versus low self-monitoring salespeople may be increased when examining only new accounts as the salespeople would be using only the information gained in that initial call.

5.8 Summary and Future Research

The primary objective of this study was to conduct an examination of sales interactions using a dynamic, process approach. This type of approach has been suggested in general for decades (Chapple & Donald, 1947, Evans, 1963) and the specific process technique used herein, relational coding, was suggested by Soldow & Thomas (1984). However, the approach had not been used in an empirical study until now. The examination of the sales interaction as it is in progress is critical since "the sales is a product of the particular dyadic interaction of a given salesman and prospect rather than a result of the individual qualities of either alone" (Evans, 1963).

The results of three of the hypotheses supported the view that interactions should be studied using a dynamic approach. Previous studies have used self-report surveys given before or after a sales interaction to try to assess the interplay. In this study, a comparison was made of two self-report scales and possibly corresponding relational behaviors. It was found that self-monitoring, which had been suggested by Weitz (1981) as a measure of adaptable behavior, did not correlate significantly with relational adaptability. Similarly, the results of a self-report scale of dominance did not correlate significantly with relational dominance. The relational measure did assess dominant behaviors (one-up statement by the seller followed by a one-down response by the customer) which were not measured by traditional self-report scales.

An additional objective of this study was to further investigation of the phases of a sales interaction by linking self-monitoring ability to an ability to quickly move a sales interaction to its close. Pennington (1968) and Olshavsky (1973) had examined sales interactions and found that there were consistent differences in the types of information sought by customers in different parts of a sales interaction. Olshavsky (1973) defined these different parts as three phases: orientation, evaluation and consummation.

In contrast to what was hypothesized, it was found that high self-monitoring salespeople move through a sales interaction more slowly than low self-monitoring salespeople. Interestingly, however, high self-monitoring salespeople completed more sales calls successfully than did low self-monitoring salespeople. High self-monitoring salespeople appeared to extend the conversation by talking more to the customer. While the concern may be social appropriateness (Snyder, 1974), the increased length may have allowed them to draw out cues about the type of information the customer desires as well as allowing the customer to broach possible problems which the salesperson would then have tried to solve. The use of relational techniques in future studies might be able to determination of which of these two scenarios occurred.

Another objective of this study was to determine if dominant, low self-monitoring salespeople manifested more dominant behavior across sales interactions than did dominant, high self-monitoring salespeople. It was found that there was no significant difference between the dominant high and dominant low self-monitors when the effect of conversation length was factored out.

5.8.1 Practical Applications

There are two practical applications stemming from this study. Since high self-monitors had more sales success than low self-monitors, a self-monitoring scale could be administered to prospective salespeople to ascertain their self-monitoring levels. It would seem that a higher self-monitoring score would give an additional reason to hire one candidate over another, all other factors being equal.

Secondly, since salespeople with longer conversation also seemed to have greater sales success, an evaluation of the interview interaction between the prospective employer and sales candidate may provide an indication of an ability to engage in meaningful longer conversations by the candidate. Another alternative would be to have formal role-plying as a part of the interview process in order to obtain an indication of behavior patterns. Additionally, it may be possible to teach salespeople how to meaningfully elongate a sales interaction. This could be added to present sales training methods to help increase sales success of salespeople already working for the company.

This study was done using only American telemarketers. There may be different results concerning adaptability or self-monitoring if salespeople of other nationalities are studied. Not only would studies of speakers from the same nation be interesting, but cross-cultural sales studies might indicate important differences in sales approaches that lead to increased sales success.

5.8.2 Future Research

There are a number of avenues that future research could follow. Relational coding could be used to assess other types of behavior that may have correlates in personality traits such as empathy and see if there is a significant relationship between any of the self-report traits and manifest behavior. Parks (1977) indicated in his axioms of relational communication that he believed there was a relational measure for empathy. That measure could be used in future studies. Secondly, relational behavior patterns other than adaptability could be researched to ascertain what relationship they have with sales success. Since both dominance and empathy have been mentioned in traditional sales literature as having positive effects on sales success, both behavioral patterns should be examined for a significant positive relationship with sales success.

Since high and low self-monitoring salespeople evidence a difference in the amount of conversation in a sales interaction, future study should focus on possible differences in conversation length between salespeople of high and low levels of relational adaptability.

It would be interesting in future research to focus on the customer's relational behavior using relational coding. When the salesperson is exhibiting more relational adaptability, does that influence the customer to also manifest more adaptability or is some other behavior stimulated? Process methods may be able to detect some of the cues given by customers that high self-monitoring salespeople may be assessing in the sales interactions.

Another possible focus of future research concerning self-monitoring would be an examination of the relationship between self-monitoring and job satisfaction. It would seem that the higher the salesperson sales per call rate, the more satisfied the person would be in the job. In the present study, since high self-monitoring salespeople completed more sales calls, they may also have higher job satisfaction than low self-monitoring salespeople.

A further extension of this research concerns the unit of measure. The present study the salesperson was the unit of measure. Future research could use each sales interaction itself as the basis of research. There may be differences between behavior of a successful salesperson as averaged over all of his/her sales calls and the behavior manifest during each successful and unsuccessful sales call. Use of the relational coding scheme allows for study of each separate sales interaction.

This study has tried to show that the use of dynamic, process techniques adds to the behavioral information gained from study of sales interactions. It is hoped that further use of this relational coding technique will uncover more behaviors that help explain what occurs in a sales interaction and what can help increase sales success.

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