

**The Adaptive Behavior Construct  
and Its Effect on Salesperson Performance**

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(ABSTRACT)

Salesperson performance has been heavily researched in the marketing literature. Previous research has identified various personality traits, salesperson behaviors, and situational characteristics that affect salesperson performance. Results indicate that no single approach to the study of salesperson performance is sufficient by itself.

This study investigated the interactions among personality, situational, and behavioral characteristics of salespeople, and their effect on salesperson performance. Since the adaptive behavior construct has been cited as a key determinant to understanding these interactions, an examination of the adaptive behavior-performance relationship was undertaken. A model of adaptive selling behavior was developed and empirically tested.

An analysis of the data suggests that adaptive behavior (e.g., salesperson planning process) affects salesperson performance. In addition, several of the situational characteristics (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer variables, salesperson-customer relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables), utilized in this study, were found to affect both adaptive behavior (i.e., salesperson planning process and customer interaction) and salesperson performance.

The results of this study provide theoretical, methodological, and substantive implications concerning the adaptive behavior to performance relationships. The study concludes with suggested directions for future research.

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**I dedicate this book to my mother and father.**

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### ***Overview***

Salesperson performance has been heavily researched in the marketing literature (Churchill et al. 1985). Previous research has identified various personality traits (e.g., aptitude, skill level), salesperson behaviors (e.g., motivation), and situational characteristics (e.g., organizational/environmental factors) that affect salesperson performance. The results of these studies indicate that no single approach to the study of salesperson performance is sufficient by itself. In 1978, Weitz introduced the contingency approach to the study of salesperson behavior. The contingency approach proposes that the relationship between salesperson behavior and sales performance is moderated by, or contingent upon, personality traits and situational characteristics. An exploration of the interactions among personality, situational, and behavioral characteristics of salespeople has been suggested as a stream of research in the sales management literature (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1977; Weitz 1980,1981; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that adaptive

behavior is a key determinant to understanding these interrelationships. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the theoretical underpinnings of salesperson performance and adaptive behavior. A statement of the current research problems is presented followed by an overview of the study and potential contributions and limitations of the study. Finally, an overview of the ensuing chapters will be given.

## ***Approaches to Studying Salesperson Performance***

Since the first study of salesperson performance (Oschrin 1918), research has attempted to identify relationships between performance and personality traits, situational variables, and salesperson behaviors. First, the use of personality traits to identify successful salespeople has met with limited success. In a meta-analysis on salesperson performance research conducted prior to 1982, Churchill, Ford, Hartley, and Walker (1985) found that personal factors and personality variables have been linked to performance more often than any other variables. Personal characteristics are thought to be a function of personal (i.e., demographics, personality traits) and psychological (i.e., mental abilities) factors (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1985; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). Variables used in previous research include self-esteem (Bagozzi 1978, 1980b), verbal intelligence (Bagozzi 1980a), gender (Bush and Busch 1978), personality traits (Lamont and Lundstrom 1977), demographic characteristics (Lamont and Lundstrom 1977), job satisfaction (Bagozzi 1980b, Behrman et al. 1981, Behrman and Perreault 1984, Futrell et al. 1983), locus of control (Behrman et al. 1983, Behrman and Perreault 1984), and experience (Behrman and Perreault 1984). In general, the relationships between salesperson performance and personal characteristics have been weak, and in one case contradictory (i.e., locus of control).

Second, the relationship between situational variables and salesperson performance has been given less attention in the marketing literature (Churchill et al. 1985). Churchill et

al. (1985) identified forty-one studies that utilized organizational/environmental factors. Situational variables include role conflict (Bagozzi 1978, Behrman and Perreault 1984), role ambiguity (Bagozzi 1980b, Behrman et al. 1981, Behrman and Perreault 1984), territorial potential (Bagozzi 1978), closeness of supervision (Behrman and Perreault 1984), innovativeness required (Behrman and Perreault 1984), managerial control (Futrell and Schul 1978), task difficulty (Mowen et al. 1985), and leadership behavior of the sales manager (Tyagi 1985). Situational characteristics describe the type of environment in which the salesperson is operating and can influence performance by directly facilitating or constraining performance, or by influencing and interacting with other performance determinants (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1977).

Lastly, research focusing on the relationships between salesperson behaviors and performance has been increasing since 1960 (Churchill et al. 1985). Salesperson behaviors may be affected by both personality traits and situational variables. Previous research has utilized a variety of variables that include effort (Behrman and Perreault 1984, Futrell et al. 1983, Mowen et al. 1985), perception of customer decision making (Weitz 1978), strategic orientation (Weitz 1978), influence strategies (Spiro and Perrault 1979), communication styles (Williams and Spiro 1985), motivation (Bagozzi 1980b, Behrman and Perreault 1984, Tyagi 1985), communication frequency (Behrman and Perreault 1984), and use of questions (Schuster and Danes 1986).

Models of salesperson performance have incorporated all three types of variables (i.e., personality, behavioral, and situational characteristics). In several of these models salesperson behavior has been the focus, and personality and situational characteristics have been incorporated as antecedents to behavior (Green and Tønning 1979; Robertson and Chase 1968; Spiro, Perreault, and Reynolds 1977; Weitz, Suján, and Suján 1986). This approach is similar to that found in the psychology literature which examined the relationship between situational characteristics and behavior. The psychology literature defines adaptive behavior as an adjustment in behavior due to internal and external stimuli (Hettema 1979). Internal stimuli are comprised of personality characteristics. External stimuli consists of situational



variables. Hetteema (1979) suggests that adjustments to behavior result from the interaction of personality and situational characteristics. Therefore, a contingency approach would be appropriate for the examination of adaptive behavior and its effect on salesperson performance.

Utilizing a contingency approach, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that salespeople need to adapt behavior to various selling situations. They define the practice of adaptive selling as "the altering of sales behavior during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986, p. 175). Their Adaptive Selling Framework indicates that the behavior, adaptive selling, is a function of the characteristics of the salesperson (such as motivation to practice adaptive selling), and that the adaptive selling-performance relationship is moderated by environmental conditions.

## ***Statement of the Problem***

The purpose of the present study is to analyze adaptive selling behavior and its relationship to performance. Several models of salesperson performance in the sales management literature have utilized feedback loops as a way to represent the behavior adjustments of salespeople (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1977; Robertson and Chase 1968; Spiro and Perreault 1979), but have not specifically addressed the nature of the adaptive behavior construct. In 1986, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan focused on the ability component of the Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1977) Model of Salesperson Performance. In particular, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) developed the Adaptive Selling Framework through which they laid the groundwork for further investigation into the adaptive behavior construct. The Adaptive Selling Framework suggests that the ability to engage in adaptive behavior is a function of

personal characteristics, and the adaptive behavior-performance relationship is moderated by situational characteristics.

The psychology literature differs from the sales management literature with respect to the determinants of adaptive behavior. Two major psychology theories (Helson 1964, Hettema 1979) suggest that the antecedents of adaptive behavior are personal and situational characteristics. Helson (1964) proposes that adaptive behavior is a result of foreground and background stimuli. In a sales situation salesperson-customer interaction would be an example of a foreground stimulus and managerial influences would be an example of background stimuli. Hettema (1979) proposes that internal and external stimuli lead to adaptive behavior. Internal stimuli include personality characteristics that could affect the salesperson's behavior or perceptions of situational characteristics. External stimuli are the situational characteristics that the salesperson experiences. In order to address whether adaptive behavior is affected by situational characteristics the first research question was developed:

#### **Research Question 1:**

**What are the effects of situational characteristics on adaptive behavior?**

In 1981, Weitz developed the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness. According to the model, the relationship between salesperson behavior and salesperson effectiveness is moderated by resources of the salesperson, salesperson-customer relationship, and the customer buying task. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) built upon this contingency framework by proposing that salespeople will practice adaptive selling when the benefits (i.e., increased performance) outweigh the costs (i.e., increased time) of practicing adaptive behavior. In other words, adapting behavior is not beneficial in all situations. The relationship between adaptive behavior and salesperson performance is dependent upon or moderated by situational characteristics. While these relationships have been theoretically developed, empirical testing has not been conducted. These developments in the sales

management literature provided impetus for the second research question to be addressed in the present study.

#### Research Question 2:

How do situational characteristics moderate the relationship between adaptive behavior and salesperson performance?

## ***The Study--Overview***

In order to address the research questions identified above, a study was undertaken to examine two relationships: (1) the relationship between situational characteristics (i.e., antecedents of adaptive behavior) and adaptive behavior, and (2) the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance. The present study focused on adaptive behavior across customer interactions and within a customer interaction, and utilized the salesperson planning process as a component of adaptive behavior. The salesperson planning process was comprised of four constructs (i.e., sales call planning, information gathering, communication strategy, and influence strategy) that may vary across customer interactions.

Previous research was used to identify those elements which would be theoretical antecedents of adaptive behavior. Those elements include sales position characteristics, customer variables, the customer-salesperson relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables. The aspect of sales position characteristics to be studied was sales position. The type of customer buying task (i.e., modified rebuy or straight rebuy) was the customer variable of interest. The customer-salesperson relationship variables of interest included the salesperson's customer orientation and the type of relationship shared by the salesperson and customer. Several personal resource variables were utilized in the present study in order to adequately examine this construct. The personal resource variables

consisted of product knowledge, customer knowledge, self-monitoring skills, motivation to adapt behavior, and self-consciousness. The managerial variables included salesperson workload and type of compensation package. Multiple regression analyses was used to examine the effects of situational characteristics on adaptive behavior.

The second relationship, adaptive behavior-performance, was studied using a 2 X 2 factorial design. The first factor manipulated was sales position. The two levels of sales position were order taker and trade servicer. The order taker and trade servicer were categorized by two variables, selling functions and information management (Moncrief 1986). The second variable manipulated was the type of buying situation. The two levels were modified rebuy and straight rebuy buying. Modified rebuy is described as a situation in which the customer may require additional information. The customer may be unfamiliar with the product, salesperson's organization, or both the product and organization. Straight rebuy is described as repeat purchases by a current customer. The customer is familiar with both the salesperson's product and organization. The dependent variable to be measured was performance. Performance measurements included relative sales volume for the current year, relative sales volume for the previous year, relative sales volume to quota, calls per week, closes per week, relative calls per week, relative closes per week, and relative selling expense. The relationship between adaptive behavior and performance was analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance, multivariate analysis of covariance, and linear structural equation modeling.

The study was conducted using a mail questionnaire. Sales representatives were surveyed from the institutional food industry in which both order takers and trade servicers operate. Since measures of adaptive behavior based on the salesperson's current job and on a scenario concerning type of customer buying task was desired, the sample population was divided into two groups (i.e., one group consists of half of the trade servicers and half of the order takers) for purposes of data collection. One group (i.e., half of the trade servicers and half of the order takers) was asked first to provide self-reported adaptive behavior responses based on a scenario (e.g., modified rebuy or straight rebuy), and second, adaptive

behavior responses based on their current job. The second group first provided self-reported adaptive behavior responses based on their current job, and second, provided adaptive behavior responses based on a scenario. Since the study involved gathering two measures of self-reported adaptive behavior (i.e., one based on the scenario and a second time based on their actual job), there was a two week delay between measurements. The use of two mailings was to reduce any carry-over effects that would have occurred if the scenario was included in the questionnaire when measuring the adaptive behavior-performance relationship. Measures of the variables were self-reported by the sales representatives.

## ***Potential Contributions of the Study***

Three dominant salesperson performance models include the Model of Salesperson Performance (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1977), the Contingency Framework (Weitz 1981), and the Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). Within these models salesperson behavior has been recognized as a key determinant of salesperson performance. The present study continues this stream of research by focusing on the adaptive behavior of the salesperson and its relationship to salesperson performance. An examination of salesperson adaptive behavior provided theoretical, methodological, and substantive contributions to the field of marketing.

The theoretical contributions of the present study include support for the use of a contingency approach in the study of salesperson performance, an extension of the adaptive behavior construct, and the incorporation of two major psychology theories into the field of marketing. Weitz's (1981) Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness proposes relationships between salesperson performance and microenvironmental characteristics, macroenvironmental characteristics, and effort related to the macroenvironment. In this model the microenvironmental variables are the key determinants of salesperson

effectiveness. The present study builds upon this research by examining the effects of macroenvironmental variables (i.e., situational characteristics).

By pursuing a contingency approach, the concept of adaptive behavior is broadened. When adaptive behavior is considered as a microenvironmental variable, behavioral changes are thought to occur when a face-to-face interaction exists. When a macroenvironmental approach is incorporated, the adaptive behavior concept can include behavioral changes that occur prior to the customer interaction and have the potential to affect a future customer interaction.

Previous marketing research has utilized situational characteristics as moderators of the behavior-performance relationship. Psychology theories (Helson 1964, Hettrema 1979) purport that individuals perceive situational characteristics and then initiate a behavioral response. The proposed model builds upon the psychology theories by suggesting that situational characteristics are antecedents of adaptive behavior. This approach provides evidence concerning the functional relationship among personality, situational, and behavioral characteristics.

Methodological contributions of the present study include delineation of the adaptive behavior construct and its determinants, a test of an empirical definition of adaptive behavior, and an empirical test of the relationship between situational characteristics and adaptive behavior. First, previous research has not delineated the adaptive behavior construct and its determinants. In the present study the adaptive behavior construct is proposed as a two-step process. The two-step process consists of the salesperson planning process and the customer interaction. The salesperson planning process provides for an examination of adaptive behavior prior to the face-to-face customer interaction. The components of the salesperson planning process include information gathering, communication strategies, and influence strategies. The second step, customer interaction, examines changes in the sales plan that occur during the face-to-face interaction.

Second, the adaptive behavior definition has not been empirically tested in previous research. A review of the marketing literature has provided a theoretical reference for the

components of adaptive behavior (Robertson and Chase 1968; Spiro and Perreault 1977; Weitz 1980, 1981; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986), but empirical evidence providing support for the proposed definitions has been lacking. In the present study, the two components of adaptive behavior are the salesperson planning process and the customer interaction.

Third, the present study empirically tests the relationship between situational characteristics and adaptive behavior. The proposed model suggests that five situational characteristics affect adaptive behavior (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer variables, salesperson/customer relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables). The study empirically tests the situation-behavior relationship through a 2 X 2 between groups factorial design. The two factors utilized for classification purposes include the sales position and customer variables. This design allows for an examination of the interaction between two key determinants of adaptive behavior.

The substantive contributions of the proposed study include implications for training programs and suggestions of rules for appropriate behavior with regard to changing situational characteristics. First, implications for training programs can be identified through the examination of the salesperson planning process. The present study proposes that salesperson performance may be affected by variations in the type of information gathered, communication strategies used, and influence strategies used. By identifying the relationships between the components of the sales plan and salesperson performance, training programs can be developed to provide salespeople with the competitive advantage of designing sales calls to more closely meet the needs of their customers. Second, the examination of situational-behavior relationships allows for the development of behavioral rules. For example, the behavior required of an order taker sales position may differ from that of a trade servicer. Training instructors will be able to develop programs tailored to the situational characteristics of their salespeople. Therefore, the potential exists for developing separate training programs to emphasize behaviors that are necessary for successful performance within various sales positions.

## ***Organization of Chapters***

This chapter provided a brief introduction to the different types of variables (i.e., personality, behavioral, situational) that have been used in previous research to study salesperson performance. An overview of the present study, including potential contributions and limitations, has been discussed.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature concerning salesperson performance and discusses the use of a contingency approach. The Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework is presented. The chapter continues with a review of adaptive behavior from the psychology literature. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the Weitz, Sujan, Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework in light of the psychological definition of adaptation.

Chapter 3 introduces the proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior. The definition of adaptive behavior used in the current study is presented. The adaptive behavior variables are reviewed followed by the proposed antecedents of adaptive behavior. The chapter concludes with the hypotheses that were empirically tested in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology used to empirically test the Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior. First, the research questions are reviewed followed by the research design, sampling frame, and sample size. Next, the predictor and response variables of interest are discussed and the procedures for operationalizing the variables are presented. The chapter continues with the presentation of hypotheses derived from the proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior. A discussion of the statistical analyses and validity issues concludes this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the statistical analyses used to test the proposed hypotheses. First, the results of the correlational analysis will indicate which variables were used in the multiple regression analysis. Second, the results of the multiple regression analysis using each of the response variables separately and as a combined score will be



presented. Third, the results of the multiple analysis of variance and multiple analysis of covariance will be discussed.

Finally, Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the major findings. The significance of the research is discussed in light of an interpretation of the results. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the directions for future research.

# **Chapter 2**

## **Literature Review**

### ***Overview***

The objectives of this chapter are to review the pertinent literature relating to the research questions suggested in Chapter 1. The fields of research to be discussed will include salesperson performance and adaptive behavior. First, the discussion of salesperson performance will review the early research; continuing with a review of the Walker, Churchill, Ford (1977) Model of Salesperson Performance and its impact on salesperson performance research. Second, the Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework will be presented. Third, adaptive behavior will be addressed from a psychological perspective. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the Adaptive Selling Framework in light of the review of adaptive behavior.

# ***Review of Literature on Salesperson Performance***

## **Early Research**

Research on salesperson performance first appeared in the early 1900's, and since that time has been the focus of over 100 studies. Churchill, Ford, Hartley, and Walker (1985) reviewed and integrated results of over 80 years of research (from 1918 to 1982) in salesperson performance. Their analysis included 116 published and unpublished articles, representing 1653 associations between performance and the determinants of performance. The results of this analysis included the number of studies published during each five year period, the mean correlation and total number of performance-determinant correlations per year, and summary indices classified by constructs found in the Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) model (see Tables 1 and 2).

First, results of the meta-analysis indicate that the quantity of research in the area of salesperson performance has grown dramatically. Between the years 1921 and 1925 only seven studies utilized salesperson performance as the dependent variable. The number of studies analyzed in this stream of research has increased to twenty between the years 1976 and 1982 (see Table 1).

Second, due to the development of new research techniques and the inclusion of numerous independent variables into research designs, the total number of determinants of salesperson performance being examined increased. Between the years 1921 and 1925 approximately 56 performance-determinant correlations were reported. The number of correlations increased to 430 between the years 1976 and 1982. As the number of independent variables increased the number of variables that were empirically weak in their correlation with performance also increased. Results indicate a statistically significant reduction in the mean performance-determinant correlations. Prior to 1951 the mean

Table 1  
Quantities and Correlations of Publications for the  
Determinants of Salesperson Performance Prior to 1982

<u>Publication</u> <u>period</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>studies</u>	<u>Total number</u> <u>of correlations</u>	<u>Mean</u> <u>correlation</u>
Before 1920	1	22	.266
1921 - 1925	7	56	.218
1926 - 1930	3	38	.354
1931 - 1935	2	13	.324
1936 - 1940	3	9	.190
1941 - 1945	3	35	.142
1946 - 1950	4	21	.223
1951 - 1955	13	101	.175
1956 - 1960	29	367	.234
1961 - 1965	12	321	.131
1966 - 1970	12	131	.269
1971 - 1975	7	109	.113
1976 and after	20	430	.166
	----	----	
Totals	116	1653	

(Source: Adapted from Churchill et. al. 1985)

Table 2  
 Review of Correlations and Range for Determinants  
 of Salesperson Performance Prior to 1982

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Number of Correlations</u>	<u>Weighted Mean Correlation</u>	<u>Range of Simple Correlations</u>
Aptitude	820	.138	.00 to .85
Skill level	178	.268	-.08 to .72
Motivation	126	.184	.02 to .48
Role Perceptions	59	.294	.08 to .51
Personal factors	407	.161	(not provided)
Organizational/ Environmental factors	51	.104	-.05 to .26
-----			
Total	1653		

(Source: Adapted from Churchill et. al. 1985)

performance-determinant correlation was .245; after 1951 the mean was .188 ( $t = 16.55$ ,  $p < .005$ ; see Table 1).

Lastly, utilizing the Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) framework of salesperson performance, the results of the meta-analysis were classified into six categories: motivation, role perceptions, aptitudes, skill level, personal variables, and organizational/environmental variables. Churchill et al. (1985) found that aptitude has been used most often as a determinant of salesperson performance (820 total correlations), followed by personal factors (407 correlations), skill level (178 correlations), motivation (126 correlations), role perceptions (59 correlations), and organizational/environmental factors (51 correlations) (see Table 2). While aptitude and personal factors have received heightened attention in research, neither construct provides as strong a correlational relationship (i.e., weighted mean correlation) with performance as does role perceptions and skill level. Role perceptions account for approximately 8 percent of the variation in salesperson performance, while skill level accounts for 7 percent, motivation accounts for 3 percent, aptitude accounts for 2 percent, and organizational/environmental factors for 1 percent of the variation in sales performance.

Utilizing an analysis of the range of correlations it is possible to get an impression of the stability associated with the variables classified into the various categories. Organizational/environmental factors possess the narrowest range in which the mean correlation fluctuates (i.e.,  $r = -.05$  to  $.26$ ), followed by role perceptions, motivation, skill level, and aptitude. It has been posited that the limited set of organizational/environmental factors used in previous research constrains the range of correlations that have been identified with these factors.

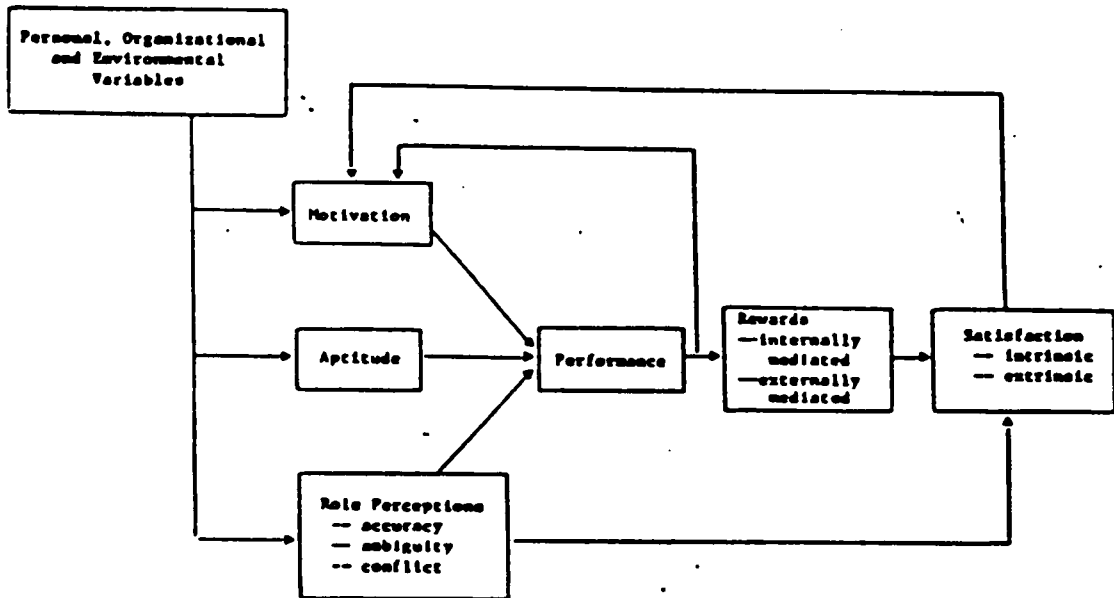
## **The Walker, Churchill, and Ford Model**

Despite extensive research, inconsistencies exist regarding the delineation of the determinants of salesperson performance (Churchill et al. 1985). One reason for these

inconsistencies may have been a lack of theory and construct development. In 1977, Walker, Churchill, and Ford proposed a framework for future research to integrate current theory and empirical research (see Figure 1). Utilizing information from the disciplines of industrial psychology (e.g., worker motivation and performance) and behavioral science, three constructs--role perceptions, aptitude, and motivation--were proposed as the key determinants of salesperson performance. Role perceptions have been defined as the salesperson's perceptions of role partners' expectations and demands as they relate to the set of activities or behaviors that are performed as a function of the job (Walker, Churchill, Ford 1977). Aptitude was defined as innate characteristics of the salesperson which may constrain the ability to perform the sales job (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977). Lastly, Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977, p. 162) defined motivation as "the amount of effort the salesperson desires to expend on each of the activities or tasks associated with the job."

The Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) model has provided researchers with consolidation and guidance in the identification of the determinants of salesperson performance. Based on the number of academic and non-academic articles that have been published since 1977, the degree of effort in uncovering the determinants of salesperson performance has increased (see Table 3).

Despite the number of studies, no new findings have emerged regarding the nature of the relationship between salesperson performance and the determinants of performance. First, an analysis of the weighted correlational means before and after 1977 indicates that no significant differences exist. Second, the degree to which the determinants of salesperson performance explain variation in performance has remained low. In studies published after 1977, aptitude accounted for 3 percent of the variation in salesperson performance, while motivation, role perception, and organizational/environmental factors accounted for 2 percent, and personal factors accounted for only 1 percent of the variation in salesperson performance. Lastly, the range of performance-determinant correlations has widened. For example, prior to 1977, correlations between aptitude and salesperson performance ranged from .00 to .85, after 1977 the range was -.36 to .91 (see Table 4). The implication is that the antecedents of



Model of Salesperson Performance  
(Walker, Churchill, and Ford, 1977)

Figure 1



Table 3  
 Number of Publications Since the Introduction  
 of the Walker et. al. (1977) Model of  
 Salesperson Performance

<u>Year of Publication</u>	<u>Number of Research Studies</u>	<u>Total Number of Salesperson Performance Articles</u>
1978	5	16
1979	5	11
1980	5	13
1981	10	20
1982	5	11
1983	8	17
1984	4	12
1985	6	14
1986	7	18
	-----	-----
Totals	55	132

(Source: Dialog Computer Search)

Table 4  
Correlations and Range of Constructs for the  
Determinants of Salesperson Performance Since 1977

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Number of Correlations</u>	<u>Weighted Mean Correlation</u>	<u>Range of Simple Correlations</u>
Aptitude	14	.18	-.36 to .91
Skill level	2	*	*
Motivation	7	.13	-.14 to .57
Role Perceptions	15	-.15	-.48 to .20
Personal factors	20	.10	-.49 to .52
Organizational/ Environmental factors	18	.15	.08 to .57
-----			
Total	76		

\* correlations not provided in research study.

salesperson performance are multifaceted, and that as the number of independent variables utilized in research increases the range of the correlations may widen.

Churchill et al. (1985) proposed that an increase in research should lead to better theories. Subsequently, developed theories should lead to fewer and stronger associations between the determinants of performance and performance measurements. An examination of the trend among the number of correlations reported for the factors utilized in the Walker, Churchill, Ford (1977) model indicates that research focusing on role perceptions and personal factors has declined (Churchill et al. 1985; see Table 5). There has been an increase in the number of associations reported in later studies, and the average size of performance-determinant correlations were larger in the earlier studies. A chronological analysis indicates that, since 1977, over 75 correlations have been reported, and no single construct has been recognized as a pre-eminent indicator of salesperson performance. Several reasons for these modest correlations include inconsistent operationalizations of performance (Churchill et al. 1985), a proliferation of independent variables which make it difficult to group variables into categories (Churchill et al. 1985), and the existence of variables which moderate salesperson performance (Churchill et al. 1985).

First, since 1977 salesperson performance has been operationalized by 17 different measures (see Table 6). One reason for the variety of dependent measures stems from the different sales positions used in research. For example, a missionary salesperson's performance may be measured by new business conversions and percentage of sales quota attained. An order taker's performance level may be measured by dollar volume. Modest performance-determinant correlations may be the result of inconsistent measures. The integration of research results across studies needs to account for the various measures being used.

Second, the proliferation of independent variables has made it difficult to group variables into categories. Since 1977, over 50 independent variables have been identified (see Table 7). Operationalizations need refinement to increase construct validity. This would lead to a more accurate assessment of the performance-determinant correlations.

Table 5  
 Number of Correlations for Constructs of the  
 Walker et. al. (1977) Model of Salesperson Performance  
 Since 1977

Year	Total Number of Correlations	Weighted Correlational Mean	Number of Correlations for:					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
1978	28	.19	4			7	13	4
1979	3	positive					1	2
1980	10	.04	4		2	3	1	
1981	3	.03	1			1		1
1982	3	.43		2			1	
1983	2	.10			2			
1984	9	.11	1		1	2	2	3
1985	16	.14	4		2	1	1	8
1986	2	.20				1	1	
	---		---	---	---	---	---	---
Totals	76		14	2	7	15	20	18

- \* 1 = Aptitude
- 2 = Skill level
- 3 = Motivation
- 4 = Role Perceptions
- 5 = Personal factors
- 6 = Organizational/Environmental factors

Table 6  
Dependent Variables Used in Salesperson Performance  
Research Since 1977

Activity Reporting  
Call Frequency  
Commissions  
Compensation  
Dollar Volume  
Human Relations Ability  
Improvement Over Previous Year  
New Business Conversions  
Overall Management Rating  
Planning  
Product Knowledge  
Sales Ability  
Salesmanship Skills  
Sales Quota  
Sales Volume Percentage  
Supportive and Developmental Strengths  
Technical Competence  
Territorial Management and Coverage  
Works Hard

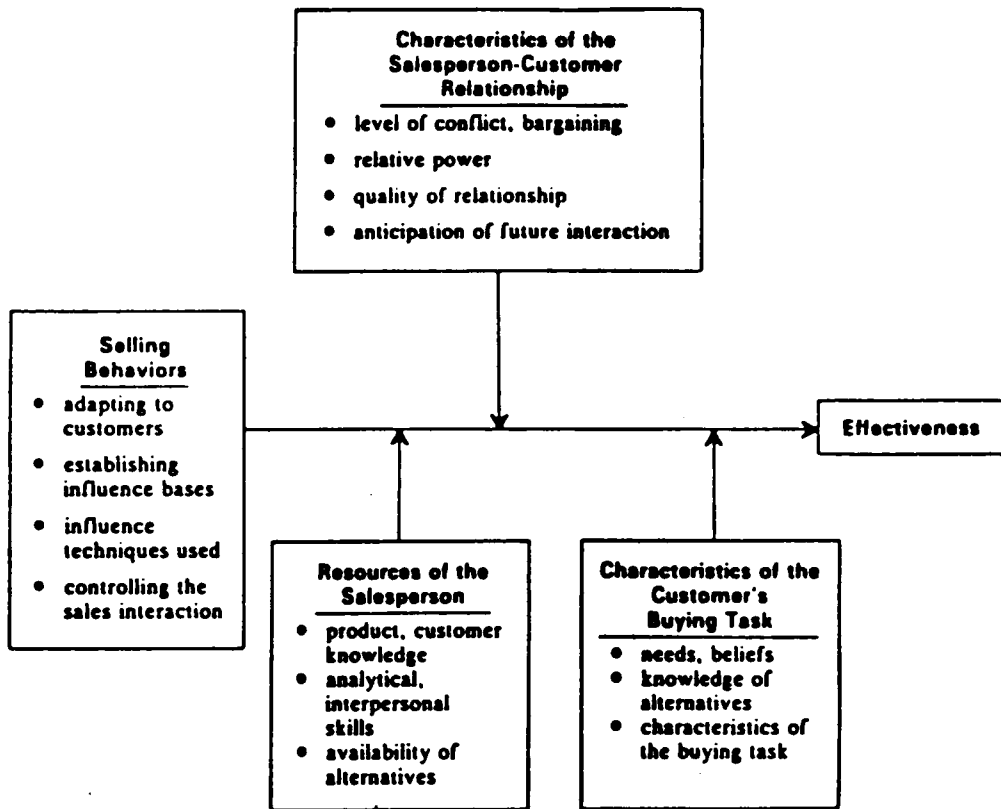
Table 7  
Independent Variables Used in Salesperson Performance  
Research Since 1977

Ability to Help	Job Satisfaction
Age	Job Skill Variety
Closeness of Supervision	Leader Trust and Support
Clubs and Professional Organizations	Level of Technical Support
Communications Frequency	Locus of Control
Contingent Reinforcement	Managerial Control
Dominance	Motivation
Effort	Other Directedness
Ego Strength	Outside Activities
Empathy	Participation
Endurance	Perception of Customers Decision Making Process
Experience	Psychological Influence
Extrinsic Motivation	Regular Evaluations
Formal Education	Relations with Customers
Gender	Role Ambiguity
Generalized Self-Esteem	Role Conflict
Height	Satisfaction with Co-workers
Hierarchical Influence	Satisfaction with Pay
Interaction and Facilitation	Selection of Effective Social Recognition
Influence Over Environment	Task Significance
Influence Over Standards	Task Specific Self-Esteem
Innovativeness Required	Tenure
Job Autonomy	Territorial Potential
Job Feedback	Territorial Potential is Concentrated
Job Related Tension	Verbal Intelligence
Job Rewards Being Based on Performance	
Weight	

Third, the identification of moderating variables may lead to a better understanding of the relationship between performance and the determinants of performance. Churchill et al. (1985) found that product type is a significant moderating variable. In their meta-analysis three product types (i.e., consumer goods, industrial goods, and services) were utilized. Results indicate that while personal factors are highly correlated with salesperson performance in the services category, organizational/environmental factors are important when selling industrial goods.

Based upon the review of salesperson performance literature, it may be concluded that universally effective selling behaviors do not exist. A new direction being taken in salesperson performance research is based on the concept that salespeople have the ability to match their behavior to a given selling situation. Weitz (1979) suggests that a contingency framework is the key to understanding the relationship between the salesperson and the customer. A contingency framework takes into consideration the interactions among characteristics of the salesperson, salesperson behaviors, and characteristics of the selling situation. Contingency oriented selling postulates that "salespeople possessing a specific characteristic will be most successful if they engage in specific behaviors when confronting specific types of selling situations" (Weitz 1979, p. 108).

In 1981, Weitz proposed a Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness (see Figure 2). The contingency model focuses on the relationship between salesperson behaviors and effectiveness. Effectiveness in sales interactions was defined as the degree to which the salesperson's "preferred solutions" are realized across their customer interactions. Salesperson behaviors include adapting to the customer, establishing a base of influence, controlling the interaction, and influence techniques used by the salesperson. Weitz (1981) postulated that effectiveness of salesperson behavior, across customer interactions, is contingent upon or moderated by the salesperson's resources, nature of the customer's buying task, the customer-salesperson relationship, and the interactions among these variables.



Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness  
(Weitz, 1981)

Figure 2



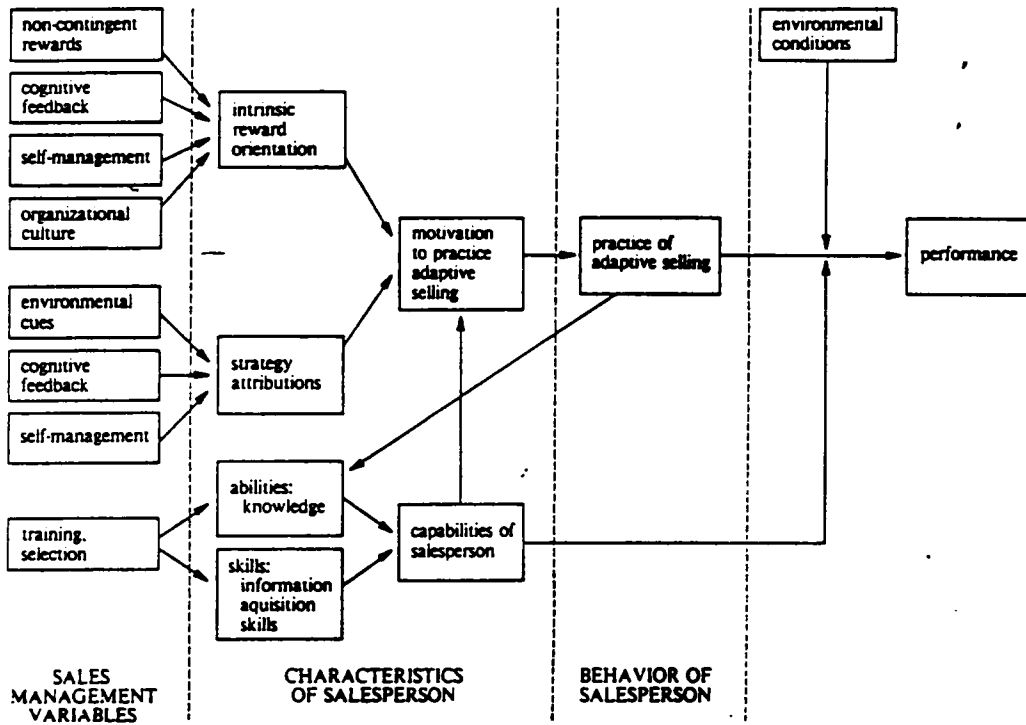
Salesperson resources have been defined as a set of skills or abilities, a level of knowledge about the products and the customer, and a range of alternatives that can be offered to the customers (Weitz 1981). The customer's buying task may be classified as new buy, modified rebuy, or straight rebuy. The customer-salesperson relationship may be characterized by relative power and level of conflict. Weitz (1981) proposes that a contingency approach should be used in salesperson performance research because salespeople match their behavior to specific customer interactions. In 1986, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan addressed this issue in the development of the Adaptive Selling Framework.

## ***Review of Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Model***

In 1986, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan built upon the Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) Model of Salesperson Performance and the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness. Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) proposed that three factors affect performance: role perceptions, motivation, and ability. The Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) builds upon the ability component of the Salesperson Performance Model by specifically addressing the salesperson's ability to adapt sales behaviors to various selling situations (see Figure 3). Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986, p. 174) state that the ability component 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."

One component of the Adaptive Selling Framework is the relationship between salesperson behavior and performance. Analogous to the Contingency model, the Adaptive Selling Framework proposes that the relationship between salesperson behavior and performance is moderated by characteristics of the salesperson and characteristics of the situation. The specific salesperson behavior addressed in the Adaptive Selling Framework is "practice of adaptive selling." Practice of adaptive selling is defined as the altering of sales

**An Adaptive Selling Framework**



Adaptive Selling Framework  
(Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan, 1986)

Figure 3

behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based upon perceived information about the nature of the selling situation (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). The Adaptive Selling Framework indicates that the practice of adaptive selling is directly related to performance. It is suggested that adaptive behavior will increase performance only when the benefits outweigh the costs of practicing adaptive selling.

Three differences exist between the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness and the Adaptive Selling Framework. First, the Contingency Model considers four selling behaviors (i.e., adapting to customers, establishing influence bases, influence techniques used, and controlling sales interactions). The Adaptive Selling Framework addresses only one selling behavior, adapting to customers. Second, the Adaptive Selling Framework examines sales behavior within and across customer interactions whereas the Contingency Model only addressed behavior across customer interactions. Third, the Adaptive Selling Framework identifies salesperson performance, not effectiveness, as the dependent variable. These differences suggest that the adaptive behavior construct is important to future research concerning salesperson performance, and that adaptive behavior research needs to be expanded to include behavior across customer interactions.

Two components were identified as the cornerstone of the Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework: (1) the behavior-performance relationship, which includes the moderating variables environmental conditions and capabilities of the salesperson, and (2) the antecedents of the practice of adaptive selling. Both components will be discussed in the following sections.

## **Behavior-Performance Relationship**

The relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and performance is moderated by environmental conditions and the capabilities of the salesperson. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) identified several characteristics of the selling environment that may increase the use

of adaptive selling. They suggested that adaptive selling is more likely to occur when customers are making significant purchase decisions, exhibiting heterogeneous needs, or when the salesperson can offer a range of alternatives (e.g., an expanded product line or a product with many features and options).

The capabilities of the salesperson may also moderate the relationship between behavior and performance. Two constructs, abilities and skills, comprise the salesperson's capabilities. The abilities construct is defined as the salesperson's knowledge structure of sales situations, sales behaviors, and contingencies that link specific behaviors to situations. The skills construct is defined as the ability to collect information about the sales situation and relate it to information stored in memory.

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggested that the practice of adaptive selling is more effective when the sales representative is capable of categorizing knowledge (e.g., customer needs, appropriate sales strategies) of the selling situation. This effectiveness increases with the number of sales situation categories in long-term memory, the degree to which knowledge structures are hierarchically organized, and the degree to which sales situations are classified in terms of underlying characteristics (e.g., the effect of sales approaches). They also suggested that the effectiveness of practicing adaptive selling increases when the sales representative is capable of linking selling strategies to their sales situation categories (i.e., possessing a high level of procedural knowledge).

The second construct associated with salesperson capabilities is information acquisition skills. Information acquisition skills have been defined as "collecting information about the sales situation and relating it to information stored in memory" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986, p. 180). These skills are utilized by the salesperson in order to gather information about the customer and the sales situation. After the information is gathered it needs to be associated with previously stored knowledge of similar customers and situations. Adaptive selling is more effective when the salesperson possesses the skills necessary to acquire information about customers and can relate this information to knowledge in memory. Examples of

information acquisition skills are probing for information, asking questions, and listening (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986).

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that information acquisition skills are utilized over a broad range of social interactions whereas knowledge structures are domain-specific. For example, a specific knowledge structure will enhance performance only in a specific domain. Information acquisition skills enhance performance over several different domains.

### **Antecedents of Sales Behavior:**

In the Adaptive Selling Framework, the only variable that directly affects the practice of adaptive selling is called "motivation to practice adaptive selling" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) propose that motivated behavior is characterized by intensity, persistence, and choice. While intensity and persistence do not indicate a direction of effort, choice does imply a directional element. Salespeople direct their efforts by choosing which customers deserve their attention and which sales strategies will be employed. When salespeople are motivated to choose strategies, they are more likely to adapt behavior across and within customer interactions (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986).

The three factors that motivate salespeople to practice adaptive selling are the capabilities of the salesperson, intrinsic reward orientation, and the tendency to make strategy attributions. First, as salespeople improve the capabilities (i.e., abilities and skills) needed for effective adaptive selling, their motivation to practice adaptive selling will increase.

Second, intrinsic rewards are defined as the extent to which salespeople find the selling task inherently interesting and rewarding. If salespeople are intrinsically motivated, they are more likely to be motivated to practice adaptive selling by adapting behavior to meet customer needs (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986). Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) identified four factors that would promote an intrinsic reward orientation in salespeople. First, offering non-contingent rewards (i.e., salary as opposed to commissions) would enhance interest in

the work itself. Second, cognitive feedback would provide information on how and why the sale was successful or not successful. Third, self-management would allow salespeople to set goals, develop plans to meet those goals, and evaluate their own performance. Increasing self-management is likely to encourage salespeople to examine the content of their work. Fourth, if the organizational culture instills a sense of long-term equity within the reward system and a belief within the salesperson that individual goals can be met by achieving the organizations goals, then the salesperson is likely to develop an intrinsic orientation.

The third factor that affects the motivation to practice adaptive selling is the tendency to make strategy attributions. Strategy attributions are defined as the assignment of reasons for successes and failures (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). When poor strategies or lack of effort are considered the reasons for failure, salespeople become motivated to use different sales approaches or spend more time asking customers questions. Therefore, strategy attributions are likely to increase motivation to practice adaptive selling. Strategy attributions may be affected by environmental cues (i.e., testimonials by sales managers claiming their successes are attributable to good strategies and failures to poor strategies), self-management, and cognitive feedback by the sales manager regarding good and bad strategies.

## **Summary of the Weitz, Sujan, Sujan (1986) Model**

The Weitz, Sujan, Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework is original in its conceptualization of the practice of adaptive selling, but a closer examination of the proposed relationships and their ability to capture the nature of adaptive behavior is required. The key relationships of the Adaptive Selling Framework exist between the "motivation to practice adaptive selling" and "practice of adaptive selling" and "practice of adaptive selling" and performance. The first relationship suggests that salespeople need to be motivated to alter their sales behavior. The factors that increase the salesperson's motivation include an intrinsic reward orientation, strategy attributions, and capabilities of the salesperson. Weitz,

Sujan, and Sujan (1986) indicate that all three factors are characteristics of the salesperson. Once the willingness to adapt behavior is present, the potential exists for the practice of adaptive selling.

The second relationship indicates that the practice of adaptive selling will lead to increased performance when environmental conditions suggest that the benefits will outweigh the costs of practicing adaptive selling. The theoretical design of the Adaptive Selling Framework proposes that salespeople will be practicing adaptive selling. When the environmental conditions are favorable, increased performance will result. Examples of the environmental conditions are the variety of customer needs, importance of the buying situation, and resources provided by the company (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986).

Two assumptions are implied by these key relationships. First, characteristics of the salesperson are solely responsible for the salesperson's behavior. Second, salespeople are aware of the impact of environmental conditions on their practicing adaptive behavior. The literature in psychology addresses these issues by providing a theoretical framework for understanding the relationships among characteristics of the salesperson, environmental conditions, and the adaptive behavior construct. The following section will discuss the psychological underpinnings of adaptive behavior.

## ***Review of Psychological Adaptive Behavior***

The concept of adaptive behavior has its roots in the psychology discipline. Psychological adaptation is based on the individual adjusting to the environment by changing thought processes and behavioral responses. Environmental changes are encountered by individuals continuously and are comprised of multiple experiences. Psychological adaptation is a process that allows individuals to expand the number of possible environments to which they can adjust. Environmental changes lead to various alternative solutions because the

perceived changes are interpreted individualistically. An individual's perception and the response or behavior of an individual arises from the combination of the individual-environment interaction. In other words, it cannot be assumed that individuals will exhibit similar behaviors to similar environmental changes.

Helson (1964) proposes that adaptation is a function of the pooled effect of three classes of stimuli: focal (i.e., stimuli that originate within a situation), background (i.e., stimuli that originate outside of a situation), and residual (i.e., stimuli that have not been classified as either focal or background). In a selling situation, focal stimuli may be originated by the customer and background stimuli may be originated by variables outside of a customer interaction. In this definition all stimuli that affect an individual's behavior may be categorized into these three classes of stimuli. He indicates that adaptive variables include individual's attitudes, values; ways of structuring experiences; judgments of physical, aesthetic, and symbolic objects; intellectual and emotional behavior; learning; and interpersonal relations. It has been postulated that, starting with an existing state, stimuli impinge upon and change the adaptive variables (Helson 1964).

Helson's (1964) conceptualization of adaptation also incorporates the constructs of "adaptation level" and "level of activity." Adaptation level has been conceptualized as the weighted mean of measurable internal and external stimuli. This implies that every stimulus displaces the adaptation level to some degree in its own direction; provided that residual stimuli are not operating. Level of activity is conceptualized as a measured deviation from a previously recorded adaptation level. For example, in a sales situation a salesperson's product knowledge can first be measured through a questionnaire to identify a base adaptation level. Second, the salesperson would go through a training program (i.e., external stimuli). Third, after the training, knowledge can be reassessed. The difference between the two scores on product knowledge would be considered the level of activity.

The two constructs, adaptation level and level of activity, are also considered co-ordinate terms. For every adaptation level there exists a measurable level of activity. For example, a missionary salesperson and an order taker may both be adaptive during the customer



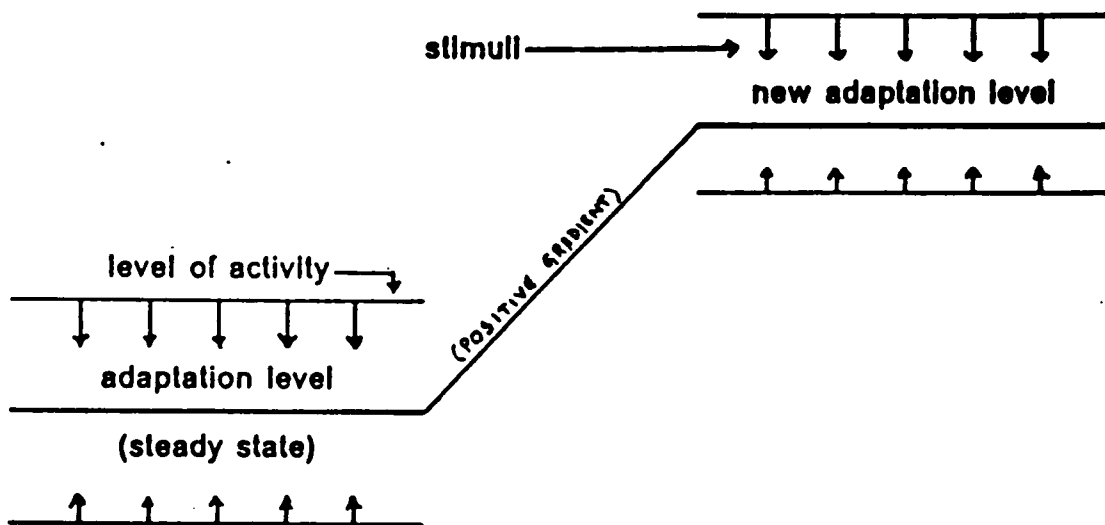
interaction. Both individuals possess an adaptation level concerning interpersonal relations, but an order taker is likely to sell to the same customers more frequently. Therefore, the order taker may possess a different level of activity concerning interpersonal relations compared to a missionary salesperson. The implication is that individuals possess a certain adaptation level with regard to the various adaptation variables, but the level of activity may vary across individuals or sales positions.

Another concept of adaptation theory is called "displacement." Helson (1964) indicates that as individuals are exposed to various stimuli they adjust their adaptation level to maintain a homeostatic or steady state. Stimuli (i.e., focal, background, or residual stimuli) impinge upon the steady state by increasing (i.e., positive gradients) or decreasing (i.e., negative gradients) the level of activity. If the stimuli create a change in behavior, then the adaptation level is said to have been displaced, and a new steady state is achieved (see Figure 4). In this conceptualization of adaptation, behavior is considered bi-polar in nature.

A consequence of Helson's (1964) theory is that adaptive behavior is considered situation specific. Individuals adapt when the situation specific stimuli force a behavioral adjustment. In other words, whether or not the behavior changes is a function of the situation, and how that behavior is manifested is a function of the individual.

Hettema (1979) conceives of adaptation as originating from within the individual in order to provide control over environmental changes. He proposes that psychological adaptation occurs through a process called "directed transformations." Directed transformation means that the individual plays an active role in the structuring of the environment. This process is composed of two sets of activities. Internal activities (i.e., activities that take place at the cognitive-symbolic level of the individual) are necessary as a basis for the directional aspect of psychological adaptation. External activities (i.e., activities at the sensomotor-operational level) are a necessary condition for actual transformations to take place in the environment. Behavior as a whole comprises both types of activities.

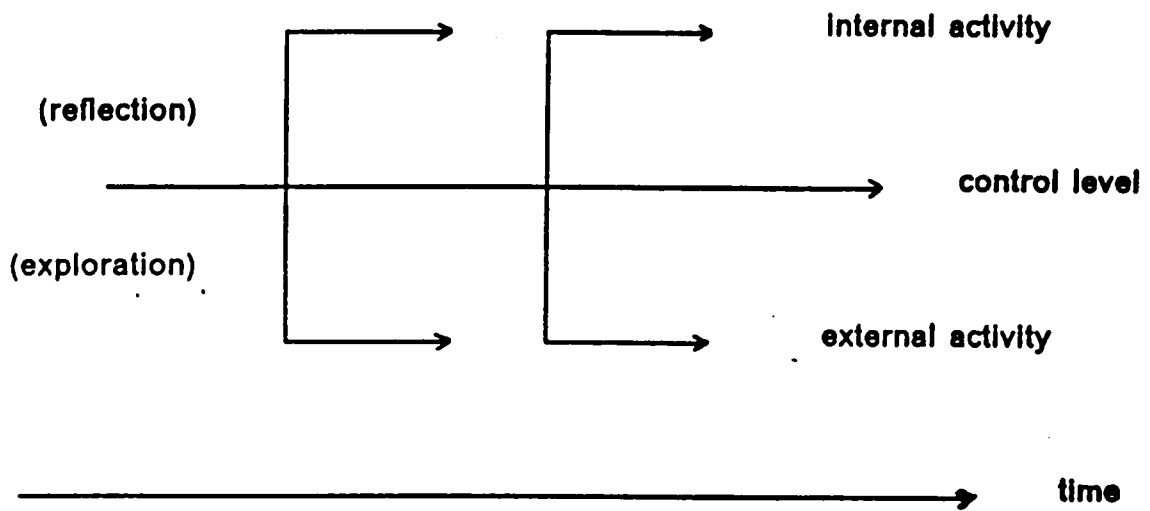
To determine whether actions correspond with intentions and whether these actions lead to the intended results, Hettema (1979) incorporates the concept of "control level" into his



(source: Adapted from Helson 1964)

Diagram of Helson's Adaptation-Level Theory

Figure 4



(source: Hetteema 1979)

Diagram of Continuity at the Control Level

Figure 5

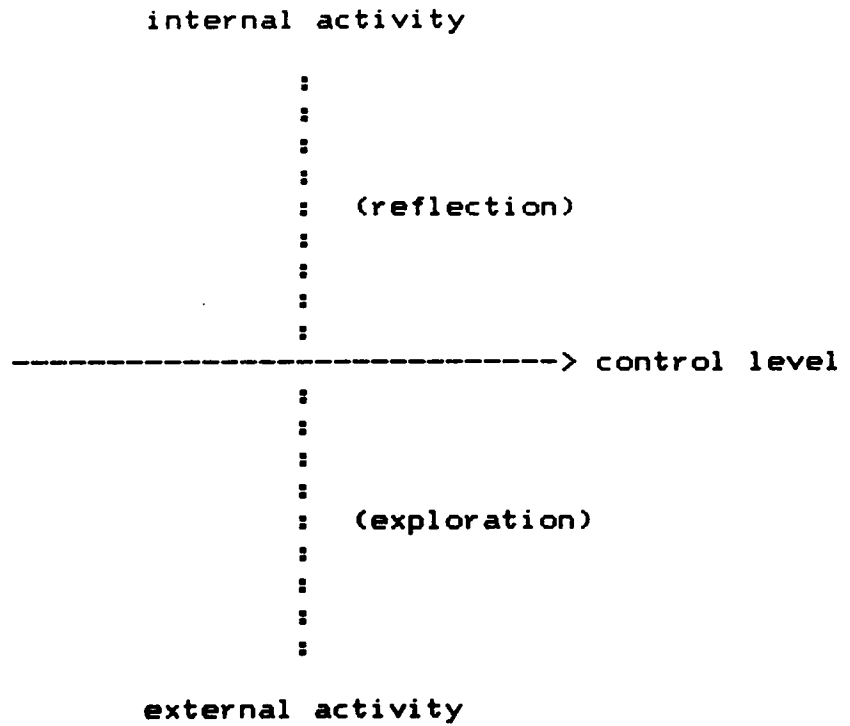
theory of psychological adaptation. The control level provides the link between internal and external activities, and it is at this level that continuity of behavior can be sought (see Figure 5).

Two processes that occur among these three concepts (i.e., internal/external activities and control level) are called "reflection" and "exploration." Hettema (1979) defines reflection as a process of reviewing significant experiences, facts, or events. Its main function is to scan existing knowledge to generate information that is useful to the current situation. Reflection unites the internal activities with the control level (see Figure 6). The second process, exploration, is defined as searching for a behavior that will provide the individual with a new orientation towards the environment (e.g., situation, customer interaction). Exploration integrates the external activities with the control level.

An important characteristic of psychological adaptation is discriminative capacity. Discriminative capacity is defined as a sensitivity to new combinations of stimuli as well as the capacity to integrate them. Once an individual learns to incorporate and integrate knowledge from previous experiences, his/her behavior becomes more flexible and effective.

While both Helson (1964) and Hettema (1979) conceive of adaptation as a reaction on the part of the individual to the environment, Hettema (1979) postulates a greater role on the part of the individual (i.e., the individual acts in unison with the environment). Congruent with the idea that external stimuli create adaptation by the individual, Hettema (1979) indicates that transformation of the environment takes place through the integration of stimuli that originate from both internal and external activities. In other words, the individual actively reflects upon internal activities and explores external activities to produce a behavioral response that will transform the situation and provide continuity of the desired direction. Helson's (1964) conceptualization of psychological adaptation postulates that the individual is acted upon by focal and background stimuli. In this approach the individual adapts behavior in the direction of the strongest stimuli.

The previous discussion suggests that an individual processes stimuli from both internal and external sources; however this does not suggest that all individuals have the same



(source: Hetteema 1979)

Diagram of Mechanisms for Continuity  
Figure 6

capacity to adapt. Adaptation means an active adjustment to the environment (Fullan and Loubser 1972). Some individuals possess a capacity to change the environment or to accept that part of the environment that cannot be changed. Fullan and Loubser (1972) defined adaptive capacity as an individual's ability to respond to complex and diverse environments. Adaptive capacity increases in proportion to the number of situations in which an individual can respond.

An individual's adaptive capacity is a function of variation and selective retention (Fullan and Loubser 1972). Variation refers to the quantity and quality of new ideas and alternative solutions that an individual can generate to resolve problems. An individual generates information by recalling from memory, being flexible, and being open to new experiences. First, recalling from memory is when the individual searches his/her memory in an attempt to identify information that is relevant to the situation. Second, being flexible is the ability of the individual to redefine or re-conceptualize previously stored information for use in a new situation. Third, being open to new experiences is dependent upon the individual's ability to trust in one's own judgment, and the belief that the situation is manipulable. It is comprised of two elements: 1) sense of control over the environment, and 2) optimism and confidence in the choices one makes concerning the environment and the future (Fullan and Loubser 1972). Variation creates divergent thinking in the individual, and allows for new alternatives to be explored. Selective retention (i.e., the ability to order diverse experiences and ideas and select from among them) includes the abilities to "analyze, abstract, and recombine new elements in terms of their logical interrelations" (Fullan and Loubser 1972). Through selective retention an individual will converge on feasible solutions by narrowing down the number of alternatives.

This review of psychological adaptive behavior has identified two theories of importance to future research. Both theories (Helson 1964, Hettema 1979) stress the role of situational characteristics in determining a behavioral response by an individual. The concept that individuals perceive the situation and then exhibit a behavior is most clearly presented by Hettema (1979). Research by Fullan and Loubser (1972) suggest that the capacity to adapt

behavior is a function of variation and selective retention. While all individuals have the ability to adapt behavior, the adaptive capacity concept suggests that a range of abilities exists. The next section will discuss the Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework in light of the review of psychological adaptive behavior.

## ***Evaluation of the Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Model***

The Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework has provided a basis upon which knowledge concerning the salesperson's adaptive behavior can be assessed. It is the purpose of this evaluation to examine the Adaptive Selling Framework with regard to the psychology literature. The discussion will address several shortcomings of the Adaptive Selling Framework in light of the psychology literature.

First, the Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) takes a different perspective in addressing the drive behind adaptive selling. It is suggested that the only variable that directly affects the practice of adaptive selling is "motivation to practice adaptive selling" (i.e., an internal stimulus). Motivation has been defined as "the amount of effort the salesperson desires to expend on each of the activities or tasks associated with the job" (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977, p. 162). The use of motivation as the drive behind adaptive selling implies that the salesperson consciously exerts influence over behavior when a desire exists.

The psychology literature suggests that adaptive behavior results from both internal and external stimuli. Helson (1964) indicates that external stimuli (i.e., situational characteristics) drive the adaptive behavior. Hettrema (1979) suggests that internal stimuli (e.g., motivation, personality characteristics) provide direction for an adaptive response. For example, a salesperson may alter behavior if they are aware that their presence in the same room with the customer may alter the customer's opinion of a product (i.e., the salesperson is public

self-conscious). A new model of adaptive selling behavior should incorporate both external stimuli (i.e., situational characteristics) and internal stimuli (i.e., personality characteristics).

Second, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986, p. 175) defined practice of adaptive selling as "the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation." This definition raises issues concerning duality of the adaptive behavior construct. The Adaptive Selling Framework focuses on the "practice of adaptive behavior" during the customer interaction. During the customer interaction, internal stimuli (e.g., personality traits and skills) may drive the "practice of adaptive selling". The ability of the salesperson to adapt behavior across customer interactions through the salesperson planning process has not been addressed.

When adaptive behavior is examined across customer interactions the inclusion of external stimuli (e.g., the salesperson-customer relationship) is necessitated. Across customer interactions the salesperson has time to plan the sale. The salesperson may perform sales planning by planning the sales call, gathering information, and planning communication and influence strategies. When adapting behavior across customer interactions the salesperson is adjusting his/her sales plans due to changes in the situational characteristics and previous customer feedback. Examining adaptive behavior across customer interactions implies that knowledge of more than one customer is involved in the creation of the sales plan. Helson's (1964) adaptation-level theory suggests that when a person repeats similar experiences their adaptive capacity will be increased. For example, the greater the number of customer interactions the salesperson experiences, the greater is the salesperson's adaptive capacity. A model of adaptive selling behavior should incorporate both adaptive behavior within and adaptive behavior across customer interactions.

Third, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that the adaptive behavior-performance relationship is moderated by environmental factors and capabilities of the salesperson. The issues raised by these relationships include the extent to which the Adaptive Selling Framework addresses the key determinants of adaptive selling and the form of the relationships used in the framework.



Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) define capabilities of the salesperson as including abilities and skills. The abilities component is defined as the organization of the salesperson's knowledge structures. The skills component is described as information acquisition skills. In their discussion, they suggest that personality traits (e.g., self-consciousness, dogmatism, sex-role androgyny) may be utilized to identify salespeople who possess good information acquisition skills, yet personality traits are not specifically considered in the Adaptive Selling Framework. Since the psychology literature also indicates that personality traits are important to adaptive behavior (Hettema 1979), they should be included in a model of adaptive selling behavior.

The Adaptive Selling Framework proposes that environmental conditions only moderate the practice of adaptive selling-performance relationship. The two psychology theories of adaptive behavior (Helson 1964, Hettema 1979) suggest that external stimuli (e.g., the situation or environment) directly affect adaptive behavior. Helson (1964) indicates that external stimuli may be the impetus behind adaptive behavior. Hettema (1979) suggests that the individual explores external stimuli to ensure that the adaptive behavior will provide a desired outcome. Therefore, a model of adaptive selling behavior should include a direct relationship between external stimuli (i.e., situational characteristics) and adaptive behavior.

Utilizing the psychology literature a model that can more clearly delineate the nature of the adaptive behavior construct should be developed. The psychology literature suggests that a model of adaptive selling behavior should incorporate both external stimuli (i.e., situational characteristics) and internal stimuli (i.e., personality characteristics). The following chapter will propose a Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior in which adaptive behavior consists of two components. The antecedents of adaptive behavior will include those variables which have been addressed in the marketing and psychology literature as key determinants of the adaptive behavior-performance relationship.

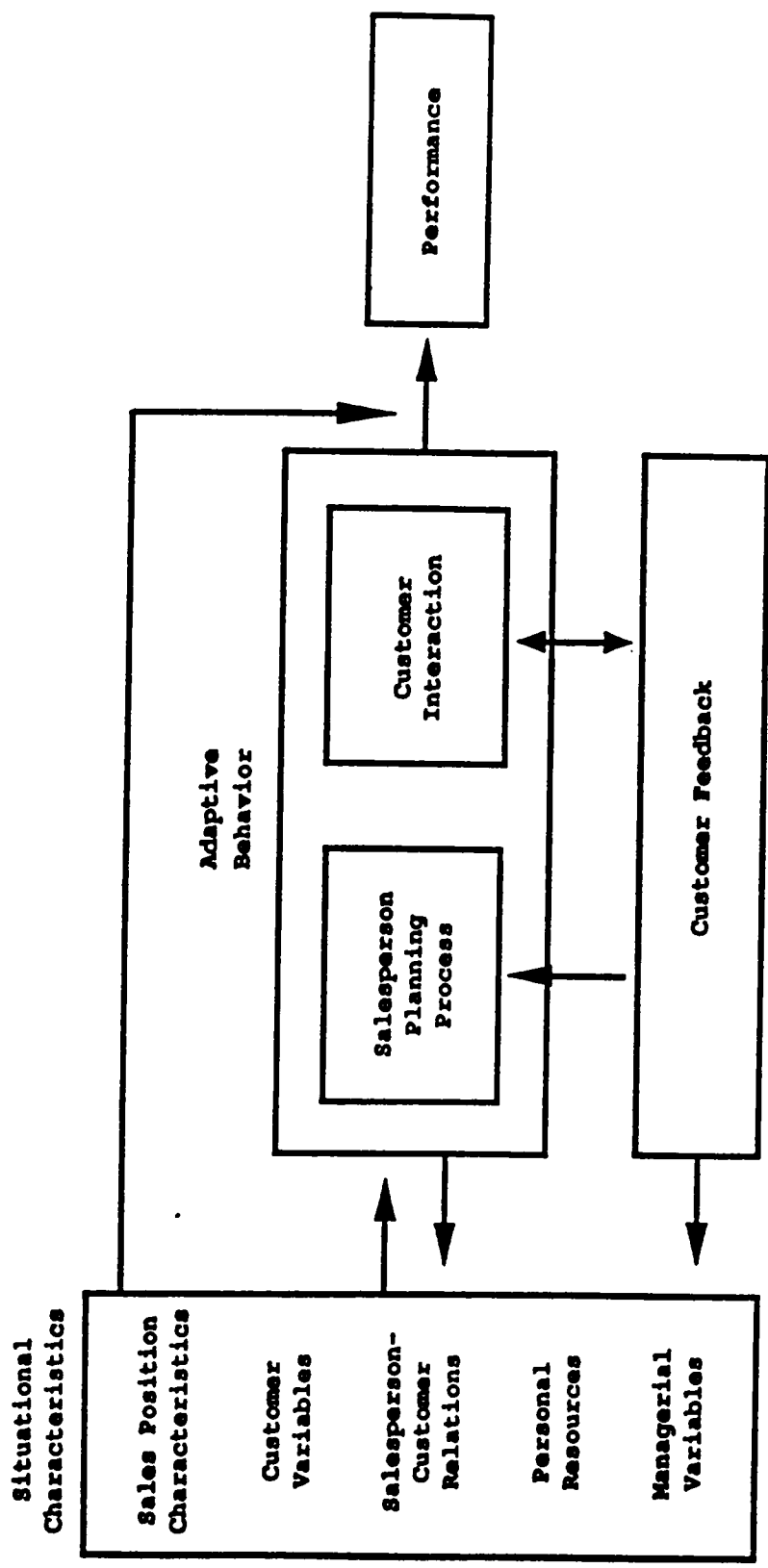
# Chapter 3

## Proposed Model

### *Overview*

The Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior is proposed as an extension of marketing thought concerning adaptive sales behavior (see Figure 7). At the core of the current model is the behavior-performance relationship identified in the Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework. The Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior builds upon previous research through the extension of two concepts. First, the adaptive behavior construct is comprised of two components. The first component is the salesperson planning process and allows for the examination of adaptive behavior that occurs prior to the customer interaction. The second component is the salesperson-customer interaction during which the sales plan may be modified. Second, situational characteristics are proposed as antecedents to adaptive behavior.

The present chapter will present an overview of previous adaptive behavior research that has led to the current definition of adaptive behavior. Next, the adaptive behavior



Proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior

Figure 7

construct and pertinent variables utilized in the measurement of adaptive behavior will be examined. This will be followed by the antecedents to adaptive behavior and an evaluation of the proposed model. The chapter concludes with the hypotheses to be examined in the present study.

## ***Overview of Previous Adaptive Behavior Research***

Early research concerning the adaptive behavior construct is rooted in the discipline of psychology. Two theories of importance to the development of adaptive behavior research are Helson's (1964) Adaptation Level theory and Hettema's (1979) Control Level theory. First, Helson (1964) proposed that behavioral adaptation is a weighted mean of focal, background, and residual stimuli. In other words, individuals respond to a situation based upon stimuli originating from inside and outside the customer interaction. Helson's theory indicates that the behavior which results after all of the stimuli have been processed (i.e., weighted) by the individual is considered an adaptive response. Second, Hettema (1979) proposed that adaptive behavior occurs when a behavior corresponds with the individual's intentions, and that it leads to an intended result. Hettema's (1979) definition suggests that the individual responds to environmental stimuli while evaluating alternative behaviors. It is implied that after information is transmitted to the individual, a decision is made to carry out a particular behavior. The behavior results in satisfying the intentions of the individual. The difference between Helson's (1964) and Hettema's (1979) theories lies in the classification of stimuli. Helson (1964) suggests that individuals respond to a situation and classifies stimuli as internal or external to an interaction. Hettema (1979) suggests that individuals can provide a direction (i.e., corresponds to the individual's intentions) in their behavioral response to a situation and classifies stimuli as internal or external to the individual. Helson's (1964) research, concerning the classification of stimuli as internal and external to the interaction, is significant

to the development of the two step process of the adaptive behavior construct. Hettema's (1979) research concerning the individual's ability to direct behavior provides suggestions for the situational characteristics that may be important to adaptive behavior (e.g., external stimuli such as managerial variables).

Adaptive behavior in the sales management literature has adopted several features from the psychological definitions. In particular, sales management has borrowed the concepts of transmission of information and transformation of behavior. In addition, as salesperson adaptive behavior research has developed, the definition of adaptive behavior has become more refined. What follows is an overview of six models in marketing that have incorporated the concept of adaptive behavior, and how these previous models differ from the proposed model.

First, Robertson and Chase (1968) developed the Open Systems Approach to the Sales Process. Adaptive behavior is depicted in their model as a change in behavior (i.e., transformation) that occurs due to transmission of information from human inputs (i.e., sales managers or customers), technological inputs (i.e., order forms, sales techniques), and organizational inputs (i.e., organizational goals, policies, and procedures). Robertson and Chase (1968) indicate that adaptive behavior occurs during the transformation process (i.e., customer interaction). Generally, the transformation consists of changes in human inputs (i.e., customer feedback). They suggest that the customer interaction is the key event in the behavior-performance relationship. The proposed model suggests that both the customer interaction and situational characteristics are important to adaptive behavior.

Second, Spiro, Perreault, and Reynolds (1977) developed the Sales Process Model, and defined adaptation as the altering (i.e., transformation of behavior) of interpersonal strategies, needs and expectations, or role requirements based on feedback (i.e., transmission of information) from an unsuccessful negotiation. Of the three types of adapting, only interpersonal strategies are considered to be controllable by the salesperson. They suggest that adaptation occurs during and after the customer interaction. The proposed model differs

from the Sales Process Model in that feedback may affect situational characteristics that are considered outside the individual (i.e., managerial variables).

Third, Green and Tønning (1979) created the Behavior Process Model of the sales interview. In their model, adaptivity is defined as a process whereby the salesperson's cognitions, during the customer interaction, "contribute to the productive use of logic or feelings in coming to a buying decision" (Green and Tønning 1979, p. 237). Adaptive processing is comprised of three components. First, adaptive task processing concerns the salesperson's thought process when linking product knowledge to customer needs. Second, adaptive relationship processing is the salesperson's cognitions of building a positive customer relationship. Third, adaptive closing processing refers to the salesperson making logical conclusions based on previous information and the use of persuasion techniques. The proposed model goes beyond the Behavior Process Model (Green and Tønning 1979) by incorporating the salesperson planning process into the adaptive behavior construct.

Fourth, Weitz (1978) included adaptive selling behavior into his ISTE A (Impression formation, Strategy formulation, Transmission, Evaluation, and Adjustment) Sales Process Model by incorporating a feedback loop into the selling process. The feedback loop is called "adjustments." After the salesperson transmits a message to the customer, the effects of the message are observed by evaluating the customer's reaction and soliciting customer opinions. The evaluation of the transmission acts as input to the adjustment process. As in previous models the ISTE A Sales Process Model suggests that adaptive behavior occurs after the transmission of information. The proposed model suggests that situational characteristics may affect adaptive behavior prior to a customer interaction.

Fifth, in the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness, Weitz (1981) proposed that adapting to the customer is one of several variables that is important to salesperson effectiveness. He defined adapting to the customer as "the degree to which [salespeople] adapt their behavior to the interaction" (p. 92). Salesperson adaptive behavior may include the choosing or altering of influence bases, influence techniques, messages and formats, and degree of control exerted across customers. Weitz (1981) indicates that the adaptive

behavior-performance relationship may be moderated by characteristics of the salesperson-customer relationship, resources of the salesperson, characteristics of the customer's buying task, or the interaction among these variables. The proposed model builds upon the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness by suggesting that adaptive behavior across and within customer interactions may consist of modifications of the sales plan across customer interactions and modifications of the sales plan during the customer interaction.

Lastly, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) introduced the concept of the "practice of adaptive selling" in their Adaptive Selling Framework. The practice of adaptive selling is defined as "the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986, p. 175). This definition is similar to the Contingency Model in that adaptive behavior can occur across and within the customer interaction. The definition differs from the Contingency Model in that salesperson perception of situational characteristics is the only basis for purposively altering behavior when interacting with the customer. In the proposed model the definition of adaptive behavior will be expanded to include perceived information concerning the interaction itself, this will be addressed in the next section.

This review indicates that adaptive behavior has been considered a key determinant in the development of sales models. While debate may exist as to which behavior is altered (e.g., sales strategy, gathering information, impressions of customers), agreement exists as to the inclusion of the adaptive behavior construct. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) make a concerted effort to identify the variables that impact on the practice of adaptive selling. The Contingency Model (Weitz 1981) and the Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) provide a beginning for moving away from the "feedback loop" conceptualization of adaptive behavior. In both models a duality in the adaptive behavior construct was recognized through the suggestion that salespeople may adapt behavior across and within customer interactions.

## ***Adaptive Behavior Construct***

The proposed model defines adaptive behavior as the altering of behavior during or across customer interactions based on perceived information concerning the selling situation (i.e., situational characteristics) and the interaction itself. Previous research has identified adaptive behavior as a singular concept (i.e., practice of adaptive selling) by considering selling behaviors across and within customer interactions as components of the adaptive behavior construct. The proposed model utilizes a two-step process (i.e., salesperson planning process and customer interaction) to recognize that how behavior is adapted may differ when the behavior is analyzed across various customers as opposed to within the customer interaction. The proposed model extends the Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) Adaptive Selling Framework in that it examines how adaptive selling occurs across and within customer interactions.

First, when adaptive behavior is examined across customer interactions the focus of adaptive behavior rests on the salesperson's planning process that is tailored to each customer's needs. The planning process is one of the key determinants of sales success. Gwinner (1968, p. 43) states:

Every selling situation presents a different challenge, and each situation must be analyzed on the basis of its own unique requirements in the establishment of a buyer-seller relationship. Planning is the key to the formulation of successful sales strategy. When based on a careful analysis of all the factors in a given selling situation, advanced planning and preparation can be the significant difference between success and failure.

While a "canned" presentation is considered a non-adaptive sales plan (Jolson 1975, Weitz 1981), any variations in the sales plan across customers could be considered adaptive. Differences in a sales plan may include variations in influence strategies, communication strategies, or information gathered.

Second, salesperson adaptive behavior must also include the deviations from the planned presentation that occur during the customer interaction. The customer interaction is



considered the actual face-to-face communication of information. Adaptive behavior includes any changes in the planned presentation based on information obtained during the customer interaction. Any deviations between the planned presentation and the actual presentation to the customer would be considered adaptive behavior during the customer interaction.

In the present study two reasons can be given for focusing on an examination of adaptive behavior across customer interactions. First, since previous research has focused on adaptive behavior during the customer interaction, research concerning salesperson behavior across customer interactions has received little attention (Reeves and Barksdale 1984). Second, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) regard situational variables as moderators of the adaptive behavior-performance relationship. Psychology theory contends that situational variables can be antecedents to adaptive behavior. In the proposed model, the inclusion of the salesperson planning process as an indicator of adaptive behavior across customer interactions, will allow for a comparison of these two theories.

According to the proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior, salespeople may adapt behavior by developing unique sales plans for each customer. Variables that will be used to study the salesperson planning process include sales call planning, information gathering, communication strategies, and influence strategies. The following sections will examine each of these variables.

## **Sales Call Planning**

Gwin (1979) developed a scale by which sales call planning can be measured. Sales call planning was defined as "the formal or informal process which includes those interrelated activities associated with a salesperson's preparation for interaction with a customer or a prospect" (Gwin 1979, p. 9). Four steps considered to be important sales call planning activities include planning effort allocation, collecting information about the account, collecting information for the account, and planning the presentation. In his research he identified one

construct (i.e., call preparation) that combines the latter three steps. Call preparation includes “not only presentation planning but also the collection of requisite information prior to the actual call” (Gwin 1979, p. 11). This construct focuses on obtaining information from internal company records and planning the presentation.

## **Information Gathering**

The second variable of interest is called “information gathering”. In the development of the Sales Call Planning Scale, Gwin (1979) found that information gathering permeates sales call planning activity. The type of information gathering examined by Gwin (1979) focused on the use of company records to inform the salesperson about specific customer interactions (i.e., “In gathering information for a sales call, I reconstruct the details of the last call on the account”). In the present study information gathering is given a broader context. A salesperson needs to gather information for various reasons such as determining the client’s needs and increasing one’s knowledge of the competition. Dubinsky and Staples (1981-82) examined selling techniques that are used by salespeople during the pre-approach stage. Their results indicated that “well prepared” salespeople were more likely to gather information from current customers, other company salespeople, and local newspapers. Evans and Schlacter (1985) studied the use of marketing information by salespeople and sales managers. One of their results indicated that salespeople are most likely to gather information concerning customer opinions of the salesperson’s marketing strategy, the customer’s marketing strategy, and competitor’s marketing strategies. Based on this research the information gathering variable (i.e., is information gathered concerning the salesperson’s company, customers, competition) was developed to examine whether salespeople adapt behavior by gathering additional information (i.e., information other than that contained in company records). The inclusion of an information gathering construct will aid in explicating adaptive behavior.

## **Communication Strategies**

The third variable included in the salesperson planning process is communication strategies. Communication strategies may be defined as the salesperson's choice of style when interacting with the customer. Williams and Spiro (1985) developed a conceptual framework for studying communication styles and their impact on sales. Utilizing Sheth's (1976) model of buyer-seller interaction, three communication styles were examined. First, a task orientation suggests that the salesperson is concerned with the salesperson's desire to complete a sale and increase performance. Second, an interaction orientation indicates that the relationship between the salesperson and the customer is most important. Third, a self orientation indicates a salesperson's concern for personal welfare to the exclusion of satisfying customer needs. Williams and Spiro (1985) found that when the salesperson and customer both use an interaction style, a sale is more likely, and that salespeople can be trained to effectively utilize the various orientations. They suggest that "communication style should be considered as one of the behavioral dimensions affecting sales outcomes in future research" (p. 440).

## **Influence Strategies**

Influence strategy is defined, for the present study, as the type of persuasion technique that the salesperson plans to use during the customer interaction. Spiro and Perreault (1979, p. 437) identified five influence strategies used by salespeople. First, legitimate influence was defined as "the salesperson's attempt to draw on the customer's feelings of shared values concerning the relevant reputation and experience of the salesman and his company". Second, expert influence dealt with the salesperson's presentation of specific information concerning the company's offerings and how they will be used in the customer's company.

Third, referent influence is indicated by the salesperson using personal affiliation with the customer as the basis for the influence attempt. Fourth, ingratiation influence is characterized by the salesperson providing personal favors for the customer and thus creating an obligation or compliance on the part of the customer. Lastly, an impression management influence is defined as the manipulation of false or deceptive impressions for the purpose of achieving a favorable response from the customer.

Spiro, Perreault, and Reynolds (1977) suggest that research needs to be conducted on the relationship between the salesperson's choice of influence strategies and perceptions of the selling situation to determine whether a relationship exists between influence strategies and selling situation. Their review of interpersonal influence strategies indicates that most of the previous research has concentrated on how the salesperson may influence the customer during the interaction (i.e., asking questions, dominating the evaluation of customer alternatives, being perceived as trustworthy). Research has not focused on the planning of influence strategies prior to the customer interaction.

## **Customer Interaction**

As stated in the definition of adaptive behavior, salespeople alter their behavior based upon perceived information obtained during the interaction process. Behavior changes elicited by interaction with the customer would be indicated by variations in the salesperson's presentation from the planned presentation. Unlike a communication strategy that examines the salesperson's orientation (i.e., task, self, interaction orientation), adjustments in the salesperson's presentation may be affected by both the salesperson's planning process and situational characteristics. In the present study the "customer interaction" variable provides an indication of the degree to which the salesperson varies his/her sales presentation from the sales plan during the customer interaction.

Gwinner (1968) suggests three communication theories that provide support for the concept that behavior varies within the customer interaction. These three theories include the stimulus-response, AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action), and need-satisfaction theories. First, stimulus-response theory indicates that there is a response for any given stimulus. The type of presentation associated with this theory is a canned sales presentation. This type of presentation is based on the salesperson communicating the right message (stimulus) at the right time to evoke a purchase (response) by the customer. Second, the AIDA (i.e., attention, interest, desire, action) theory implies that the salesperson needs to attract the attention of the customer, stimulate interest in the product line, create a desire for the product line, and stimulate an action by the customer (i.e., purchase). According to this theory the salesperson should vary the presentation within a set framework. Third, need-satisfaction theory suggests that the salesperson should discover the needs of the customer, make the customer aware of the needs, and then indicate to the customer how the product will satisfy the need. Using this approach the customer must fully understand the customer's business.

If a salesperson utilizes a canned presentation, adaptive behavior within the customer interaction is less likely to occur. When the salesperson varies the presentation, adaptive behavior occurs as the salesperson attempts to meet the needs of the individual customers. The Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior suggests that modifications to the salesperson's presentation will provide for an assessment of adaptive behavior within the customer interaction.

## ***Antecedents of Adaptive Behavior***

The reviews of the marketing and psychology literature indicate that situational characteristics affecting adaptive behavior are more diverse than what was proposed by the Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). For example, the psychology

literature indicated the importance of personality traits, and Weitz (1981) suggested that salesperson/customer relationships may affect adaptive behavior. Most research provides some information about the situation (e.g., industry, product line). Situational variables cited as affecting adaptive behavior include the company, role, competition (Green and Topping 1979); salesperson-customer relationship (Weitz 1980); characteristics of the customer's buying task (Weitz 1981); importance of the buying situation to the customer, and resources provided by the company (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). In the proposed model, situational variables have been defined as characteristics of the selling environment that provide the salesperson with perspective or structure concerning the selling environment. Based upon the literature review the proposed model suggests that the situational variables can be organized into five situational concepts: sales position characteristics, customer variables, salesperson-customer relationships, personal resources, and managerial variables. Each of these concepts will be discussed next.

## **Sales Position Characteristics**

Sales position characteristics are defined as characteristics of the salesperson's role as a boundary spanner and are comprised of the salesperson's position and characteristics of that position. Moncrief (1986) developed a taxonomy of sales positions (i.e., roles within the organization) based on ten different characteristics. These characteristics included the selling function, working with orders, servicing the product, information management, servicing the account, conferences/meetings, training/recruiting, entertaining, out of town travel, and working with distributors. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) identify two of these sales position characteristics (i.e., selling function and information management) as key determinants of adaptive behavior.

Moncrief (1986, p. 263) defines the selling function as basic selling activities. These activities include making sales presentations, calling on potential accounts, overcoming

objections, planning sales activities, preparing sales presentations, introducing new products, identifying the person in authority, searching out leads, using presentation aids, calling on new accounts, and helping clients. When salespeople perform these activities they are adapting behavior to meet the needs of their customers. As the importance of selling function activities increases, the potential is created for the salesperson to engage in adaptive behavior more frequently. For example, if the salesperson's sales position characteristics include conducting sales presentations for the customer, it would be an indication that behavior could be adapted. When the salesperson's role requires incorporating several activities (e.g., making presentations, introducing new products, using presentation aids) there exists a greater potential for the salesperson to adapt behavior.

In the Moncrief (1986) sales position taxonomy one position (i.e., trade servicer) was ranked highest and a second position (i.e., order taker) ranked the lowest on selling function activities. Selling function activities are an important component of the trade servicer sales position. Moncrief (1986) indicates that the trade servicer performs nine of the selling function activities more frequently than any other sales position. These activities include making sales presentations, overcoming objections, planning selling activities, preparing sales presentations, introducing new products, searching out leads, using presentation aids, calling on new accounts, and helping clients. Selling function activities are least important to the order taker sales position. The order taker is likely to perform only one of the eight selling function activities (i.e., helping customers).

The second sales position characteristic identified as a key determinant of adaptive behavior is information management. In 1986 Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan extended the definition of adaptive behavior to suggest that perceived information concerning the nature of the selling situation may be considered an antecedent of adaptive behavior. In other words, salespeople who perform information management activities have a greater tendency to adapt behavior. Moncrief (1986, p. 263) defined the information management characteristic as "tasks which include receiving feedback from customers and then relaying information to management." The activities identified by Moncrief (1986) include providing feedback to the organization,

receiving feedback from the organization, checking in with superiors, and providing technical information to the customer. In the Moncrief (1986) sales position taxonomy, three of the information management activities were most important to the trade servicer sales position (i.e., providing feedback, checking in with superiors, and providing technical information). The order taker sales position was ranked the lowest on three information management activities (i.e., not providing feedback, checking in with superiors, and providing technical information).

To examine the relationship between salesperson role and adaptive behavior the selling function and information management characteristics were utilized to discriminate between sales positions. The goal was to identify one sales position that ranked high and a second sales position that ranked low on the two key characteristics. A review of Moncrief's (1986) taxonomy indicates that the activities of the order taker and trade servicer sales positions are maximally divergent. The order taker consistently ranked the lowest on both the selling function and information management characteristics, whereas the trade servicer consistently ranked the highest (see Figure 8).

## **Customer Variable**

The customer variables are defined as characteristics of the situation which are based on the customer's buying decision. First, a straight rebuy buying situation is usually initiated by the user and are due to stock depletion (Doyle, Woodside, and Michell, 1979). Other characteristics of a straight rebuy include known buying alternatives, continuing requirement for product type, no new suppliers being considered, concern with delivery terms, prices, and terms of payment (Jackson, Keith, and Burdick, 1984), and little information being required by the buyer (Hutt, Johnston, and Ronchetto, 1985; Jackson, Keith, and Burdick, 1984).

Second, a modified rebuy buying situation is usually initiated by persons in the customer's firm other than the users, and may be due to a change in supplier's prices, a new product introduction, or a need for cost reductions (Doyle, Woodside, and Michell, 1979; Hutt,



Characteristic/item	Order Taker (ranks lowest)	Trade Servicer (ranks highest)
<b>Selling Function</b>		
makes sales presentation	X	X
calls on potential accounts	X	
overcomes objections	X	X
plans selling activities	X	X
prepares sales presentation	X	X
introduces new products		X
identifies person in authority	X	
searches out leads	X	X
uses "presentation aids"		X
calls on new accounts	X	X
helps clients		X
<b>Information Management</b>		
provides feedback		X
receives feedback	X	
checks in with supervisors	X	X
provides technical information	X	X

**Differences Between Sales Positions**

Figure 8

Johnston, and Ronchetto, 1985; Jackson, Keith, and Burdick, 1984). Other characteristics of a modified rebuy include the customer's buying alternatives are known, new suppliers are being considered, and additional information is required by the customer (Hutt, Johnston, and Ronchetto, 1985; Jackson, Keith, and Burdick, 1984).

Avila and Fern (1986) examined two selling situations when studying the effect of personality differences on performance. The first situation was large computer system sales. This type of selling was characterized as having a long selling cycle (4-18 months), higher task complexity, not many close opportunities, fewer presentations, requiring more information, making many calls to the same customers, having close personal customer relationship, and selling to fewer customers. The second situational dimension, small computer systems sales, was characterized as having a shorter selling cycle (1-3 months), lower task complexity, many close opportunities, more presentations, less information required, fewer calls to the same customers, impersonal customer relationships, and more customers in their territory. Their results indicate that the type of selling situation moderates the relationship between personality and sales performance. They found that locus of control was positively related to performance for salespeople of large computer systems and negatively related to performance for small computer system salespeople.

## **Salesperson/Customer Relationship Variables**

The third situational concept is the salesperson-customer relationship variables. The length of time the salesperson has had a relationship with the customer would affect the degree to which the planning process needs to be structured. In long-term relationships the salesperson may not require planning prior to the customer interaction, but may exhibit greater adaptive behavior during the customer interaction.

Saxe and Weitz (1982) developed the Selling Orientation-Customer Orientation (SOCO) Scale. The purpose of their research was to develop a scale to determine the level of

customer-oriented selling by the salesperson. Customer-oriented selling is defined as the degree to which salespeople practice the marketing concept by trying to help their customers make purchase decisions that will satisfy customer needs. They proposed that customer-oriented selling is more likely to be used when the salesperson can offer a range of alternatives, when the customer is engaged in a complex buying task, when a cooperative relationship with the customer exists, and when repeat sales and referrals are an important source of business for the salesperson (Saxe and Weitz 1982).

Saxe and Weitz (1982) identified two factors which account for 73 percent of the variance in the SOCO scale. The first factor, customer orientation, accounts for 53 percent of the variance in the SOCO scale. The second factor (not named) separated positively scaled from negatively scaled items, and accounts for 20 percent of the variance in the SOCO scale. Michaels and Day (1985) administered the SOCO scale to industrial buyers to assess the customer-orientation of salespeople who call on them. They found the same factor structure as that identified by Saxe and Weitz (1982).

In addition to the development of the SOCO scale, Saxe and Weitz (1982) collected typical information concerning the selling situation. A factor analysis identified a factor called "relations." Relations has been defined as the degree to which the salesperson-customer relationship is long-term and cooperative (Saxe and Weitz 1982). If the salesperson-customer relationship is long term, the salesperson may not require a detailed sales plan. Similarly, a cooperative salesperson-customer relationship may suggest that less structure is required for the sales plan.

## **Personal Resources**

Personal resources are defined as the salesperson's knowledge, skills, and personality traits which modify the perceptions that the salesperson has of the customer or the customer interaction. The personal resources variable is similar to the "capabilities of the salesperson"

defined by Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986); the difference lies in the inclusion of personality traits in the personal resources construct. First, knowledge affects the ability of the salesperson to recall information (e.g., customer history, product information). Second, information acquisition skills (e.g., self-monitoring) are necessary for the salesperson to glean information during the customer interaction to adjust the presentation to satisfy the customer's needs. Lastly, personality traits (e.g., self-consciousness) are an indication of the salesperson's predilection for adaptive behavior (Bodkin and Schuster 1988). Each of these variables will be discussed next.

## ***Knowledge***

Salespeople need to possess knowledge of both the product and the customer in order to sell effectively. Product knowledge is defined as the degree that the salesperson is aware of the various product offerings that may be presented to the customer. For example, salespeople may sell a variety of products to a single customer and would need to know product descriptions for several different lines of goods in order to adequately present the company's offerings.

Second, customer knowledge is defined as the salesperson's awareness of the customer as an individual and the customer's organization. In order to sell effectively salespeople need to understand the customer's role within the buying organization as well as information concerning customer demographics and psychographics.

## ***Skills***

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) propose that information acquisition skills are a key determinant of the tendency to practice adaptive selling effectively. Information acquisition skills represent the ability of the salesperson to gather information about the customer and the

sales situation. One variable that is used to measure this construct is self-monitoring. Self-monitoring is the degree to which the individual can and does observe and control expressive behavior and self-presentation (Snyder and Gangestad 1986). The study of self-monitoring originated in the social psychology literature (Briggs, Cheek, and Buss 1980; Caldwell and O'Reilly 1985; Dabbs et al. 1980; Lennox and Wolfe 1984; Snyder 1974; Snyder and Gangestad 1986), but has been used very little in the salesperson performance literature (Dubinsky, Hartley, and Yammarino 1985).

Results of previous research, utilizing self-monitoring as an information acquisition skill, identified high self-monitors as possessing various interpersonal skills that would aid the salesperson in adapting behavior. These skills include adapting behaviors more readily to the situation (Dubinsky, Hartley, and Yammarino 1985), selecting and using information to engage in impression management (Caldwell and O'Reilly 1982), being better at influencing a partner (Dubinsky, Hartley, and Yammarino 1985), being more sociable (Lennox 1984), and being more sensitive to others (Dubinsky, Hartley, and Yammarino 1985; Snyder and Cantor 1980).

### ***Personality Traits***

Motivation to practice adaptive selling and self-consciousness are two variables to be utilized in the present study to examine the effect of personality traits on adaptive behavior. First, motivation to practice adaptive selling is primarily concerned with salespeople choosing to direct their effort towards developing sales plans that lead to unique selling approaches for various customers. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that motivated behavior is comprised of intensity, persistence, and choice. "Intensity refers to the level of mental and physical effort expended. Persistence indicates the duration over which the effort is expended...[and] choice is the directional aspect of motivation because it refers to the task selected as well as the particular approach used in the task" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986, p. 180).

Previous research has defined motivation as "the amount of effort the salesman desires to expend on each of the activities or tasks associated with his job..." (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977, p. 162). The key components of motivation are expectancy and valence for performance. Expectancy is the "salesman's estimate of the probability that expending a given amount of effort on a task will lead to an improved level of performance on some performance dimension" (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977, p. 162). Valence for performance is defined as "the salesman's perception of the desirability of attaining an improved level of performance on a [particular] dimension" (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977, p. 162). Utilizing these definitions, research concerning motivation has sought to identify relationships between motivation and performance (Dubinsky and Hartley 1986, Morecroft 1985, and Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977), job satisfaction (Bagozzi 1980a, 1980b; Hafer 1986), and role perceptions (Hafer 1986, Kohli 1985, Teas 1982).

In the present study a key determinant of the motivation to practice adaptive selling concept is choice. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986, p. 180) indicate that salespeople have significant latitude in how the job is performed and that "the direction of effort is a major determinant of performance." A variable that examines the motivation of the salesperson to sell adaptively is "concern for the appropriateness of social behavior" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). This variable provides an indication of whether or not a salesperson is concerned with the appropriateness or use of a particular sales plan.

Concern for the appropriateness of social behavior is a component of the self-monitoring construct. Self-monitoring is comprised of five components. These components include concern for the appropriateness of social behavior, attention to social comparison information, the ability to control and modify one's self-presentation, the use of this ability in specific situations, and the extent to which a person's self-presentation varies across situations. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986, p. 186) state that "the items for the first component could be used to assess the degree to which the candidate will be motivated to practice adaptive selling." By examining the first component of the self-monitoring variable, an indication of the salesperson's motivation to practice adaptive selling can be ascertained.

When studying personal resources, personality traits are a key determinant of the perceptual differences that exist among members of the salesforce. A salesperson may possess information about the product/customer and may have the ability to acquire information, but depending on the salesperson's personality traits the advantages gained through knowledge and skills may be disparate.

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986, p. 186) indicate that one psychological test conceptually related to adaptability in social situations is public self-consciousness. Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) define self-consciousness as the consistent tendency of persons to direct attention inward or outward. In 1975 they constructed a scale to measure the self-consciousness trait. Behaviors that are identified as underlying the self-consciousness scale include: 1) preoccupation with past, present, and future behavior, 2) sensitivity to inner feelings, 3) recognition of one's positive and negative attributes, 4) introspective behavior, 5) a tendency to picture or imagine oneself, 6) awareness of one's physical appearance and presentation, and 7) concern over the appraisal of others (Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss 1975). These seven behavioral domains were factor analyzed to identify the components of self-consciousness that could be used to predict, based on an individual's beliefs and feelings, their reported dispositions.

Three constructs of the self-consciousness trait that encapsulate the behavioral domains are public self-consciousness, private self-consciousness, and social anxiety. First, Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) define public self-consciousness as a general awareness of the self as a social object that has an effect on others. Public self-consciousness emphasizes the reactions of an individual to others. When salespeople lack public self-consciousness they are less responsive to their transient affective state. Being less responsive implies they would be more likely to continue their current behavior, indicating that the salesperson might be "rigid" in the approach they take with the customer during the interaction. Second, private self-consciousness is the tendency for an individual to be concerned with attending to one's inner thoughts and feelings concerning themselves (e.g., being alert to mood changes) Third, social anxiety is defined by a discomfort in the presence

of others. While public and private self-consciousness can be used to study an individual's focus of attention, social anxiety indicates a reaction to the outward focus of attention.

## **Managerial Variables**

Lastly, Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977, p. 157) made two assumptions concerning the use of compensations. First, they suggest that "monetary rewards are the primary motivator of sales effort." Second, the "pay package is the basic motivator whereas other financial incentives, such as bonuses and contests, operate only to induce effort over and above that produced by the basic compensation plan." Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) also indicated that motivational techniques may increase the likelihood that salespeople will practice adaptive selling. One motivational technique which they address is the type of compensation program. They propose that emphasis on incentive compensation (commissions and bonuses) will reduce the desire to practice adaptive selling when the incentive is viewed as a means of controlling their behavior because "there is a threat of losing income if one does not perform adequately" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986, p. 182).

Weitz, Sujan and Sujan (1986) state that adaptive selling will take place when the benefits outweigh the costs. The costs may include the increased time necessary to practice adaptive selling and the ensuing loss of monetary compensation due to the fewer number of accounts that can be serviced. Because monetary rewards are the basic motivator, the use of a straight salary compensation package should encourage the salesperson to spend more time with each account and lead to increased use of adaptive behavior.

The second managerial variable, workload, has been defined as the number of accounts in a salesperson's territory (Bagozzi 1978). In his study of salesperson performance, Bagozzi (1978) found that workload was significantly related to performance ( $r = .45$ ;  $p < .001$ ). In the present study it is assumed that an increased workload will lead to a reduction in the use of adaptive behavior.



The relationship between the situational variables and adaptive behavior is reciprocal. The basis for the sales plan is the information embodied in the situation. In turn, the completed sales plan and ensuing customer interaction may create a change in the salesperson's perception of the situation that will be useful for the next customer interaction.

## ***Customer Feedback***

The second antecedent of adaptive behavior is customer feedback. Customer feedback occurs during or after the customer interaction and affects the customer interaction, salesperson planning process, and situational variables. Face-to-face contact during the customer interaction allows for two forms of feedback to occur. First, verbal feedback consists of questions initiated by the customer, responses to questions initiated by the salesperson, and rapport building dialogue. Research has shown that verbal feedback for the successful salesperson is likely to emphasize responses to salesperson questions and rapport dialogue (Schuster and Danes 1986, Willett and Pennington 1966). Second, non-verbal feedback consists of physical gestures by the customer (e.g., eye, hand, and head movements and body postures). Griksheit and Crissy (1973) found that effective salespeople are better at decoding non-verbal feedback. When the customer interaction is concluded, customer feedback is utilized in updating situational variables and future sales plans.

## ***Evaluation of the Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior***

The proposed model builds upon the Contingency Approach (Weitz 1981) and extends research concerning the Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). In this evaluation two areas will be addressed. First, the underlying assumptions of the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness (Weitz 1981) and the impact on the proposed model will be examined. Second, the hypothesized relationships identified in the Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) will be compared to those of the proposed model.

Weitz (1981) examined salesperson effectiveness in sales interactions through the development of a contingency framework. The contingency framework allows for the examination of variable interactions. Weitz (1981) proposed that the relationship between salesperson behavior and salesperson effectiveness is moderated by three types of variables (i.e., nature of the customer's buying task, characteristics of the salesperson-customer relationship, and resources of the salesperson). In comparing the proposed model with the Weitz (1981) Contingency Framework three distinctions can be drawn.

First, Weitz (1981) indicates that salesperson performance is comprised of three constructs. These constructs include characteristics of the macroenvironment, effort related to the macroenvironment, and effectiveness in sales interactions (the microenvironment). When the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness was developed, Weitz (1981) chose to address only the microenvironment (i.e., the face-to-face interaction with the customer). By choosing to examine salesperson effectiveness in this way two important constructs which impact on salesperson performance have not been addressed. In the proposed model macroenvironmental characteristics and effort related to the macroenvironment have been incorporated in order to more fully explain the relationship between adaptive behavior and salesperson performance. Macroenvironment variables include both the sales position and managerial variables. The effort related to the macroenvironment will be measured through the motivation variable.

Second, the Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness addresses adaptive behavior of the salesperson only in the context of the sales interaction. Weitz (1981, p. 91 footnote 5) defines the sales interaction as "the point that a salesperson makes contact with the customer and then continues to its conclusion." The proposed model extends this conceptualization of adaptive behavior by indicating that salespeople adapt behavior prior to the face-to-face interaction. This extension is accomplished by incorporating a two-step process into the adaptive behavior construct. First, the salesperson planning process allows for an examination of the salesperson's adaptive behavior prior to the face-to-face interaction as well as during the customer interaction. Second, subsequent to the salesperson developing a sales plan, the behavior exhibited during the customer interaction can be affected by the salesperson planning process.

Third, because the customer interaction is the underlying basis for the Contingency model (Weitz 1981), it is assumed that behavioral changes are the result of the face-to-face contact. In the proposed model the assumption is made that salespeople may alter their behavior based on information that is obtained prior to the face-to-face contact. For example, customer or product knowledge may provide impetus for the salesperson to alter the type of information which is used in the development of the sales plan, and the nature of the sales plan may in turn precipitate a particular behavioral response that is manifested when the customer interaction takes place.

The proposed model provides additional contributions to the sales management literature by extending the Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). The proposed model extends this previous research by creating a process model through which the adaptive selling construct can be empirically tested, incorporating personality traits, and empirically exploring a taxonomy of sales behaviors.

First, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986, p. 175) state that the Adaptive Selling Framework "is NOT intended to describe the process by which salespeople adapt their sales presentation, develop adaptive selling skills, or are motivated to practice adaptive selling." On the other hand, the proposed model may be considered a process model. First, the proposed model is

designed to capture the manner in which salespeople alter their behavior based on situational characteristics. The variables used in examining the sales planning process include information gathering, influence, and communication strategies. Second, the proposed model measured the declarative knowledge of the salesperson as opposed to knowledge structures which aid in the classification of information. An examination of the salesperson's declarative knowledge base provided information concerning the development of a sales plan.

Second, the proposed model incorporates personality traits to determine whether salespeople have a predilection to adaptive behavior. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest several psychological tests that are appropriate for studying adaptive behavior in social situations, but do not incorporate any of these variables into the Adaptive Selling Framework. In the proposed model, the self-consciousness and "motivation to adapt behavior" variables are included in the personal resources construct. The addition of these variables distinguish the personal resources construct from the "capabilities of the salesperson" construct developed by Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986).

Third, the proposed model provides for an examination of how behaviors change, based on variations in situational characteristics. The Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) suggests that salespeople will adapt behavior when the benefits outweigh the costs of adapting behavior. The proposed model extends the framework by providing an indication of which behaviors will change when specific situational characteristics are present. In this way, the proposed model possesses the ability to describe the behavior of the salesperson, thus creating a taxonomy of linked relationships between salesperson behavior and situational characteristics.

Based on this review, the differences between the proposed model and the research conducted by Weitz (1981) and Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) include a micro- and macro-environmental approach, the use of a two-step approach in defining adaptive behavior to capture the behavior of the salesperson prior to the face-to-face interaction with the customer, an extension of the situational characteristics which affect salesperson adaptive behavior, the use of a process model to delineate the manner by which salespeople adapt

behavior, the use of personality traits to examine the salesperson's predilection for adapting behavior, and the creation of a taxonomy by which the behavior-situational characteristic relationships may be linked. The next section will address the hypotheses which have been developed based on the proposed model.

## ***Hypotheses***

The following hypotheses were developed to address the research questions raised in Chapter 1. The first research question focuses on the relationship between situational variables and adaptive behavior. The second research question focuses on the adaptive behavior-performance relationship. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, a proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior was developed. Chapter 3 has provided a discussion of the proposed model. Pertinent situational variables when salespeople would be more likely to adapt behavior were suggested. The five situational variables include sales position characteristics, customer variables, salesperson/customer relationship variables, personal resources, and managerial variables.

First, the sales position characteristics are based on Moncrief's (1986) taxonomy. The order taker and trade servicer may be differentiated by the two key sales position characteristics (i.e., selling function and information management) that are important to adaptive behavior. Since the trade servicer ranked highest on these two characteristics, it may be hypothesized that salespeople occupying this sales position are more adaptive.

Second, the customer variable to be utilized in the present study is type of buying situation (i.e., modified rebuy or straight rebuy). Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that one characteristic influencing the cost/benefit trade-off associated with adaptive selling is the variety of customer needs. Through an examination of the modified rebuy and straight rebuy buying situations, the present study will explore the proposed relationship. In a straight rebuy

buying situation the customer has previously bought the product, and it is likely that the salesperson will exhibit behavior that has been proven to be successful. Therefore, it is hypothesized that salespeople will utilize adaptive behavior when the customer is involved in a modified rebuy buying situation.

Third, Weitz (1981) proposed that the salesperson/customer relationship affects the behavior-performance relationship. In 1982, Saxe and Weitz developed the SOCO (i.e., selling orientation/customer orientation) scale. The formulation of this scale suggests that not all salespeople are equally customer oriented. When salespeople are more customer oriented the salesperson may be more likely to gather information during the sales planning process. Therefore, the current model hypothesizes a positive relationship between salesperson/customer relationship and adaptive behavior.

Fourth, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) proposed a positive relationship between capabilities of the salesperson (i.e., knowledge and skills) and motivation to practice adaptive selling. The present study builds upon the capabilities of the salesperson concept by defining personal resources as the knowledge, skills, and personality traits of the salesperson. Analogous to the Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) study, knowledge, skills, and motivation to practice adaptive selling are hypothesized as being positively related to adaptive behavior. The personality trait, self-consciousness, is comprised of public and private self-consciousness and social anxiety. According to Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) salespeople who are publicly self-conscious should be more sensitive to the influence that they have on the customer. Private self-conscious salespeople, who attend to their inner thoughts, should be less sensitive. Salespeople who have social anxiety are discomforted in the presence of others. Therefore, public self-conscious salespeople may be more likely to adapt behavior because of their awareness of the possibility to influence the customer. Private self-conscious and social anxiety salespeople would be less likely to adapt behavior due to a lack of awareness concerning influence possibilities or fear stemming from discomfort.

Lastly, the managerial variables (i.e., type of compensation and workload) allow for an assessment of an organizational influence on the salesperson's behavior. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that incentive compensation will reduce intrinsic rewards leading to a decline in the motivation to practice adaptive selling. In the present study it is hypothesized that a straight salary type of compensation will be positively related to adaptive behavior. The workload construct is incorporated to provide an indication of the amount of time that a salesperson has to spend on each account. As the workload increases it is hypothesized that less time can be given to each account, and therefore salespeople may not adapt behavior. A summary of the first proposed hypothesis is given in Figure 9.

The second hypothesis examines the relationship between adaptive behavior and salesperson performance (see Figure 10). The Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) proposes a positive relationship between adaptive behavior and salesperson performance. In addition, the framework proposes that situational characteristics will have a moderating effect on the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. In the present study the situational characteristics that may moderate the adaptive behavior to performance relationship include sales position characteristics, customer variables, salesperson/customer relationship variables, personal resources, and managerial variables.

First, the sales position characteristic used in the present study is sales position. As a moderating variable the sales position of the salesperson will affect the context in which the adaptive behavior to performance relationship is assessed. Moncrief (1986) provided a taxonomy by which sales positions can be described. Utilizing his approach sales people who are trade servicers and adapt behavior are more likely to increase performance when compared to order takers who adapt behavior. Therefore, it is hypothesized that sales position characteristics will moderate the adaptive behavior to performance relationship.

Second, the customer variable assesses the customers buying task. In the present study the two scenarios (i.e., modified rebuy and straight rebuy) may be considered as moderators. For example, in a modified rebuy situation the customer has limited knowledge of the salesperson's company offerings. In this scenario, the customer may require additional

- H1: Salespeople are more likely to adapt behavior across customer interactions in the following situations:
1. Sales position characteristics:
    - a. when the sales position is that of a trade servicer.
  2. Customer Variables:
    - a. when the customer is making a complex buying decision.
  3. Salesperson-Customer Relationship:
    - a. when the salesperson utilizes a customer orientation.
    - b. when the salesperson-customer relationship is characterized as long-term and cooperative.
  4. Personal Resources:
    - a. when the salesperson possesses product knowledge.
    - b. when the salesperson possesses customer knowledge.
    - c. when the salesperson possesses product self-monitoring skills.
    - d. When the salesperson is motivated to practice adaptive selling.
    - e. when the salesperson possesses the psychological trait of public self-consciousness.
  5. Managerial Variables:
    - a. when the salesperson's workload is low.
    - b. when straight salary is the basis for compensation.

#### First Hypothesis

Figure 9



- H2: Adaptive behavior will lead to an increase in performance when the following situations exists:
1. Sales position characteristics:
    - a. when the sales position is that of a trade servicer.
  2. Customer Variables:
    - a. when the customer is making a complex buying decision.
  3. Salesperson-Customer Relationship:
    - a. when the salesperson utilizes a customer orientation.
    - b. when the salesperson-customer relationship is characterized as long-term and cooperative.
  4. Personal Resources:
    - a. when the salesperson possesses product knowledge.
    - b. when the salesperson possesses customer knowledge.
    - c. when the salesperson possesses product self-monitoring skills.
    - d. When the salesperson is motivated to practice adaptive selling.
    - e. when the salesperson possesses the psychological trait of public self-consciousness.
  5. Managerial Variables:
    - a. when the salesperson's workload is low.
    - b. when straight salary is the basis for compensation.

## Second Hypothesis

Figure 10

information. If the salesperson is able to adapt behavior (e.g., alter the sales presentation during the customer interaction), the likelihood of closing the sale is enhanced. In the straight rebuy scenario the salesperson may not want to adapt behavior. Since the customer has previously purchased the product, they are already familiar with the salesperson's company offerings. By taking the time to adapt behavior the salesperson may be reducing the amount of time spent with other customers, thus reducing overall performance.

Third, the salesperson/customer relationship assesses the degree to which the relationship is long-term and cooperative and the customer orientation of the salesperson. If the relationship between the customer is good (i.e., the relationship has been long-term, cooperative and the salesperson is customer oriented), the salesperson is more likely to create a sales plan that will satisfy the customer. If the salesperson/customer relationship is poor (i.e., the relationship is short-term and uncooperative), the salesperson is less likely to create a sales plan that will be appropriate for the customer. Therefore, it is hypothesized that the salesperson/customer relationship will moderate the adaptive behavior to performance relationship.

Fourth, personal resources include product and customer knowledge, self-monitoring skills, motivation to practice adaptive selling, and public self-consciousness. Personal resources provide a context in which adaptive behavior will lead to an increase in performance. For example, when salespeople possess product and customer knowledge, they are more likely to create initial sales plans that are acceptable to their customers. Since the sales plans are acceptable, the amount of time that needs to be spent with each customer is reduced. The salesperson now has time to meet with additional customers. By increasing the number of customer contacts the salesperson may increase performance. Therefore, it is hypothesized that personal resources will moderate the adaptive behavior to performance relationship.

Lastly, managerial variables (i.e., workload and compensation package) may moderate the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. If the salesperson has a low workload, then their number of customer contacts is limited. In this instance adapting behavior will allow

for the salesperson to tailor the sales plan to each of his/her customers. By adjusting the sales plan the salesperson may experience a greater percentage of closed sales compared to the salesperson with a higher workload. Similarly, when a salesperson is compensated through straight salary they may be more willing to spend time interacting with the customer. When the salesperson is not pressured to move on to the next customer (e.g., as may be experience if commissions were the form of compensation), adapting behavior (e.g., during the customer interaction) may increase the likelihood of a closed sale. In the present study, it has been hypothesized that the adaptive behavior to performance relationship will be moderated by managerial variables.

The hypotheses presented in this discussion provide for an empirical test of the research questions set forth in Chapter 1. The primary focus is on the situational characteristics and adaptive behavior relationship. The secondary focus examines the adaptive behavior-performance relationship. In order to empirically test these hypotheses a methodology has been developed and is presented in Chapter 4.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Methodology**

### ***Overview***

Previous research concerning salesperson's adaptive behavior and the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance has provided a theoretical basis for an empirical investigation. The current chapter presents a methodology to test several of the relationships identified in the proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research design followed by the sampling design, sample size, data collection procedures, variable operationalizations, validity issues, and critique of the methodology.

## ***Research Design***

The purpose of the present study is to address two research questions. The first research question examines the relationships between the situational variables and adaptive behavior. In order to examine whether salespeople adapt behavior across various types of customer interactions, a scenario provided the basis for self-reported adaptive behavior responses. These adaptive behavior (scenario) responses utilized during the analysis of the first research question. The second research question examines the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance. Since self-reported adaptive behavior responses based on a scenario are not related to the salesperson's level of performance, self-reported adaptive behavior responses that are associated with the salesperson's current job were gathered. These adaptive behavior (current) responses was utilized during the analysis of the second research question. In the present study, two research designs were utilized to examine the research questions.

First, a 2 X 2 between groups factorial design will be utilized to examine the relationships between the situational variables and adaptive behavior (scenario). The first factor was type of sales positions and had two levels (i.e., order taker and trade servicer). The second factor was type of buying situation and had two levels (i.e., modified rebuy and straight rebuy). These two factors were crossed to form four treatment conditions (see Figure 11). Respondents were selected from both types of sales positions and half of the respondents from each type were randomly assigned to one of the buying situations.

Second, a correlational design was used to examine the regression models created for the evaluation of the relationships between adaptive behavior (current) and performance and between the situational variables and adaptive behavior (scenario).

	Order Taker	:	Trade Servicer
Modified Rebuy	:	:	:
Straight Rebuy	:	:	:

Research Design

Figure 11

## Sampling Design

Tull and Hawkins (1987) indicated that seven steps are involved in the sampling process. These steps include defining the population; specifying the sampling frame, the sampling unit, the sampling method, the sampling plan; selecting the sample; and determining sample size. Six of these steps will be addressed in this section. The determination of sample size will be presented in the following section.

First, the sample population consisted of sales representatives in the institutional food wholesaler industry, whose sales territory is within the continental United States, and who have been with the company long enough to have responsibility for a sales territory.

The food industry was selected because of the ability to obtain responses from the two different types of sales positions used in the study. Trade servicers ranked highest on making sales presentations, overcoming objections, planning selling activities and presentations, introducing new products, searching out leads, using "presentation" aids, calling on new accounts, helping clients, providing feedback, checking in with supervisors, and providing technical information. Order takers ranked the lowest on making sales presentations, calling on potential accounts, overcoming objections, planning selling activities, preparing sales presentations, identifying the person in authority, searching out leads, calling on new accounts, receiving feedback, checking in with supervisors, and providing technical information.

Second, the sampling frame consisted of institutional distributors/wholesalers obtained from the "TOP 50" listing of Institutional Distribution magazine. Since the average number of trade servicers and order takers for an institutional food distributor is low (i.e., average number of trade servicers per company = 10; average number of order takers per company = 4), it was determined that the larger firms would provide an efficient sampling frame for data collection.

Third, the sampling unit consisted of certain sales representatives within the selected companies.

Fourth, the sampling method was a convenience sample of sales representatives in the institutional food distributor companies. This nonprobability sampling method was chosen because of the inability to obtain employee rosters for all the companies within the food industry.

Fifth, the sampling plan involved identifying the Presidents and CEO's of the companies, and obtaining their permission to have the surveys sent to their office for distribution.

Lastly, the sample selection involves the actual selection of the sample elements. Since direct contact with the salespeople was not permitted, the selection of sales representatives was determined by the sales managers or presidents of the participating organizations.

## **Sample Size**

For the determination of sample size a power analysis was conducted. Three values need to be determined prior to the examination of sample size (Cohen 1979). These values include the alpha level, the percentage of power which will be acceptable in the study, and the appropriate effect size. First, alpha is the Type I error or the rate of rejecting a true null hypothesis. In the present study sample size was examined using alpha equal to .05 in order to provide sufficient information concerning the latitude for interpreting the results given various sample sizes. Second, power was set at 80 percent. This percentage indicates that the study will have an 80 percent chance of detecting an effect (e.g., whether the correlations differ from zero) based on the statistical tests being used in the study. Third, when statistically testing a null hypothesis, it is usually concluded that the null hypothesis is either true or false. Thus, the phenomenon in the study is indicated to be either present or absent. While this may be true, it is more likely that the phenomenon is present to some degree, therefore a



determination of effect size (i.e., the degree to which the null hypothesis is false) needs to be made.

Cohen (1979) proposes a qualitative convention to describe effect size as small, medium, or large. A small effect size indicates that the variance distribution of the phenomenon in the sample is closely related to the variance distribution of the phenomenon in the population. A large effect size indicates a visually noticeable difference exists between the variances. Cohen's (1979) only indication of describing a medium effect size is that it lies between a small and large effect size.

In the present study sample size was examined using a medium effect size. One reason for the use of a medium effect size is the unprecedented examination of the relationships that are being studied (i.e., antecedents of adaptive behavior and adaptive behavior, itself). Since different statistical tests were used in this study (i.e., correlational analysis, multiple regression, MANOVA, MANCOVA), four effect size indicators were considered. The effect size indicators included the r-statistic (i.e., for correlational tests), q-statistic (i.e., for population parameters), f-statistic (i.e., for MANOVA), and f-squared statistic (i.e., for multiple regression). The results indicate that the minimum sample size is 280 subjects based on the q-statistic with  $\alpha = .05$ . The next section will address the data collection procedures.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

The present study collected data from sales representatives who work for institutional food distributors. The issues to be addressed in this section include the data collection method, the contents of the questionnaire, the approach used in distributing and retrieving the questionnaire, incentives, and limitations.

First, data was collected using a mail survey questionnaire. This method provides several advantages for the present study which include gathering data from dispersed geographical locations, a lower cost per contact, and a moderate amount of data. Based on

expectations from previous research a 30% response rate was assumed, and a total of 930 questionnaires were mailed.

Second, the present study attempted to gather adaptive behavior responses based on a modified rebuy scenario, a straight rebuy scenario, and the salesperson's current job. In order to gather these responses three forms of the questionnaire was utilized. The first questionnaire, called Form MR, utilized a modified rebuy customer buying scenario. The second questionnaire, called Form SR, utilized a straight rebuy buying scenario. Forms MR and SR contained measures of adaptive behavior (scenario). The third questionnaire, called Form N, contained no scenario. Form N will be used to measure antecedents of adaptive behavior, adaptive behavior (current) with relation to their current work experience, and performance measurements. The variable contents of the two types of questionnaires (with and without scenarios) are presented in figures 12 and 13.

The reason for using separate questionnaires is to control for any carry over effect which may occur due to salespeople being asked to answer questions concerning adaptive behavior (scenario) based on a scenario, and also to answer questions concerning adaptive behavior (current) based on their current job. In other words, if responses to adaptive behavior (scenario) and adaptive behavior (current) were gathered in the same questionnaire, respondents may not accurately react to the scenario.

The scenario consisted of a description of a particular type of selling situation. Hutt, Johnston, and Ronchetto (1985) suggest that a modified rebuy buying situation may include known buying alternatives, consideration of new suppliers, and additional information to make a decision. A straight rebuy buying situation may include concerns with price, delivery terms, terms of payment, and little additional required information. The scenario was examined by several sales managers of local institutional food distributors to ensure accuracy of description.

The survey questionnaire contained a cover letter to explain the contents of the questionnaire and elicit the support of the salesperson (see Figures 14 and 15). An endorsement of the study by the company was prominently noted to encourage salespeople

Frequency that salesperson encounters the type of  
situation described  
Adaptive Behavior (scenario)  
    Sales Call Planning  
    Communication Strategy  
    Information Gathering  
    Influence Strategy  
Sales Position  
Customer Buying Situation

Variable Contents of Questionnaire with Scenario

Figure 12

Adaptive Behavior  
    Sales Call Planning  
    Communication Strategy  
    Information Gathering  
    Influence Strategy  
Customer Interaction Variable  
Relationship Variable  
Salesperson Orientation - Customer Orientation Scale  
Product Knowledge  
Customer Knowledge  
Self-Monitoring  
Motivation to Practice Adaptive Selling  
Self-Consciousness  
Sales Position  
Customer Buying Situation  
Workload  
Type of Compensation Package  
Performance  
Demographics

Variable Contents of Questionnaire without Scenario

Figure 13

Dear Distributor Sales Representative:

Your company has agreed to participate in the following study. We are trying to determine what kinds of behavior lead to success for salespeople in different types of selling jobs. This study is one of the first of its kind, and your insights into the behavior of salespeople will enable us to learn more about the selling process. Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.

The questionnaire will begin with a situation which describes a buyer you will be calling on. You will then be asked to respond to a series of questions about this situation. We recognize that your responses will depend on a number of factors other than those presented in the situation. Therefore, we ask that you answer the questions in light of the information provided.

This is one part of a two-part series. In order to match the two questionnaires please indicate the last 4 digits of your social security number in the space provided (\_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_). Of course, your responses will be totally confidential.

Your responses are of extreme importance to us. Questions regarding this study can be directed to Dr. Keith (703-231-7026). Please return the completed questionnaire along with this cover letter within two weeks. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this study.

Janet E. Keith  
Assistant Professor  
of Marketing

Charles D. Bodkin  
Doctoral Candidate  
in Marketing

Cover Letter For Scenario Surveys

Figure 14

Dear Distributor Sales Representative:

Your company has agreed to participate in the following study. We are trying to determine what kinds of behavior lead to success for salespeople in different types of selling jobs. This study is one of the first of its kind, and your insights into the behavior of salespeople will enable us to learn more about the selling process. Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.

This is one part of a two-part series. In order to match the two questionnaires please indicate the last 4 digits of your social security number in the space provided (\_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_). Of course, your responses will be totally confidential.

Your responses are of extreme importance to us. Questions regarding this study can be directed to Dr. Keith at (703) 231-7026. Please return the completed questionnaire along with this cover letter within two weeks. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this study.

Janet E. Keith  
Assistant Professor  
of Marketing

Charles D. Bodkin  
Doctoral Candidate  
in Marketing

Marketing Cover Letter For Surveys Without Scenario

Figure 15

to respond to the survey, and directions concerning the return of the survey were given. Salespeople were asked also to indicate the last four digits of their social security number. This number allowed for the matching of adaptive behavior (scenario) responses and performance measures. A reassurance of confidentiality was addressed in the cover letter.

Third, in order to implement the data collection, while controlling for carry over effects, two different mailings were utilized. First, companies were assigned to one of two groups. Group one received the adaptive behavior (current) and performance measurements first. They received the adaptive behavior (scenario) measurements second. Group two received the adaptive behavior (scenario) measurements first, with the adaptive behavior (current) and performance measurements following in two weeks (see Figure 16).

Fourth, the key incentive for the salesperson to complete and return the survey was company endorsement of the study. Since the questionnaires were distributed from the President or CEO's office, higher response rates were achieved.

Lastly, two limitations should be noted as affecting the data collection design. First, the use of two mailings may have driven the response rate down. For this reason the data collection were designed so that responses to both adaptive behavior (current) and adaptive behavior (scenario) were gathered from the first mailing. Second, while the study could not maintain anonymity, confidentiality was assured by the researcher.

## ***Operationalizations of Variables***

### **Predictor Variables - Manipulated**

In the proposed model situational characteristics include sales position characteristics, customer variables, customer-salesperson relationship variables, personal resources, and

First Mailing

	Order Taker	Trade Servicer	
Modified Rebuy Scenario	:	:	:
	:	:	:
Straight Rebuy Scenario	:	:	:
	:	:	:
No Scenario	:	:	:
	:	:	:
	:	:	:
	:	:	:
	:	:	:

Second Mailing

	Order Taker	Trade Servicer	
No Scenario	:	:	:
	:	:	:
	:	:	:
	:	:	:
	:	:	:
Modified Rebuy Scenario	:	:	:
	:	:	:
Straight Rebuy Scenario	:	:	:
	:	:	:

Data Collection Design

Figure 16



managerial variables. The variable manipulated in the present study is type of customer buying situation (i.e., customer variable) .

In the present study, two buying situations were manipulated (i.e., modified rebuy and straight rebuy) using scenarios presented to the salesperson. The scenarios were based upon the characteristics described in the literature review, and presented to sales managers of local institutional food distributors. After several iterations, the final scenarios were incorporated into the questionnaires (see Figure 17). Since the responses based on the scenario may be affected by the percentage of time that the salesperson is normally involved in a modified rebuy or straight rebuy selling situation, measures of the percentage of time that they actually spend conducting modified or straight rebuy selling were incorporated into the survey.

## **Predictor Variables - Measured**

In the proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior, five situational characteristics affect adaptive behavior and the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance. These include sales position characteristics, customer variables, salesperson-customer relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables. Each of the situational characteristics are represented in the present study, but only four were measured (the customer variable was manipulated).

First, the sales position variable utilizes two different sales positions. Second, salesperson-customer relationship was measured by the Selling Orientation-Customer Orientation Scale (SOCO) and the "relations" variable (Saxe and Weitz 1982). Third, because personal resources is a multi-faceted construct, several variables were used. These variables included product knowledge (Behrman and Perreault 1982), customer knowledge, self-monitoring (Snyder and Gangestad 1986), private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety (Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss 1975). Fourth,

### **Straight Rebuy Scenario**

Imagine that, for one of your current restaurant accounts, the customer needs to reorder several products that are used on a regular basis because stock levels are depleted. This customer has a great deal of buying experience. He/She purchases products from you on a continuing basis because your firm offers good delivery, prices, and terms of payment. Soon you will have the opportunity to speak with this customer concerning an order.

### **Modified Rebuy Scenario**

Imagine a restaurant is looking for a new supplier of food products which are needed on a regular basis. You have heard that the customer has been comparing the quality, price, product performance, delivery, and guarantees of alternative suppliers. Since they are aware of your organization, you have been given the opportunity to speak with a representative of the restaurant concerning an order.

### **Scenarios Used in Surveys**

**Figure 17**

managerial variables measured were type of compensation package and the number of accounts in the territory (Jackson, Keith, and Schlacter 1983). Each variable will be addressed in the following discussion.

### ***Sales Position Characteristics***

In order to test the situational characteristic, sales position, two different sales positions were selected from Moncrief's (1986) Sales Position Taxonomy. The order taker and trade servicer sales positions were selected because of their divergent rankings on two key factors identified by Moncrief (1986). The first factor, selling functions, addresses selling activities (e.g. overcoming objections, planning, sales presentations). The second factor, information management involves communication activities (e.g. feedback from customers, relaying information to management) on the part of the salesperson. The order taker ranked the lowest and the trade servicer ranked highest on both factors. In order to validate the sample six items from Moncrief's (1986) Sales Position Taxonomy were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = very frequently, 7 = very infrequently).

### ***Salesperson-Customer Relations***

The current study utilized both the SOCO scale and Relations factor because of their ability to examine the salesperson-customer relationship. The first scale focused on the customer orientation of the salesperson, and is adapted from the SOCO scale. It consisted of seven items measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Almost Never, 7 = Almost Always) The relations variable examined the relationship (i.e., length of relationship and cooperativeness) between the salesperson and the customer. It asked the salesperson to think about the customer's perception of the interaction. Six items were adapted from the Relations factor,

and are measured using a 7-point Likert scale anchored by "Usually False" and "Usually True".

### ***Personal Resources***

Three areas of interest when studying the relationship between personal resources and adaptive behavior are salesperson knowledge, salesperson skills, and salesperson traits. First, salespeople need to possess knowledge of the product and customer. Second, salesperson skills consist of information acquisition skills (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) such as self-monitoring skills. Third, salesperson traits include motivation to practice adaptive selling, private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, social anxiety. Each of these variables and their measures will be discussed in the following sections.

**Knowledge:** Swan and Futrell (1978) utilized product knowledge in their analysis of performance differences between men and women. Their measurement of product knowledge was based on a district sales manager's appraisal form. Their results indicated that 44 percent of the males were rated medium-high or high on product knowledge compared to 6 percent for females. In the present study product knowledge was measured using a four item 7-point Likert scale anchored by "Usually False" to "Usually True". Customer knowledge was measured using a four item 7-point Likert scale anchored by "Usually False" to "Usually True".

**Skills:** The self-monitoring scale has gone through several revisions since its introduction in 1974 (Snyder 1974). Originally Snyder (1974) indicated that the scale measured five constructs. These constructs included concern for appropriateness of social behavior, attention to social comparison information, ability to control or modify self-presentation, use of this ability in particular situations, and cross-situational variability of social behavior. Lennox and Wolfe (1984) contended that the scale measured acting ability, extroversion, and other-directedness.

Snyder and Gangestad (1986) argue that the Lennox and Wolfe (1984) study used items that were virtual restatements of one another, and that respondents tended to use the extremes of the scales which lead to a response bias. A reanalysis of the self-monitoring scale (Snyder and Gangestad 1986) has led to a new measure which examines three constructs (i.e., expressive self-control, social stage presence, and other-directed self-presentation). The self-monitoring scale for the present study was adapted from the new 18-item measure and was comprised of six items. The 7-point Likert scale was anchored by "Usually False" to "Usually True".

**Personality Traits:** Motivation to practice adaptive selling was examined using one component (i.e., the component recommended by Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) of the original self-monitoring scale that was developed by Snyder (1974) and presented in the research by Lennox and Wolfe (1984). The variable, "concern for social appropriateness", consisted of four items measured by a 7-point Likert scale (1= Usually False; 7= Usually True). The self-consciousness scale was adapted from the Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) scale. It measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1= Usually False; 7= Usually True). Private self-consciousness was measured using five items that are concerned with the salesperson's attention to inner thoughts and feelings. Public self-consciousness utilized five items to uncover the salesperson's tendency to perceive oneself as a social object. Lastly, social anxiety was measured by three items and is concerned with the degree of discomfort that the salesperson experiences in the presence of others

### ***Managerial Variables***

In the present study, the means by which the salesperson is rewarded was measured by three items: (1) "What percentage of your compensation is based on salary?", (2) "What percentage of your compensation is based on commission?", and (3) "What percentage of your

compensation is based on bonuses or contests?" Salespeople responded to the items by entering a percentage score in the space provided. They were directed to have all three answers equal 100 percent.

Workload was measured by asking salespeople to indicate the number of accounts in their territory, and the average number of sales calls made in a week.

### ***Demographic Variables***

In the present study demographic variables included the salesperson's years of experience in the field of sales, years of experience with his/her current employer, and approximate age.

### **Response Variables**

The proposed Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior focuses on two relationships. First, the relationship between the antecedents of adaptive behavior and adaptive behavior (scenario) was examined. Second, the relationship between adaptive behavior (current) and performance was examined. The response variables to be measured in the present study were adaptive behavior and performance.

### ***Adaptive Behavior***

In Chapter 3, it was indicated that adaptive behavior is comprised of the sales planning process and the customer interaction. The sales planning process examines adaptive behavior across customer interactions and includes measures of sales call planning,

information gathering, communication strategies, and influence strategies. The customer interaction variable focuses on adaptive behavior within the customer interaction.

**Sales Call Planning:** The sales call planning measures were adapted from the scale developed by Gwin (1979). It consisted of seven items on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by "Very Infrequently" and "Very Frequently".

**Information Gathering:** In the present study, the variable information gathering focused on the type of information salespeople gather during the sales planning process. Salespeople may gather information from customers or trade magazines. The types of information salespeople gather include the customer's marketing strategy, the competitor's marketing strategy, and reactions to the salesperson's marketing strategy. The scale consisted of eleven items measured on a 7-point scale (1 = Almost Never, 7 = Almost Always).

**Communication Strategies:** Data were collected concerning the planning of communication strategies prior to the customer interaction. Salespeople may take the approach of being either task-, self-, or interaction-oriented. The scale consisted of ten items measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Almost Never; 7 = Almost Always).

**Influence Strategy:** The study adapted the Spiro and Perreault (1979) Influence Strategy scale. Spiro and Perreault (1979) indicate that salespeople may use either expertise, legitimate, referent, impression management, or ingratiation influence strategies. Salespeople were asked to respond to fifteen items. The items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Almost Never; 5 = Almost Always).

**Customer Interaction:** Questions were asked in order to determine whether or not salespeople change their behavior (i.e., whether salespeople change the type of information presented, how the information is presented, type of influence strategy used, or type of

information gathered) while interacting with the customers. Four items were asked using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = very unlikely, 7 = very likely).

## ***Performance***

The second response variable to be used in the present study was performance. Performance has been defined as "behavior evaluated in terms of its contributions to the goals of the organization" (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1985, p. 624). In the proposed model, performance is directly affected by adaptive behavior and moderated by the situational variables.

As indicated in Chapter 2, performance has been extensively researched in the marketing literature. Approximately nineteen different variables have been used to measure performance. Jackson, Keith, and Schlacter (1983) indicate that performance evaluations may be based on both quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative variables consist of output and input variables. Output variables are based on the results produced by the salesperson (e.g., sales volume, sales volume to previous years sales, sales volume by product line). Input variables reflect effort on the part of the salesperson (e.g., number of new accounts, calls per period, selling expenses to sales). Qualitative variables are those which are subjectively assessed by the manager (e.g., attitude, product knowledge, selling skills), and are subject to either a bias or halo effect on the part of the sales manager.

The current research design necessitated that performance be operationalized in a manner that allowed for the examination of differences across sales positions. Due to the sensitivity of obtaining performance estimates, relative estimates (i.e., estimates compared to other salespeople within the organization) of sales volume, selling expense, sales quotas, number of calls per week, number of closes per week, and the salesperson's actual average number of calls per week, and actual average number of closes per week were requested.



## ***Statistical Analyses***

The data collected from the questionnaire was used to test the hypotheses stated in the previous section. Five statistical tests were be employed:

(1) Correlation analysis identified the relationships between the predictor and response variables.

(2) Multiple regression analysis examined the relationships between the predictor variables and the response variable, adaptive behavior.

(3) Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) tested overall difference between sales position and type of selling situation on adaptive behavior.

(4) Multiple Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) tested the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance. The antecedents of adaptive behavior will be included as covariates.

(5) Linear Structural Equation Modeling (LISREL) tested the relationships among the constructs proposed in the model.

### **Correlation Analysis**

The first step in the analysis examined the intercorrelations among the predictor variables, and the correlations between the predictor and response variables. The purpose of this analysis was to provide an indication of which predictor variables to use in the regression analysis. Hair, Anderson, and Tatham (1987) suggest that the "cutoff point for intercorrelation among predictor variables is that no predictor should be included that is more closely related to the best predictor than it is to the dependent variable." The correlations were tested for significance with the t-test statistic.

## **Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression tested the relationships between the predictor and response variables identified during the correlation analysis. Multiple regression analyzes the relationship between a single dependent variable and several predictor variables. In the present study four different measures (i.e., sales call planning, information gathering, communication strategies, influence strategies) of the dependent variable (i.e., salesperson planning process) were examined. The regression models were examined using the Multiple R-square, F-ratios, and partial correlation coefficients.

## **Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)**

The multiple analysis of variance is a statistical technique used to determine if samples come from populations with equal means. In the present study the MANOVA was used to examine the means of the dependent measures (i.e., sales call planning, information gathering, communications strategy, influence strategy) across the two factors (i.e., sales position and type of selling situation). The test statistic used in the MANOVA was Wilks' lambda. Wilks' lambda "examines whether groups are somehow different without being concerned with whether they differ on at least one linear combination of the dependent variables" (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham 1987).

## **Multiple Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA)**

For the analysis of the second hypothesis, a multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used. The MANCOVA utilized metric covariates to remove extraneous influences from

the dependent variable. This procedure allowed for an increase in measurement precision (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham 1987). In the present study, the covariates were those predictor variables found to be antecedents of adaptive behavior (as determined during the regression analysis). The test statistic used in the MANCOVA was Wilks' lambda.

## **Linear Structural Equations (LISREL)**

In order to examine the relationships among the constructs of interest, LISREL was utilized. By utilizing an iteration process, LISREL provides solutions for simultaneous equations that provided an analysis of causal relationships. In the present study the causal relationships among situational characteristics and adaptive behavior, and adaptive behavior and performance were analyzed with the LISREL technique.

## **Statistical Assumptions**

In order for the above testing procedures to be valid, two assumptions were made concerning the general linear model proposed in the Multiple regression, MANOVA, and MANCOVA analyses. First, it was assumed that at each level of the predictor variable the values of the response variable all have the same variance, and that the prediction errors were randomly distributed (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham 1987). For the multiple regression analyses a residual analysis of the error terms was used to check for violation of the assumptions. In the MANOVA and MANCOVA the F-tests are robust with regard to these assumptions when the cell sizes are sufficiently large (i.e., greater than 30) for the central limit theorem to apply (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham 1987).

## ***Validity Issues***

Cook and Campbell (1979) identify four types of validity. First, statistical conclusion validity "refers to inferences about whether it is reasonable to presume covariation given a specified alpha level and the obtained variances" (Cook and Campbell 1979, p. 41). Second, internal validity is defined as the extent to which the observed treatment effect in a study is causal (Campbell and Stanley 1963). Third, construct validity "is concerned with the psychological qualities contributing to the relationships between the predictor and response variables" (Rosenthal and Rosnow 1984, p. 470). Lastly, external validity addresses the issue of generalizing results across and to various persons, times, and settings (Cook and Campbell 1979). McGrath and Brinberg (1983, p. 116) state that "all research methods are flawed, but different methods are flawed differently." Following is a review of the validity issues facing the current research study.

### **Statistical Conclusion Validity**

Cook and Campbell (1979) indicate that statistical conclusion validity is concerned with the ability of the statistical tests to detect the postulated relationships. In particular, the issues of statistical power and validity of the statistical assumptions need to be addressed. Statistical power is the ability to detect an effect of a given magnitude with the variances and sample sizes on hand. Because the present study was exploratory in nature, previous research had not utilized the current predictor variables in the study of adaptive behavior and acceptable variance estimates were unavailable. Judd and Kenny (1982) suggest that statistical conclusion validity can be increased, a priori, by utilizing a random assignment of subjects. The present study assigned subjects randomly to either the modified rebuy situation or the straight rebuy situation.

The nature of the statistical assumptions have been addressed previously. Cook and Campbell (1979) indicate that analysis of variance is robust to violations of normality. By examining the interaction term in the statistical models and providing a minimum of thirty responses per cell, the proposed statistical tests were expected to be statistically valid.

## **Internal validity**

Once covariation between the predictor and response variables has been established, the internal validity of the study needs to be assessed. The variable being manipulated in the study was the type of selling situation (i.e., modified or straight rebuy selling). The manipulation occurred through the use of two different scenarios. The questions addressed in this section are whether a causal relationship exists between the type of selling situation and adaptive behavior, and whether the direction of causality was due to the scenario manipulation or a third variable.

First, in determining causality several threats to internal validity can be eliminated because the subjects were randomly assigned to the scenario manipulation. These threats included history, testing instrumentation, statistical regression, selection, and the interactions with selection. Cook and Campbell (1979) indicate that three threats to internal validity cannot be controlled for by randomization. First, when the manipulation provides a desirable good or service there may be a reluctance to tolerate the inequality. The present study provided no such incentive. Second, when the control and experimental groups are made public, competition may result. The present study maintained confidentiality of the results. Third, if one of the groups were to receive less desirable treatment the responses could be affected. This study did not present an undesirable treatment.

Second, eliminating alternative interpretations is necessary to provide support for the validity of the scenario manipulation. First, the use of two mailings was an attempt to reduce any carry over effect which may affect the adaptive behavior response. Second, several

demographic variables were measured (e.g., time with the company, experience) to examine differences between treatments.

## **Construct validity**

Construct validity is concerned with the ability to determine whether the measurement instruments are representing the theoretical variable under examination. Cook and Campbell (1979) indicate that construct validity depends on testing for convergence of measures across different measures and testing for divergence of measures against other related but distinct measures.

Convergent validity is enhanced through the use of multiple indicators. The use of multiple indicators allows for the assessment of internal consistency. One measure of internal consistency is reliability. Reliability is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition, for validity of measures (Peter 1979). Tests for reliability may include Cronbach's alpha and the Spearman Brown test-retest correlation. In the present study many of the predictor variables had been tested for reliability in previous research. Those variables that had been previously tested for reliability include the Selling Orientation-Customer Orientation Scale (SOCO; alpha = .86), product knowledge (alpha = .75), self-monitoring (alpha = .70), self-consciousness (alpha = .80), and sales call planning (alpha = .84). For the scenario, a panel of judges was used to ascertain the accuracy of the description. A manipulation check was used to determine if the salesperson correctly understood the described selling situation. Discriminant validity was assessed by examining the correlations of variables that should not have been related.

Cook and Campbell (1979) indicate that several threats to construct validity exist. In the present study these threats included mono-method bias, hypothesis guessing, and evaluator apprehension. First, mono-method bias may have occurred because all of the responses were gathered using the same method. Second, hypothesis guessing may have resulted in a

salesperson responding with high scores on adaptive behavior, if they believed that was a desired response. Third, the salesperson may have responded differently if they believed they would be judged. Evaluator apprehension was reduced by ensuring confidentiality.

## **External Validity**

External validity addresses the ability to generalize the results across or to various target populations, settings, and times. The present study provided information concerning the adaptive behavior of individuals who perform a selling function. The sample in the present study consisted of salespeople who were classified as either trade servicers or order takers. The setting for the study may be broadly described as the institutional food distribution industry. While it could be argued that the results were situation specific, the basis for the study was the adaptive behavior theory.

## ***Critique of Current Methodology***

McGrath (1982, p. 69) states that "the research process can be viewed as a series of interlocking choices." In research many trade-offs are made which contribute to the validity of the results, but the findings must be examined as one step in the process of knowledge accumulation (McGrath and Brinberg 1983). The strengths of the present research methodology included the introduction of an empirical definition of adaptive behavior, an examination of the variables that affected adaptive behavior, and an examination of the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance. Weaknesses of the research methodology included threats to validity.

First, no previous research has empirically tested the relationships between situational characteristics and adaptive behavior. While the marketing literature has provided theoretical research concerning proposed relationships, the present study operationalized adaptive behavior through an examination of the salesperson planning process.

Second, research in the psychology and social psychology disciplines have identified variables that may be considered predictors of adaptive behavior. Several of these variables (e.g., self-consciousness and self-monitoring) have not been widely studied in the marketing literature, and their inclusion in the present study added to current marketing thought.

Third, no empirical research examined the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance. While theoretical research in the marketing discipline proposes a relationship (Weitz 1980; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986), it was suggested that situational characteristics were key determinants. The present study proposed a research design that manipulated two of the key situational characteristics (i.e., sales position and type of selling situation) in order to test the theoretical proposition.

Lastly, the lack of control during the administration of the survey instrument may have created factors unknown to the researcher (i.e., fatigue, time of day the survey is completed) and could have affected the results.



# **Chapter 5**

## **Results and Analyses**

### ***Overview***

This chapter describes the analytic procedures and findings of this study. First, a respondent profile will be presented. Second, an assessment of the measurement instrument will be made. Third, simple statistics (i.e., means, standard deviations and correlations) will be examined. Fourth, hypothesis 1 is tested utilizing multivariate analysis of variance, multiple regression, and LISREL statistical techniques. Fifth, hypothesis 2 is tested utilizing multiple regression and LISREL statistical techniques.

## ***Respondent Profile***

In order to provide a profile of respondents, information was gathered concerning their sales background. Specifically, information on respondents' sales position (i.e., trader servicer vs. order taker as identified by the company), years of experience in sales, years of experience with their current company, and age group was collected. As shown in Table 8, the respondents consisted of 274 trade services and 56 order takers. This percentage of trade servicer to order taker (20%) is consistent with the ratio found in the food service industry for companies whose annual sales volume is greater than \$21 million (i.e., the sales volume for companies targeted by this study) (*Institution Distribution*, January 1989) The mean age group for the total sample was between 31-40 years old. The respondents had an average of 11 years sales experience with five of those being with their current company.

## ***Assessment of Measurement Instrument***

This section presents the steps taken to ensure that the scales utilized in the measurement instrument are sufficiently reliable for the statistical analyses to follow. Specifically, the first section presents the initial reliabilities. Second, several scales are re-examined based on the initial findings. Third, the final reliabilities are presented along with the individual items used to capture the constructs of interest.

Table 8. Respondent Profile: Type of Representative, Age, Sales Experience, Company Experience

Type of Representative:

Trade Servicer	274	83 %
Order Taker	56	17 %
Total	330	100 %

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cumulative Frequency</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
Less than 20	0	0	0
21-30	36	36	16
31-40	108	144	65
41-50	52	196	88
51-60	26	222	99
61-70	1	223	100
Over 70	0	223	100

Missing = 107  
 Mode Group = 31-40

<u>Years of Sales Experience</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cumulative Frequency</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
0 - 5	60	60	27
6 - 10	65	125	56
11 - 15	47	172	77
16 - 20	20	192	86
Over 20	31	223	100

Missing = 107  
 Mean = 11 years; Standard Deviation = 8.6

<u>Years of Company Experience</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Cumulative Frequency</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
0 - 1	75	75	34
2 - 3	45	120	54
4 - 5	36	156	70
6 - 7	23	179	80
Over 7	44	223	100

Missing = 107  
 Mean = 4.8 years; Standard Deviation = 5.4

## **Initial Reliabilities**

Before the data collected in the measurement instrument were used in statistical analysis, the individual items that underlie the constructs of interest were examined. Reliability “is the degree to which observations are consistent or stable” (Rosenthal and Rosnow 1984, p. 76). For multi-item scales, scores from individual items are correlated to provide an approximation of the correlation of a measure with itself (J. Paul Peter, 1981). While several tests are capable of examining reliability (e.g., test-retest, equivalent-forms, and split-half methods), Churchill (1979) recommends coefficient alpha to assess scale quality. For purposes of comparing variables, Nunnally (1967, 1978) suggests that an alpha coefficient of .60 to .70 is adequate for basic research. Table 9 presents the standardized coefficient alphas for the scales utilizing the initial scale items discussed in Chapter 3.

An analysis of the initial coefficient alphas suggested that serious reliability problems existed among several of the constructs, most notably communication strategies (alpha = .27 to .62) and influence strategies (alpha = .02 to .67). This may have been caused by the manner in which the questions were adapted from the original scales. In order to resolve this issue, a reexamination of the items that underlie the constructs was conducted. Specifically, three constructs will be addressed, including communication strategies, influence strategies, selling orientation-customer orientation. These three constructs were chosen because each were comprised of sub-scales that exhibited low initial reliabilities. Sales position characteristics will also be examined to identify the two components (i.e., selling function and information management) suggested by Moncrief (1986).

## ***Communication Strategies***

The first concept to exhibit low reliability was communication strategies. The communication strategy scale items were originally thought to be comprised of three distinct

Table 9. Initial Reliabilities

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Coefficient Alpha</u>
<b>Adaptive Behavior:</b>	
Sales Call Planning	.82
Communication Strategies	
-interaction orientation	.62
-task orientation	.38
-self orientation	.27
Information Gathering	.90
Influence Strategies	
-expertise	.34
-legitimate	.19
-referent	.13
-impression management	.02
-ingratiation management	.67
Customer Interaction	.83
<b>Situational Characteristics:</b>	
Sales Position Characteristic:	
Type of Representative	.83
Customer Buying Task:	
Modified Rebuy	.57
Straight Rebuy	.52
Salesperson/Customer Relationship:	
Long-term Relationship	.52
Cooperative Relationship	.52
Selling Orientation-Customer Orientation	.63
<b>Personal Resources:</b>	
Self-Monitoring	.70
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	.75
Public Self-Consciousness	.70
Private Self-Consciousness	.78
Social Anxiety	.55
Product Knowledge	.72
Customer Knowledge	.61
<b>Managerial Variables:</b>	
None of these variables were scaled items	

strategies by which a salesperson might communicate with a potential buyer. First, the interaction-oriented strategy should indicate that the salesperson would attempt to complete a sale by building upon the personal relationship that a salesperson has with the customer. Second, a task-orientation would indicate that the salesperson would be aggressive since completing the task was the overriding criteria. Third, a self-oriented strategy would suggest that the salesperson has little regard for the customer and would dominate the interaction (see Figure 18).

In order to examine the communication strategies construct, three procedures were undertaken. The first procedure was a factor analysis of the items. Utilizing a principal components factor method, three factors were identified (see Table 10). The three factors explained 30%, 13% and 11% of the variance in communication strategy, respectively. The first factor consisted of six items, four of which were the original items used to measure an interaction-orientation. The second factor consisted of three items, of which two of the items were originally used to measure a self-orientation. The third factor was a one-item factor that was originally a self-oriented scale item. Since the third factor was only one-item, and a one-item scale lacks construct validity, it was dropped from any further analysis.

The second procedure was to conduct a reliability analysis of the new constructs. The results indicated that the first factor had a coefficient alpha of .69. The second factor still exhibited an inadequate coefficient alpha (i.e.,  $\alpha = .32$ ), and was dropped from further analyses.

The third procedure consisted of an examination of the items that comprised the first factor. Since a reliability analysis indicated that item number 7 was lowering the reliability of the overall construct, it was deleted from the final analyses. The result of the three procedures was a five-item measure of communication strategy (see Figure 19). The five items have been renamed as a "commitment-orientation" scale because the salesperson is indicating a desire to satisfy a commitment to the customer, job, and self. A re-analysis of the questions indicated that they were worded in a manner that identifies the type of communication strategy the salesperson most frequently utilized. A more appropriate

Question to Respondent: Circle the number which more closely indicates how you interact with your current customers.

Original Scale Items: Interaction Communication Strategy  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

I genuinely enjoy helping customers. (1)  
I am interested in the buyer not only as a customer,  
but also as a person. (2)  
My customers find me easy to talk with. (4)  
I try to establish a personal relationship with my  
customers. (7)

Original Scale Items: Task Communication Strategy  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

I work hard to complete the sale. (3)  
My primary concern is to help the customer make a  
purchase. (6)  
I want to do the job well. (9)

Original Scale Items: Self-Oriented Communication Strategy  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

I am more interested in myself than in the customer. (5)  
I am more interested in listening to the customer  
than presenting my information (r) (8)  
I usually dominate the conversation. (10)

Legend: r= recoded  
original item position in parenthesis

Figure 18. Original Scale Items Used To Measure the Three  
Types of Communication Strategies

Table 10. Results of Principal Components Analysis on Communication Strategies

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
CSTYLE 1	<u>0.797</u>	-0.079	0.112
CSTYLE 2	<u>0.776</u>	-0.068	0.194
CSTYLE 3	-0.372	<u>0.622</u>	-0.184
CSTYLE 4	<u>0.635</u>	0.263	-0.335
CSTYLE 5	<u>0.756</u>	0.197	-0.083
CSTYLE 6	-0.128	0.036	<u>0.833</u>
CSTYLE 7	<u>0.508</u>	0.013	-0.201
CSTYLE 8	0.371	0.456	0.092
CSTYLE 9	-0.049	<u>0.760</u>	0.305
CSTYLE 10	<u>0.517</u>	-0.198	0.304
Eigenvalue	3.035	1.333	1.141
Proportion	0.303	0.133	0.114
Cumulative	0.303	0.436	0.550



interpretation of these results suggests that the salesperson's typical communication strategy has been identified and not a behavior that is adaptive. Once this was discerned, it became apparent that the "commitment" on the part of the salesperson was more of a personal orientation. Therefore, it was decided that this construct no longer adequately represented adaptive behavior, and "commitment-orientation" was repositioned within the Adaptive Selling Behavior Model as a personal resource.

### ***Influence Strategies***

The second concept to exhibit unreliable scales was influence strategies. The measurement instrument utilized the influence strategy scale developed by Spiro and Perreault (1979). It was originally thought that salespeople would utilize five distinct influence strategies. The five influence strategies included expertise, legitimate, referent, impression management, and integration management. First, expertise influence suggested the use of specific information (e.g., technical information) concerning the company's offering. Second, legitimate influence suggested that the salesperson would emphasize personal reputation and experience. Third, referent influence was built upon the salesperson's personal affiliation with the customer. Fourth, impression management was identified as a manipulation by the salesperson to create a false impression. Fifth, ingratiation influence would be indicated by the salesperson's use of personal favors to create an obligation on the part of the customer. (See Figure 20 for the original scale items.)

As was identified in Table 9, the reliabilities of these five influence strategies was extremely low. The reliabilities ranged from  $\alpha = .02$  (i.e., impression management) to  $\alpha = .67$  (ingratiation management). Due to the lack of reliable measures, a re-examination of the items that comprise the various influence strategies was undertaken. Following the same procedures used in the analysis of communication strategies, the

Question to Respondent: Circle the number which more closely indicates how you interact with your current customers.

Final Scale Items for Communication Strategy  
Renamed: Commitment Orientation  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

I genuinely enjoy helping customers. (1)  
I am interested in the buyer not only as a customer,  
but also as a person. (2)  
My customers find me easy to talk with. (4)  
I am more interested in myself than in the customer. (5)  
I usually dominate the conversation. (10)

Legend: original item position in parenthesis

Figure 19. Final Scale Items Used To Measure  
Commitment Orientation

Question to Respondent: How might you influence your current customers to purchase your product.

Original Scale Items for Expertise Influence Strategy  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

- I try to influence my customers by drawing on my expertise concerning the product. (1)
- I use more general than detailed facts when trying to sell my customers. (7)
- I discuss quite a bit of technical information with my customers. (12)

Original Scale Items for Legitimate Influence Strategy  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

- I stress the general quality of my products relative to that of other suppliers. (3)
- I do not stress my reputation with my customers (r) (9)
- I stress my company's reputation to my customers. (13)

Original Scale Items for Referent Influence Strategy  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

- I do not use my friendly relationship with my customers to my advantage. (r) (6)
- I do not use my friendship with my customers to get to place orders with me. (r) (10)
- My customers are aware that I expect special consideration because of our friendship. (r) (11)

Legend: r= recoded  
original item position in parenthesis

Figure 20. Original Scale Items Used To Measure the Three Types of Influence Strategies

Original Scale Items for Impression Management  
Influence Strategy

(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

I exaggerate the extent to which I can bend company policy  
to help my customers. (3)

Some of my comments appear to be made casually, but they  
are actually 'planted' with the intent of gaining  
favorable impressions. (5)

In some situations I try to give the impression that I do  
not have the authority to act on one of their requests.  
(r) (15)

Original Scale Items for Ingratiation Influence Strategy

(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

I go out of my way to do personal favors for my customers  
so that they will be indebted to me. (4)

I imply that I do special favors for them that I generally  
do not do for other customers. (8)

I make efforts to provide them with promotional items so  
that they feel an obligation to me. (14)

Legend: r= recoded

original item position in parenthesis

Figure 20. Original Scale Items Used To Measure the Three  
Types of Influence Strategies (con't)

influence strategy scale items were factor analyzed by themselves, the individual factors were examined, and the items within the factors were examined.

First, the principal components method, factor analysis, identified only four factors, not the originally conceived five factor solution (see Table 11). The four factor solution was examined utilizing eigenvalue weights, and the degree to which each factor explained the variance within the influence strategies construct. The first factor had a considerably higher eigenvalue compared to factors 2, 3, and 4. The first factor also explained 23% of the variance within the influence strategies construct, compared to factors 2, 3, and 4 (i.e., proportion of variance explained by factor 2 = 13%, factor 3 = 12%, and factor 4 = 7%). Since factor 4 was a one-item solution, and would lack construct validity, it was dropped from further analysis.

The second procedure consisted of a reliability analysis of the new scales that were created through the examination of the factor loadings. During this analysis, two of the scale items (i.e., 15 and 7, see Table 11) were deleted from further analysis because of their low or inconsistent factor loadings. The result of this procedure was the identification of three distinct and more reliable scales. The first scale had the highest coefficient alpha of .78, followed by scale 2 (i.e., alpha = .60) and scale 3 (alpha = .66). Since their alphas were greater than .60 and they provided an indication of influence types these items were retained for further analyses.

The third procedure consisted of an examination of the individual items that comprised the three scales (see Figure 21). Since the three scales were sufficiently reliable, the items were scrutinized for purposes of renaming the constructs. The first scale is comprised of five items that were originally part of the impression management, ingratiation management, and referent scales. This factor has been renamed as a "manipulation-orientation" type of influence due to its subtle emphasis on controlling the customer's behavior. The second factor is comprised of scale items that were originally part of the expertise and legitimate scales. This factor was renamed as a "product-orientation" type of influence strategy. The second scale pivots around the salesperson's knowledge of the product quality, technical

Table 11. Results of Principal Components Analysis on Influence Strategies

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
INSTR 1	0.271	<u>0.542</u>	0.059	0.179
INSTR 2	0.343	<u>0.629</u>	0.095	-0.229
INSTR 3	<u>0.563</u>	-0.394	0.092	0.230
INSTR 4	<u>0.684</u>	-0.205	0.358	0.009
INSTR 5	<u>0.709</u>	0.044	0.040	0.116
INSTR 6	-0.230	-0.010	<u>0.621</u>	0.264
INSTR 7	-0.280	0.419	0.111	<u>0.644</u>
INSTR 8	<u>0.657</u>	-0.284	0.106	-0.012
INSTR 9	-0.258	-0.073	<u>0.783</u>	-0.166
INSTR 10	-0.361	-0.072	<u>0.711</u>	-0.118
INSTR 11	<u>0.627</u>	-0.311	0.043	0.020
INSTR 12	0.375	0.468	0.113	0.332
INSTR 13	0.281	<u>0.653</u>	0.072	-0.381
INSTR 14	<u>0.676</u>	0.135	0.170	-0.205
INSTR 15	-0.291	0.010	0.049	-0.292
Eigenvalue	3.392	1.925	1.728	1.060
Proportion	0.226	0.128	0.115	0.071
Cumulative	0.226	0.354	0.469	0.540

information associated with the product, and the company's reputation that is built upon physical products or the service offered to customers. The third scale is comprised of three items, two from the original referent scale and one from the legitimate scale. The third scale was renamed "self-orientation" influence. This type of influence evolved from the items emphasis on the salesperson's use of personal friendship or reputation to attain a desirable outcome.

During the identification of the three types of influence, close examination of the items that comprised the constructs revealed that the questions were worded in a manner that did not adequately provide an indication of the salesperson making a choice among the influence strategies during planning. Salespeople were asked to express a degree of usage for all of the influence types. Since comparison of influence strategies across customer interactions would require salespeople to indicate the type of influence strategy utilized in a particular situation (e.g., a scenario), it was decided that the influence strategy that had the highest score would be taken as an indication of the salesperson's personal orientation for influence strategy use. Therefore, the original concept of influence strategy has been redefined as an influence orientation, and analyzed as a component of the personal resources category.

### ***Selling Orientation - Customer Orientation (SOCO)***

The SOCO scale used in this study was adapted from the scale created by Saxe and Weitz (1982). In their article they suggested that the SOCO scale was comprised of two components. The first factor was a customer orientation factor and the second factor, not named by Saxe and Weitz (1982), separated positively from negatively scaled items. Since the second factor was not interpretable for the present study, only the "customer-oriented" scale items were retained for further analysis (see Figure 22). By deleting scale items that related to the second factor, the coefficient alpha increased to .77. This new construct focuses on measuring the degree of customer orientation, and the selling orientation component is no

Question to Respondent: How might you influence your current customers to purchase your product.

Final Scale Items for Manipulation Influence Orientation  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

- I stress the general quality of my products relative to that of other suppliers. (3)
- I go out of my way to do personal favors for my customers so that they will be indebted to me. (4)
- Some of my comments appear to be made casually, but they are actually 'planted' with the intent of gaining favorable impressions. (5)
- I imply that I do special favors for them that I generally do not do for other customers. (8)
- My customers are aware that I expect special consideration because of our friendship. (r) (11)
- I make efforts to provide them with promotional items so that they feel an obligation to me. (14)

Final Scale Items for Company Influence Orientation  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

- I try to influence my customers by drawing on my expertise concerning the product. (1)
- I stress the general quality of my products relative to that of other suppliers. (2)
- I discuss quite a bit of technical information with my customers. (12)
- I stress my company's reputation to my customers. (13)

Original Scale Items for Self Influence Orientation  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

- I do not use my friendly relationship with my customers to my advantage. (r) (6)
- I do not stress my reputation with my customers (r) (9)
- I do not use my friendship with my customers to get to place orders with me. (r) (10)

Legend: r= recoded  
original item position in parenthesis

Figure 21. Final Scale Items Used To Measure the Three Types of Influence Orientations



Question to Respondent: How often do you behave as described in the statement.

Final Scale Items for Customer Orientation Scale  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

I try to get my customers to discuss their needs with me (1)

I try to help my customers achieve their goals. (3)

I try to keep the customer's best interest in mind. (4)

I try to achieve my goals by satisfying customers. (6)

Legend: r= recoded  
original item position in parenthesis

Figure 22. Final Scale Items Used To Measure  
Customer Orientation Variable  
(i.e. a Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
measure)

longer suggested by the final items that comprise this scale. A greater customer orientation suggests a closer relationship between the salesperson and customer. The new scale has been renamed "customer orientation," and the selling orientation connotation has been removed.

### ***Sales Position Characteristics***

During the development of the measurement instrument, the sales position variable was designed as a unitary construct to capture information concerning the type of sales representative (i.e., trade servicer or order taker). Moncrief (1986) had indicated that trade servicers were more likely to perform selling activities and exhibit a greater degree of information management. It was originally hypothesized that a trade servicer would score higher on the original scale items. The analysis of the initial reliabilities indicated that the unitary construct could be broken out into two separate scales (see Figure 23). The first scale has been renamed "selling activities" (coefficient and alpha = .85), the second scale as "information management" (coefficient alpha = .63). In addition to these two separate scales, individual surveys were also coded as either trade servicer or order taker, providing a second check of the representative type.

### **Final Reliabilities**

Once the aforementioned scales were re-examined, the remaining scale reliabilities were improved through the deletion of one or two items. For the present study and further analyses, the final coefficient alphas, presented in Table 12, ranged from .52 (i.e., information gathering) to .90 (straight rebuy customer buying task). The final scale items retained for measurement purposes are presented in the following figures: Figure 24--Salesperson

Question to Respondent: How frequently do you perform the following activities.

Final Scale Items for Selling Activities Scale  
(scale: 1= Very Infrequently; 7= Very Frequently)

I search out leads. (1)  
I plan selling activities. (2)  
I plan sales presentations. (3)

Final Scale Items for Information Management Scale  
(scale: 1= Very Infrequently; 7= Very Frequently)

I check in with supervisors on a regular basis. (4)  
I provide technical information to the customer. (5)

Legend: original item position in parenthesis

Figure 23. Final Scale Items Used To Measure  
Sales Position Characteristics

Planning Process (i.e., sales call planning and information gathering); Figure 25--Customer Interaction; Sales Position variables (i.e., selling activities and information management) were previously presented in Figure 23; Figure 26--Customer Buying Task (i.e., modified rebuy and straight rebuy); Figure 27--Salesperson/Customer Relationship (i.e., long-term relationship and cooperative relationship, customer orientation was presented in Figure 22); Figure 28--Personal Resources (i.e., self-monitoring, motivation to adapt behavior, public self-consciousness, private self-consciousness, social anxiety, product knowledge, and customer knowledge, commitment orientation previously presented in Figure 19, influence orientations previously presented in Figure 21). The next section will discuss the range of the independent and dependent variables.

## ***Range of Independent and Dependent Variables***

Prior to testing the hypotheses, an examination of the independent and dependent variable means for all the respondents was undertaken for purposes of identifying important variables (see Table 13). Utilizing the constructs of interest to this study (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer buying task, salesperson/customer relationship, personal resources, managerial variables, adaptive behavior variables, and performance variables) the following results were highlighted. First, both of the sales position characteristics were performed frequently by the respondents (i.e., selling activities mean=5.17 and information management mean=5.49; scaled 1 to 7). Second, as expected, more straight rebuys (i.e., mean=5.57; scaled 1 to 7) occur compared to modified rebuys (i.e., mean=3.89; scaled 1 to 7). Third, the salesperson/customer relationships are perceived to be strong (i.e., all three scales had a mean greater than 6 on a 7 point scale). Fourth, the salespeople are committed to their companies and customers (i.e., commitment orientation mean=6.6; scaled 1 to 7), and less likely to use manipulation as an influence (i.e., manipulation influence mean=3.07; scaled

Table 12. Final Reliabilities

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Coefficient Alpha</u>
<b>Adaptive Behavior:</b>	
Sales Call Planning	.82
Information Gathering	.90
Customer Interaction	.83
<b>Situational Characteristics:</b>	
<b>Sales Position Characteristics:</b>	
Selling Activities	.85
Information Management	.63
<b>Customer Buying Task:</b>	
Modified Rebuy	.57
Straight Rebuy	.52
<b>Salesperson/Customer Relationship:</b>	
Long-term Relationship	.61
Cooperative Relationship	.60
Customer Orientation	.77
<b>Personal Resources:</b>	
Commitment orientation	.76
Manipulation influence orientation	.78
Company influence orientation	.60
Self influence orientation	.66
Self-Monitoring	.73
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	.75
Public Self-Consciousness	.70
Private Self-Consciousness	.78
Social Anxiety	.72
Product Knowledge	.84
Customer Knowledge	.61
<b>Managerial Variables:</b>	
None of these variables were scaled items	

Question to Respondent: Circle the number which best indicates how you would prepare your sales calls for your current customers.

Final Scale Items for Sales Call Planning  
(scale: 1= Very Infrequently; 7= Very Frequently)

- Before I make a sales call, I evaluate the specific information needs of the buyer I will be meeting. (1)
- Before a sales call, I consider unique questions the buyer is likely to ask about my company or my products. (2)
- Before a sales call, I review the details of product line information which may have special interest or particular value to the buyer. (3)
- In gathering information for a sales call, I reconstruct the details of the last call on the account. (4)
- Before making a sales call, I collect information the the accounts's past purchase patterns. (5)
- Before a sales call, I consciously try to anticipate the events which are likely to occur in the call. (6)

Question to Respondent: The following questions are concerned with the information you would gather prior to a sales call.

Final Scale Items for Information Gathering Scale  
(scale: 1= Almost Never; 7= Almost Always)

- I gather information concerning:
- how my customers might react to my company's prices. (1)
  - changes in prices of my customers' goods. (2)
  - introductions of my competitor's new products or product modifications. (3)
  - how my customers might react to my company. (4)
  - changes in my customers' product offerings. (5)
  - my competitors' sales force strategies. (6)
  - my competitors' distribution policies. (7)
  - how my customers might react to my company's product. (8)
  - changes in my customers' market(s). (9)
  - my competitors' pricing strategies. (10)
  - my customers' expansion plans. (11)

Legend: original item position in parenthesis

Figure 24. Final Scale Items Used To Measure  
Salesperson Planning Process Variables  
(for current job)

Question to Respondent: Once you have begun speaking to a customer, how likely is it that you would vary the following part of your sales plan.

Final Scale Items for Customer Interaction  
(scale: 1= Very Unlikely; 7= Very Likely)

The type of information presented to the customer. (1)  
How the information would be presented to the customer. (2)  
The type of new information to gather from the customer.  
(3)  
The type of influence used to get the customer to purchase  
your product. (4)

Legend: original item position in parenthesis

Figure 25. Final Scale Items Used To Measure  
Customer Interaction (for current job)

Question to Respondent: Indicate the degree to which your customers may be characterized by the statement.

Final Scale Items for Modified Rebuy  
(scale: 1= Almost None; 7= Almost All)

My customers request information prior to closing a sale. (1)

My customers consider alternative suppliers before purchasing from me. (3)

My customers have purchased products similar to my company's offering, but have not purchased from me. (4)

Final Scale Items for Straight Rebuy  
(scale: 1= Almost None; 7= Almost All)

My customers are already familiar with how my product sells in their store(s). (2)

My customers purchase the same products from me on a continuing basis. (5)

My customers have a great deal of experience purchasing the products I sell. (6)

Legend: original item position in parenthesis

Figure 26. Final Scale Items Used To Measure Customer Buying Task (for current job)



Question to Respondent: Indicate the degree to which the statement is characteristic of your current sales situations.

Final Scale Items for Long-term Relationship  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

My customers trust me. (2)  
My satisfied customers will buy from me again (3)

Final Scale Items for Cooperative Relationship  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

The interests of my customers and myself conflict in this business. (r) (5)  
My customers expect pressure from me. (r) (6)

Legend: r = recoded item  
original item position in parenthesis

Figure 27. Final Scale Items Used To Measure Salesperson/Customer Relationship

Question to Respondent: Indicate the degree to which the statements are characteristic of yourself.

Final Scale Items for Self-Monitoring  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

- (r) (1) At a party I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
- I put on a show to impress or entertain others. (2)
- I would probably make a good actor. (3)
- I change my behavior to suit different people and different situations. (5)
- In a group of people I am the center of attention. (6)

Final Scale Items for Motivation to Adapt Behavior  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

- I try to pay attention to the reactions of others to my behavior in order to avoid being out of place. (1)
- It's important to me to fit into the group I'm with. (2)
- At parties I usually try to behave in a manner that makes me fit in. (3)
- If I am the least bit uncertain as to how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues. (4)

Legend: r = recoded item  
original item position in parenthesis

\* Commitment Orientation and Influence Orientations were presented in Tables 19 and 21, respectively.

Figure 28. Final Scale Items Used To Measure Personal Resources

Question to Respondent: Indicate the degree to which the statements are characteristic of yourself.

Final Scale Items for Public Self-Consciousness  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

I'm concerned about the way I present myself. (1)  
I'm self-consciousness about the way I look. (2)  
I usually worry about making a good impression. (3)  
I'm concerned about what other people think of me. (4)  
I'm usually aware of my appearance. (5)

Final Scale Items for Private Self-Consciousness  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

I'm always trying to figure myself out. (6)  
I reflect about myself a lot. (7)  
I'm generally attentive to my inner feelings. (8)  
I'm constantly examining my motives. (9)  
I'm alert to changes in my mood. (10)

Final Scale Items for Social Anxiety  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

It takes me time to overcome my shyness in new situations.  
(11)  
I get embarrassed very easily. (12)

Legend: original item position in parenthesis

Figure 2B. Final Scale Items Used To Measure  
Personal Resources (con't)

Question to Respondent: Indicate the degree to which the statements are characteristic of yourself.

Final Scale Items for Product Knowledge  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

- I am aware of new company offerings. (2)
- I am aware of quality improvements which occur among the products I sell (3)
- I am aware of the improvements in the features of the products I sell. (4)

Final Scale Items for Customer Knowledge  
(scale: 1= Usually False; 7= Usually True)

- I spend time learning about my customer's product offerings. (1)
- I am aware of the length of experience that the customer has with their company. (2)
- I learn about the customer's buying habits. (3)
- I am aware of any financial difficulties my customers might be having. (4)

Legend: original item position in parenthesis

Figure 28. Final Scale Items Used To Measure  
Personal Resources (con't)

1 to 7). Fifth, the average number of accounts is approximately 78 with few being new customers (i.e., percentage of new customers mean=12). Sixth, most of the salespeople indicated that they adapt behavior (i.e., scores on adaptive behavior variables ranged from 4.32 to 5.18; scaled 1 to 7). Seventh, compared to other salespeople performing similar jobs, the respondents indicated that their sales volume was higher than their colleagues (i.e., relative sales volume for 1987-88=7.3 on a 10 point scale). In addition, the means are provided for each sales position (i.e., trade servicer and order taker), see Table 14. Results indicate that the means across groups are within one standard deviation of each other. The next section will discuss the significant correlations among the variables.

## ***Interpretation of Correlations***

In order to provide an introduction for the hypothesis testing to follow, pairwise correlations were analyzed. Pairwise correlations were utilized to provide the maximal number of observations. This analysis was conducted by examining five separate correlation matrixes that include the situational variables, adaptive behavior variables, performance variables, situational variables by adaptive behavior variables, and situational and adaptive behavior by performance variables (see Tables 15 to 19).

First, the correlations among the situational variables indicated that 93 of the possible 253 correlations were significant at  $\alpha = .05$  (see Table 15). Of the 93 significant correlations, 55 were inter-correlations within the five constructs used to distinguish the various types of situational characteristics (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer buying task, salesperson/customer relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables). Thirty-four of the significant correlations were between the situational characteristics. Most of these correlations involved either sales position characteristics or customer buying task variables with personal resources, salesperson/customer relationship,

Table 13. Means and Standard Deviations for All Respondents

<u>Variable_Name</u>	<u>Mean</u>		<u>Standard Deviation</u>
<b>Sales Position Characteristics:</b>			
Selling Activities	5.19	a	1.56
Information Management	5.47	a	1.36
<b>Customer Buying Task:</b>			
Modified Rebuy	3.89	a	1.23
Straight Rebuy	5.57	a	0.83
<b>Salesperson/Customer Relationship:</b>			
Long-term relationships	6.69	a	0.44
Cooperative Relationships	6.11	a	1.18
Customer Orientation	6.42	a	0.62
<b>Personal Resources:</b>			
Commitment orientation	6.58	a	0.47
Manipulation influence orientation	3.07	a	1.23
Company influence orientation	5.43	a	0.95
Self influence orientation	4.41	a	1.45
Self-monitoring	3.31	a	1.26
Motivation to adapt behavior	4.56	a	1.40
Public Self-consciousness	5.45	a	1.22
Private Self-consciousness	4.22	a	1.35
Social Anxiety	3.13	a	1.67
Product knowledge	5.83	a	0.95
Customer knowledge	5.62	a	0.97

a= scaled 1 to 7; b= scaled 1 to 10; c= not scaled

Table 13. Means and Standard Deviations for All Respondents (con't)

Managerial Variables:			
Number of accounts	77.73	c	74.01
Relative number of accounts	3.96	a	1.77
Percentage of new customers	11.86	c	14.33
Percentage on straight salary	43.50	c	46.16
Adaptive Behavior Variables:			
Sales call planning	5.18	a	1.16
Information gathering	4.89	a	1.20
Customer interaction	4.32	a	1.42
Performance Variables:			
Relative sales volume for 1987	7.07	b	2.47
Relative sales volume for 1988	7.33	b	2.32
Relative sales volume--total	7.30	b	2.23
Relative sales quota for 1988	7.46	b	2.02
Relative selling expenses 1988	5.56	b	2.38
Average number of closes/week	52.39	c	34.77
Average number of calls/week	58.60	c	30.15
Relative number of closes/week	4.25	a	1.53
Relative number of calls/week	4.13	a	1.68

a= scaled 1 to 7; b= scaled 1 to 10; c= not scaled

Table 14. Means and Standard Deviations by Sales Positions

Variable_Name	Trade Servicer		Order Taker	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Sales Position Characteristics:</b>				
Selling Activities	5.5a	1.1	3.5	2.1
Information Management	5.7a	1.1	4.3	2.0
<b>Customer Buying Task:</b>				
Modified Rebuy	3.9a	1.3	3.8	1.1
Straight Rebuy	5.5a	0.8	5.7	0.8
<b>Salesperson/Customer Relationship:</b>				
Long-term relationships	6.7a	0.4	6.5	0.6
Cooperative Relationships	6.1a	1.2	6.3	1.1
Customer Orientation	6.5a	0.6	6.2	0.7
<b>Personal Resources:</b>				
Commitment orientation	6.6a	0.4	6.6	0.6
Manipulation influence	3.2a	1.2	2.5	1.3
Company influence orientation	5.5a	0.8	4.8	1.2
Self influence orientation	4.4a	1.4	4.6	1.7
Self-monitoring	3.3a	1.3	3.3	1.1
Motivation to adapt behavior	4.6a	1.4	4.6	1.3
Public Self-consciousness	5.4a	1.2	5.7	1.1
Private Self-consciousness	4.1a	1.3	4.8	1.3
Social Anxiety	3.0a	1.6	3.8	1.6
Product knowledge	5.9a	0.9	5.5	1.0
Customer knowledge	5.8a	0.7	4.8	1.4

a= scaled 1 to 7; b= scaled 1 to 10; c= not scaled



Table 14. Means and Standard Deviations by Sales Positions  
(con't)

<b>Managerial Variables:</b>				
Number of accounts	75.4c	73.4	100.0	86.7
Relative number of accounts	3.9a	1.7	4.4	1.9
Percentage of new customers	12.6c	14.8	5.4	6.5
Percentage on straight salary	39.3c	45.5	72.9	40.3
<b>Adaptive Behavior Variables:</b>				
Sales call planning	5.3a	1.1	4.8	1.4
Information gathering	4.9a	1.1	4.4	1.4
Customer interaction	4.4a	1.4	4.0	1.5
<b>Performance Variables:</b>				
Relative sales volume for 1987	7.1b	2.5	6.9	2.2
Relative sales volume for 1988	7.3b	2.3	7.3	2.0
Relative sales volume--total	7.3b	2.2	7.0	2.2
Relative sales quota for 1988	7.6b	2.0	7.4	2.0
Relative selling expenses 1988	5.5b	2.4	6.1	2.5
Average number of closes/week	49.6c	29.6	80.0	63.1
Average number of calls/week	57.3c	26.9	68.9	48.5
Relative number of closes/week	4.2a	1.5	4.3	1.8
Relative number of calls/week	4.1a	1.7	4.4	1.7

a= scaled 1 to 7; b= scaled 1 to 10; c= not scaled

Table 15. Correlations Among Situation Variables

	RETYPE	RTYP1	RTYP2	MR	SR	L/T REL	CO. REL	CU OR	COM. OR	MAN. OR	CO. OR.
RETYPE	1.000										
RTYP1	.500*	1.000									
RTYP2	.382*	.739*	1.000								
MR	.030	.079	.135*	1.000							
SR	-.082	-.021	.035	-.092	1.000						
L/T REL.	.085	.213*	.341*	-.102	.163*	1.000					
CO. REL.	-.057	.006	.043	-.013	.063	.164*	1.000				
CU OR.	.143*	.324*	.389*	.007	.130*	.419*	.221*	1.000			
COM. OR.	-.013	.240*	.349*	-.060	.245*	.348*	.192*	.532*	1.000		
MAN. OR.	.221*	.191*	.136*	.032	-.046	-.033	-.418*	-.072	-.030	1.000	
CO. OR.	.077*	.453*	.569*	-.017	.117	.323*	.008	.420*	.464*	.260*	1.000
SELF OR.	-.065	-.005	.008	-.077	.025	.017	.157*	.010	.016	-.160*	-.102
PKNO	.171*	.475*	.563*	-.005	.184*	.389*	.108	.409*	.374*	.082	.420*
CKNO	.402*	.632*	.550*	-.004	.124	.319*	.016	.415*	.331*	.207*	.498*
SELF-MON.	-.002	.018	.065	.086	-.091	-.106	-.245*	-.043	-.025	.322*	.132*
MOTIVAT.	-.001	.021	.094	.040	.044	.063	-.149*	.037	-.035	.254*	.144*
PUB. SC.	-.077	.037	.104	.073	.080	.090	-.094	.135*	.079	.183*	.154*
PRI. SC.	-.189*	-.040	-.086	.202*	.084	-.013	-.198*	.023	-.014	.167*	-.050
SOC. ANX.	-.186*	-.298*	-.280*	.115	-.081	-.163*	-.167*	-.160*	-.219*	.088	-.376*
NUM. ACC.	-.097	-.013	-.034	.027	.080	-.042	-.141*	-.152*	-.094	.030	-.018
REL. ACC.	-.103	-.011	-.061	.007	.008	-.055	-.066	-.036	-.026	.043	-.109
NEW CUST.	.158*	.336*	.202*	.103	-.144*	.301	-.048	.085	.140*	.089	.170*
STR. SAL.	.240*	-.036	-.084	.121	-.120	.077	.066	-.002	-.032	-.036	-.118

Legend:

\* = Significant at alpha=.05

Full Legend on Following Page

Table 15. Correlations Among Situation Variables (cont.)

	SELF OR	PKNO	CKNO	SELFMON	MOTIVAT	PUB. SC	PRI. SC	SOC.ANX	NUM.ACC	REL.ACC	NEWCUST
SELF OR.	1.000										
PKNO	-.001	1.000									
CKNO	-.078	.555	1.000								
SELF-MON.	-.034	-.107	.062	1.000							
MOTIVAT.	-.098	.034	.049	.318*	1.000						
PUB. SC.	-.060	.084	.003	-.003	.300*	1.000					
PRI. SC.	-.147*	-.009	-.000	.299*	.269*	.282*	1.000				
SOC. ANX.	.004	-.157*	-.193*	-.153*	-.037	.217*	.241*	1.000			
NUM. ACC.	.087	-.065	-.090	.067	.092	.011	-.042	-.065	1.000		
REL. ACC.	.085	.060	-.037	-.015	.044	-.030	-.0336	.121	.352*	1.000	
NEW CUST.	-.040	-.054	.127	.028	-.069	.082	.120	-.069	.038	-.127	1.000
STR. SAL.	.040	-.143*	-.059	.079	-.008	-.157*	.112	.031	-.082	-.187*	.238*

Legend:

- \* = Significant at alpha=.05
- Reptype = Type of Representative (0= Order Taker, 1= Trade Servicer)
- Rtyp1 = Selling Activities
- Rtyp2 = Information Management
- MR = Modified Rebuy customer buying situation
- SR = Straight Rebuy customer buying situation
- L/T REL. = Long-term Relationship
- Co. REL. = Cooperative Relationship
- CU OR. = Customer Orientation
- COM. OR. = Commitment Orientation
- MAN. OR. = Manipulation Influence Orientation
- CO. OR. = Company Influence Orientation
- SELF OR. = Self Influence Orientation
- PKNO = Product Knowledge
- CKNO = Customer Knowledge
- SELF-MON. = Self-Monitoring
- MOTIVAT. = Motivation to Adapt Behavior
- PUB. SC. = Public Self-Consciousness
- PRI. SC. = Private Self-Consciousness
- SOC. ANX. = Social Anxiety
- NUM. ACC. = Number of Accounts
- REL. ACC. = Relative Number of Accounts
- NEW CUST. = Percentage of New Customers
- STR. SAL. = Straight Salary

Table 16. Correlations Among Adaptive Behavior Variables

	Sales Call Planning	Information Gathering	Customer Interaction
Sales Call Planning	1.000		
Information Gathering	.490 *	1.000	
Customer Interaction	.072	.131 *	1.000

\* = significant at alpha=.05

Table 17. Correlations Among Performance Variables

	V87	V88	VTOT	SQ88	SEXP	CLOSE	NUMCAL	COMCAL	COMCLOS
V87	1.000								
V88	.791*	1.000							
VTOT	.952*	.940*	1.000						
SQ88	.596*	.710*	.676*	1.000					
SEXP	-.187*	-.102	-.148*	-.159*	1.000				
CLOSE	.190*	.192*	.199*	.108	-.111	1.000			
NUMCAL	.047	.081	.049	.084	-.089	.639*	1.000		
COMCAL	-.009	.034	.017	.142	.040	.265*	.339*	1.000	
COMCLOS	.219*	.375*	.294*	.312*	.159*	.275*	.144*	.474*	1.000

Legend:

- \* = Significant at alpha=.05
- V87 = Relative Sales Volume for 1987
- V88 = Relative Sales Volume for 1988
- VTOT = Relative Average Sales Volume for 1987 and 1988
- SQ88 = Relative Sales Quota for 1988
- SEXP = Relative Selling Expenses for 1988
- CLOSE = Number of Closes/week
- NUMCAL = Number of Calls/week
- COMCAL = Relative Number of Calls/week
- COMCLOS = Relative Number of Closes/week

Table 18. Correlation of Situational Variables to Adaptive Behavior Variables

	1	2	3
Type of Representative	.148*	.187*	.091
Selling Activities	.410*	.481*	.209*
Information Management	.367*	.475*	.190*
Modified Rebuy	.184*	.064	.149*
Straight Rebuy	-.039	.059	-.017
Long-term Relationship	.182*	.194*	-.039
Cooperative Relationship	-.008	-.018	-.105
Customer Orientation	.348*	.361*	.104
Commitment Orientation	.264*	.290*	.072
Manipulation Influence Orientation	.039	.161*	.177*
Company Influence Orientation	.292*	.472*	.166*
Self Influence Orientation	-.127	-.109	.038
Product Knowledge	.302*	.370*	.096
Customer Knowledge	.358*	.556*	.150*
Self-Monitoring	.064	-.038	.147*
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	.019	.094	.070
Public Self-Consciousness	.150*	.163*	.135*
Private Self-Consciousness	.152*	.062	.002
Social Anxiety	-.089	-.197*	-.099
Number of Accounts	-.013	-.000	.116
Relative Number of Accounts	.098	-.106	.003
Percentage of New Customers	.185*	.138*	.147*
Straight Salary	.056	-.067	.083

Legend:

- \* = Significant at alpha=.05
- 1 = Sales Call Planning
- 2 = Information Gathering
- 3 = Customer Interaction

Table 19. Correlation of Situational and Adaptive Behavior Variables By Performance Variables

	V87	V88	VTOT	SQ88	SEXP	CLOSE	NUMCAL	COMCAL	COMCLES
SCPLAN	-.036	-.033	-.045	-.010	.036	-.019	.0129	.073	.046
INF. SAT.	-.028	-.014	-.053	.040	.021	.020	.048	.002	-.036
CUST. INT.	-.003	-.052	-.001	-.135	.066	-.019	-.053	-.033	.071
REPTYPE	.017	.003	.031	.011	-.044	-.250*	-.121	-.058	-.015
RTYP1	.099	.086	.082	.140	.013	-.123	-.034	.026	.118
RTYP2	.136	.156*	.127	.142	.004	-.014	-.048	.012	.056
MR	-.112	-.196*	-.147	-.293*	-.044	-.166*	-.153*	-.086	-.166*
SR	-.030	.011	-.019	.126	-.111	.282*	.256*	.070	.040
L/T REL.	.126	.166*	.126	.190*	.048	.159*	.139*	.061	-.081
CO. REL.	-.024	.033	-.043	-.000	.115	.114	.116	.116	.023
CU OR.	.113	.116	.116	.137	.027	.074	.013	.086	.082
COM. OR.	.123	.119	.096	.126	.056	.025	-.020	.111	.092
MAN. OR.	.003	-.070	-.002	-.049	.038	-.128	-.110	.018	.120
CO. OR.	-.035	.018	-.035	.078	.010	-.054	-.014	.101	.107
SELF OR.	-.076	.053	-.046	-.089	.124	.083	.061	-.097	.087
PKNO	.180*	.186*	.166*	.256*	.078	.086	.093	.023	.099
CKNO	.142	.088	.129	.125	-.010	.026	-.004	.094	.137
SELF-MON.	.004	.008	.056	-.041	.101	-.201*	-.200*	.070	.055
MOTIVAT.	-.020	.024	-.012	.043	-.032	.116	.070	.081	.085
PUB. SC.	.059	.041	.021	.076	-.098	-.020	-.143*	-.080	.035
PRI. SC.	.154	.053	.137	.077	-.027	-.112	-.090	-.030	-.008
SOC. ANX.	.009	-.079	-.013	-.129	-.011	-.029	-.082	-.056	.038
NUM. ACC.	.109	.083	.080	.083	.042	.208*	.329*	.253*	.122
REL. ACC.	.217*	.322*	.274	.283*	.022	.286*	.281*	.408*	.481*
NEW DUST.	.007	-.033	-.005	-.158*	.093	-.256*	-.120	.045	.065
STR. SAL.	-.112	-.206*	-.130	-.263*	.194*	-.170*	-.112	-.058	-.195*

Legend: on next page.

Table 19. Correlation of Situational and Adaptive Behavior Variables  
By Performance Variables (con't)

Legend:

*	= Significant at alpha=.05
V87	= Relative Sales Volume for 1987
V88	= Relative Sales Volume for 1988
VTOT	= Relative Average Sales Volume for 1987 and 1988
SQ88	= Relative Sales Quota for 1988
SEXP	= Relative Selling Expenses for 1988
CLOSE	= Number of Closes/week
NUMCAL	= Number of Calls/week
COMCAL	= Relative Number of Calls/week
COMCLOS	= Relative Number of Closes/week
SCPLAN	= Sales Call Planning
INF GAT	= Information Gathering
CUST INT	= Customer Interaction
REPTYPE	= Type of Representative (0= Order Taker, 1= Trade Servicer)
RTYP1	= Selling Activities
RTYP2	= Information Management
MR	= Modified Rebuy customer buying situation
SR	= Straight Rebuy customer buying situation
L/T REL.	= Long-term Relationship
Co. REL.	= Cooperative Relationship
CU OR.	= Customer Orientation
COM. OR.	= Commitment Orientation
MAN. OR.	= Manipulation Influence Orientation
CO. OR.	= Company Influence Orientation
SELF OR.	= Self Influence Orientation
PKNO	= Product Knowledge
CKNO	= Customer Knowledge
SELF-MON.	= Self-Monitoring
MOTIVAT.	= Motivation to Adapt Behavior
PUB. SC.	= Public Self-Consciousness
FRI. SC.	= Private Self-Consciousness
SOC. ANX.	= Social Anxiety
NUM. ACC.	= Number of Accounts
REL. ACC.	= Relative Number of Accounts
NEW CUST.	= Percentage of New Customers
STR. SAL.	= Straight Salary



or managerial variables. Lastly, only four of the significant correlations were unexpected; these included commitment orientation and product influence with percentage of new customers, and product knowledge and public self-consciousness with percentage on straight salary.

Second, the correlations among the three adaptive behavior variables indicated that information gathering is correlated with both sales call planning and customer interaction (see Table 16). Surprisingly, sales call planning was not correlated with customer interaction.

Third, the correlations among the performance variables indicated that 24 of the 36 possible inter-correlations were significant (see Table 17). It was unexpected that the number of calls per week and relative number of calls per week were not significantly correlated with the relative sales volume variables.

Fourth, the correlations between the adaptive behavior and situational variables indicated that almost all of the five situational characteristics (i.e., sales call planning, customer buying task, salesperson/customer relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables) are related to each of the adaptive behavior variables (see Table 18). For several of the situational variable and adaptive behavior correlations, a significant relationship was not indicated. Specifically, the non-correlated situational variables included a cooperative relationship, the use of self influence, motivation to adapt behavior, the number of accounts, the comparative number of accounts, and the degree to which compensation is straight salary.

Fifth, the correlations between the situational and adaptive behavior variables with performance were disappointing (see Table 19). First, none of the adaptive behavior variables were correlated with performance. Second, of the situational characteristics, the customer buying task and the managerial variables provided more significant correlations (i.e.,  $p < .05$ ) than did three remaining situational characteristics (i.e., sales position characteristics, salesperson/customer relationship, and personal resources). Specifically, the number of significant correlations to performance included only 2 of the 27 correlations with the sales position characteristics, 4 of the 36 correlations with salesperson/customer relationship

variables, and 7 of the 99 correlations with personal resources. The next section will provide a brief introduction to the use of multiple regression prior to the testing of hypotheses 1 and 2.

## ***Multiple Regression and The Testing of Hypotheses 1 and 2.***

Multiple regression techniques were utilized for the identification of situational characteristics that would lead to increased adaptive behavior. This section will provide a brief explanation of the multicollinearity diagnostics and examine the multiple regression technique utilized in this study prior to the examination of the final multiple regression models.

In Chapter 3 it was hypothesized that several situational characteristics would lead to an increase in adaptive behavior (see Figure 9). Since the five situational characteristics (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer buying task, salesperson/customer relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables) are comprised of several variables, and these variables have shown evidence of significant inter-correlations, the inclusion of all of the independent variables may lead to multicollinearity. When multicollinearity exists among the independent variables, the beta estimates in the regular equation become biased. "Multicollinearity can seriously disturb the least squares fit, and in some situations, render the regression model almost useless" (Montgomery and Peck 1982, p. 149). In order to overcome the problems associated with multicollinearity, stepwise regression was used to identify the model which was most parsimonious

## **Multiple Regression Results for Hypotheses 1**

This section presents the multiple regression results used to test hypothesis 1. The process that was utilized in creating the regression model involved two steps. First, stepwise regression to identify the variables that were significantly related to the dependent variable being tested. Second, multicollinearity diagnostics aided in the removal of regressors that were linearly dependent with each other. Utilizing these two steps, significant ( $p < .05$ ) models were developed. The test of hypothesis 1 is discussed next.

### ***Test of Hypotheses 1 Using Multiple Regression***

The analysis of hypothesis 1 began with an examination of the relationship between each of the five situational characteristics (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer buying task, salesperson/customer relationship, personal resources, and managerial variables) and the adaptive behavior variables. An overview of the role of the situational variables in the multiple regression analyses of adaptive behavior can be found in figure 29. Initial results indicated that, individually, many of the situational characteristics explain a significant ( $p < .05$ ) amount of variance in the sales call planning and information gathering (see Table 20). Only two relationships were found not to be significant at the .05 level; these relationships were managerial variables as a predictor of sales call planning and the customer's buying task as a predictor of information gathering. The adaptive behavior variable, customer interaction, was not significantly explained by any of the situational characteristics (see Table 20).

Following these initial results, stepwise regression identified three multiple regression equations for the adaptive behavior variables (i.e., sales call planning, information gathering, and customer interaction) (see Table 21). First, three situational characteristics significantly (i.e.,  $p = .001$ ) explained 20% of the variance in sales call planning. The three variables

Adaptive Behavior Variable

Sales Call Information Customer  
 Planning Gathering Interaction

Selling Position Char.:			
Type of Representative			X
Selling Activities	X		
Information Management		X	
Customer Buy Task:			
Modified Rebuy	X		
Straight Rebuy			
Salesperson/Customer Relationship:			
Long-term Relationship			
Cooperative Relationship			
Customer Orientation			
Personal Resources:			
Commitment Orientation			
Manipulation Influence			X
Company Influence			
Self Influence			
Product Knowledge			
Customer Knowledge		X	
Self-Monitoring			
Motivation to Adapt			
Public Self-Consciousness		X	X
Private Self-Consciousness	X		
Social Anxiety			X
Managerial Variables:			
Number of Accounts			
Relative Number of Accounts			
Percentage of New Customers			
Percentage of Straight Salary			X

Legend: X= indicates a significant indicator of Adaptive Behavior utilizing Multiple Regression

Figure 29. Overview of Significant Situational Variables Used in Multiple Regressions of Adaptive Behavior

Table 20. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Adaptive Behavior

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Sales Call Planning

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .0001$ , Adjusted R-Square: .20

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-.144	.6991
Selling Activities	.328	.0004
Information Management	.141	.1536

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0363$ , Adjusted R-Square: .04

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	.189	.0107
Straight Rebuy	.052	.6452

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .0195$ , Adjusted R-Square: .05

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	.101	.6826
Cooperative Relationship	-.080	.3030
Customer Orientation	.496	.0043

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .0001$ , Adjusted R-Square: .22

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	-.074	.7976
Manipulation Influence	-.023	.7787
Company Influence	.060	.6363
Self Influence	-.103	.0951
Product Knowledge	-.032	.8105
Customer Knowledge	.331	.0216
Self-Monitoring	.033	.6673
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.108	.1110
Public Self-Consciousness	.219	.0057
Private Self-Consciousness	.202	.0038
Social Anxiety	-.006	.9215

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .4539$ , Adjusted R-Square: .003

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	.001	.4887
Relative Number of Accounts	-.029	.6421
Percentage of New Customers	.012	.1886
Percentage on Straight Salary	.001	.7401

Table 20. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Adaptive Behavior (con't)

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Information Gathering

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .0001$  , Adjusted R-Square: .30

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-.567	.1426
Selling Activities	.277	.0035
Information Management	.384	.0002

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0728$  , Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	.106	.1938
Straight Rebuy	.248	.0491

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .0066$ , Adjusted R-Square: .07

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	.238	.3845
Cooperative Relationship	-.026	.7549
Customer Orientation	.545	.0041

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .0001$ , Adjusted R-Square: .35

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	-.127	.6653
Manipulation Influence	-.006	.9456
Company Influence	.418	.0015
Self Influence	-.066	.2893
Product Knowledge	-.012	.9276
Customer Knowledge	.469	.0014
Self-Monitoring	-.205	.0082
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	.151	.0289
Public Self-Consciousness	.067	.3982
Private Self-Consciousness	.061	.3783
Social Anxiety	-.045	.4510

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0128$ , Adjusted R-Square: .07

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	-.001	.7636
Relative Number of Accounts	-.184	.0058
Percentage of New Customers	.019	.0493
Percentage on Straight Salary	.002	.1791

Table 20. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Adaptive Behavior (con't)

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Customer Interaction

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .1586$  , Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	.853	.1244
Selling Activities	.201	.1343
Information Management	-.123	.3990

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .1002$  , Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	.211	.0335
Straight Rebuy	.058	.7029

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .7223$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	-.388	.2541
Cooperative Relationship	.027	.7982
Customer Orientation	.047	.8412

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .2493$ , Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	-.302	.4894
Manipulation Influence	.142	.2616
Company Influence	-.181	.3431
Self Influence	.022	.8122
Product Knowledge	-.135	.5111
Customer Knowledge	.253	.2389
Self-Monitoring	.071	.5317
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.112	.2701
Public Self-Consciousness	.338	.0046
Private Self-Consciousness	-.100	.3551
Social Anxiety	-.202	.0237

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .7598$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	.001	.7267
Relative Number of Accounts	.084	.2986
Percentage of New Customers	.003	.7911
Percentage on Straight Salary	.001	.7564

include selling activities, modified rebuy buying situation, and private self-consciousness. Second, three situational variables were found to significantly (i.e.,  $p = .001$ ) explain 36% of the variance in the information gathering variable. These variables included customer knowledge, information management, and public self-consciousness. Third, the adaptive behavior variable, customer interaction, was significantly predicted ( $p = .0006$ ) by five of the situational variables. These variables included manipulation influence orientation, type of representative, social anxiety, public self-consciousness, and degree to which their compensation was based on straight salary. These five variables explain 8% of the variance in customer interaction.

In addition to the regression analyses, the multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed utilizing the 2 X 2 between groups factorial design. The two independent factors were the type of representative and customer buying task. The adaptive behavior variables (i.e., sales call planning and information gathering) from the scenario surveys were utilized because the scenario was the manipulation for the customer buying task. The MANOVA results were not significant ( $p > .05$ ), see Table 22. Since these results did indicate that type of representative might be significant if customer buying task was removed from the MANOVA analysis, a follow up MANOVA analysis was undertaken. The results, presented in Table 23, indicates that type of representative is a significant ( $p < .05$ ) indicator of adaptive behavior. The next section will present the multiple regression results used in the analysis of hypothesis 2.

**Summary:** The results of the stepwise multiple regression analyses on hypothesis 1 suggest that situational characteristics successfully predict adaptive behavior. The percentage of explained variation was 8% for customer interaction, 20% for sales call planning, and 36% for information gathering. The results of the MANOVA analyses indicated that the type of representative (i.e., sales position characteristic) is a significant indicator of adaptive behavior.



Table 21. Final Stepwise Regression Results of Situational Variables on Adaptive Behavior

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Sales Call Planning

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .20

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Selling Activities	.310	.0001
Private Self-Consciousness	.124	.0182
Modified Rebuy	.116	.0458

Adaptive Behavior: Information Gathering

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .36

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Customer Knowledge	.533	.0001
Information Management	.196	.0006
Public Self-Consciousness	.134	.0114

Adaptive Behavior: Customer Interaction

p = .0006, Adjusted R-Square: .08

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Manipulation Influence	.200	.0144
Type of Representative	.536	.0810
Social Anxiety	-.104	.0806
Public Self-Consciousness	.189	.0224
Percentage on Straight Salary	.005	.0351

Table 22. Multiple Analysis of Variance Results to Determine Effects of Type of Representative and Customer Buying Task on Salesperson Planning Process (utilizing the scenario data as the measure of Customer Buying Task)

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Sales Call Planning

p = .2440, Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>F-value</u>	<u>Prob. &gt; F</u>
Type of Representative	2.72	.1010
Customer Buying Task	.13	.7230

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Information Gathering

p = .0846, Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>F-value</u>	<u>Prob. &gt; F</u>
Type of Representative	3.71	.0557
Customer Buying Task	1.30	.2556

Table 23. Multiple Analysis of Variance Results to Determine Effects of Type of Representative on Salesperson Planning Process

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Sales Call Planning

p = .0316, Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>F-value</u>	<u>Prob. &gt; F</u>
Type of Representative	4.67	.0316

Adaptive Behavior Variable: Information Gathering

p = .0055, Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>F-value</u>	<u>Prob. &gt; F</u>
Type of Representative	7.84	.0055

## ***Test of Hypothesis 2 Using Multiple Regression***

Hypothesis 2 posited that adaptive behavior will lead to an increase in performance when situational characteristics are present (see Figure 10). The analysis of hypothesis 2 consisted of three steps. First, multiple regression equations with the adaptive behavior variables as independent variables were examined. Second, multiple regression identified the relationship between situational characteristics and adaptive behavior with performance.

The first step was to regress the adaptive behavior variables (i.e., sales call planning, information management, and customer interaction) on performance. The performance variables included relative sales volume for 1987 and 1988 (i.e., salespeople were asked to compare their performance to other salespeople in their company), the average of relative sales volume for 1987-88, relative sales quota for 1988, relative selling expenses for 1988, average number of closes per week, average number of calls per week, relative number of closes per week, and relative number of calls per week. The results of the multiple regression indicate that adaptive behavior is not significantly ( $p < .05$ ) related to performance (see Table 24).

The second step consisted of an examination of the role of the situational characteristics in explaining variance among the performance variables (see Table 25). The results indicate that the customer's buying task, managerial variables, or both were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) related to all of the performance variables. In addition, personal resources were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) related to relative sales quota and average number of calls and closes per week. Sales position characteristics were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) related to average number of calls and closes per week.

The third step consisted of stepwise regression techniques utilizing both situational and adaptive behavior variables. This regression technique identified equations that significantly ( $p < .05$ ) explain some of the variance in performance (see Table 26). These results indicate, as did step 1, that the adaptive behavior variables are not significantly related to performance. None of the adaptive behavior variables were included in any of the stepwise multiple

Table 24. Multiple Regression Results of Adaptive Behavior on Performance

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume for 1987

p = .9921, Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-.033	.8919
Information Gathering	.030	.8940
Customer Interaction	-.1031	.8530

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume for 1988

p = .9950, Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-.024	.9157
Information Gathering	-.018	.9313
Customer Interaction	.004	.9808

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume 1987&1988

p = .9958, Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-.029	.8983
Information Gathering	.006	.9764
Customer Interaction	-.014	.9287

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Quota 1988

p = .2547, Adjusted R-Square: .01

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-.051	.7955
Information Gathering	.225	.2084
Customer Interaction	-.224	.0917

Performance Variable: Relative Selling Expenses 1988

p = .9512, Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	.135	.5907
Information Gathering	-.047	.8357
Customer Interaction	.023	.8914

Table 24. Multiple Regression Results of Adaptive Behavior on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Average Number of Closes/Week

p = .6942, Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-2.84	.3786
Information Gathering	2.56	.3838
Customer Interaction	1.28	.5553

Performance Variable: Average Number of Calls/Week

p = .8428, Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-1.02	.7365
Information Gathering	1.96	.4798
Customer Interaction	1.01	.6236

Performance Variable: Relative Number of Closes/Week

p = .0651, Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-.113	.4059
Information Gathering	-.232	.0628
Customer Interaction	.087	.3425

Performance Variable: Relative Number of Calls/Week

p = .5191, Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Sales Call Planning	-.098	.5342
Information Gathering	-.136	.3449
Customer Interaction	.013	.9062

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume for 1987

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .5665$  , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-.386	.7023
Selling Activities	.230	.3470
Information Management	.081	.7601

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0492$  , Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.434	.0146
Straight Rebuy	-.010	.7188

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .5911$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	.415	.4975
Cooperative Relationship	-.196	.3093
Customer Orientation	.329	.4394

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .1705$ , Adjusted R-Square: .04

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	1.045	.1809
Manipulation Influence	-.057	.7994
Company Influence	-.759	.0274
Self Influence	-.057	.7323
Product Knowledge	.355	.3320
Customer Knowledge	.417	.2757
Self-Monitoring	-.033	.8721
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.150	.4074
Public Self-Consciousness	.005	.9827
Private Self-Consciousness	.248	.1797
Social Anxiety	-.030	.8507

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .1115$ , Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	-.003	.4673
Relative Number of Accounts	.331	.0217
Percentage of New Customers	.006	.7780
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.006	.2176

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume for 1988

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .8198$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-.293	.7531
Selling Activities	.095	.6751
Information Management	.109	.6560

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0160$ , Adjusted R-Square: .05

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.467	.0041
Straight Rebuy	-.033	.8948

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .6343$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	.322	.5673
Cooperative Relationship	-.189	.2871
Customer Orientation	.275	.4821

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .5723$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	-.040	.9561
Manipulation Influence	-.150	.4775
Company Influence	-.236	.4631
Self Influence	.109	.4843
Product Knowledge	.588	.0896
Customer Knowledge	.099	.7819
Self-Monitoring	.233	.2243
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.081	.6338
Public Self-Consciousness	-.119	.5451
Private Self-Consciousness	.222	.2013
Social Anxiety	.008	.9587

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0097$ , Adjusted R-Square: .08

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	-.002	.4587
Relative Number of Accounts	.394	.0029
Percentage of New Customers	.001	.9551
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.008	.0837



Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume 1987-1988

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .6669$  , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-.339	.7129
Selling Activities	.162	.4675
Information Management	.095	.6950

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0201$  , Adjusted R-Square: .05

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.450	.0053
Straight Rebuy	-.065	.7907

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .5716$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	.368	.5089
Cooperative Relationship	-.193	.2739
Customer Orientation	.302	.4363

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .3817$ , Adjusted R-Square: .01

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	.502	.4860
Manipulation Influence	-.104	.6178
Company Influence	-.497	.1165
Self Influence	.026	.8637
Product Knowledge	.472	.1649
Customer Knowledge	.258	.4652
Self-Monitoring	.100	.5938
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.156	.4902
Public Self-Consciousness	-.057	.7668
Private Self-Consciousness	.235	.1692
Social Anxiety	-.011	.9400

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0246$ , Adjusted R-Square: .06

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	-.003	.4388
Relative Number of Accounts	.363	.0057
Percentage of New Customers	.003	.8540
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.007	.1209

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Quota for 1980

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .3055$  , Adjusted R-Square:  $.01$

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-.234	.7731
Selling Activities	.269	.1739
Information Management	.054	.7987

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0001$  , Adjusted R-Square:  $.13$

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.558	.0001
Straight Rebuy	.354	.0916

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .3102$ , Adjusted R-Square:  $.005$

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	.458	.3532
Cooperative Relationship	-.208	.1828
Customer Orientation	.376	.2725

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .0748$ , Adjusted R-Square:  $.06$

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	-.707	.2573
Manipulation Influence	-.018	.9183
Company Influence	.048	.8599
Self Influence	-.195	.1417
Product Knowledge	.729	.0138
Customer Knowledge	.182	.5501
Self-Monitoring	-.051	.7552
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.137	.3463
Public Self-Consciousness	.003	.9862
Private Self-Consciousness	.135	.3585
Social Anxiety	-.054	.6658

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0014$ , Adjusted R-Square:  $.11$

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	-.003	.4388
Relative Number of Accounts	.363	.0057
Percentage of New Customers	.003	.8540
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.007	.1209

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Selling Expenses 1988

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .1817$  , Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Type of Representative	-2.011	.0502
Selling Activities	- .097	.6954
Information Management	.354	.1893

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .4322$  , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.092	.6131
Straight Rebuy	-.343	.2226

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .3949$  , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Long-term Relationship	.310	.6180
Cooperative Relationship	.315	.1103
Customer Orientation	-.312	.4577

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .1188$  , Adjusted R-Square: .05

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Commitment Orientation	.117	.8809
Manipulation Influence	.302	.1807
Company Influence	-.001	.9970
Self Influence	.421	.0120
Product Knowledge	.149	.6833
Customer Knowledge	-.144	.7066
Self-Monitoring	.431	.0356
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	.015	.9321
Public Self-Consciousness	-.157	.4509
Private Self-Consciousness	.098	.5950
Social Anxiety	.079	.6154

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0716$  , Adjusted R-Square: .04

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Number of Accounts	-.002	.6788
Relative Number of Accounts	.225	.1271
Percentage of New Customers	.023	.2950
Percentage on Straight Salary	.011	.0318

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Average Number of Closes/Week

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .0161$  , Adjusted R-Square: .06

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-38.27	.0035
Selling Activities	- 3.55	.2552
Information Management	4.77	.0165

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0001$  , Adjusted R-Square: .16

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	- 2.51	.2467
Straight Rebuy	16.38	.0001

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .1215$ , Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	15.30	.0554
Cooperative Relationship	3.01	.2310
Customer Orientation	- 3.32	.5470

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .0754$ , Adjusted R-Square: .06

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	- .887	.9300
Manipulation Influence	-3.817	.1925
Company Influence	-2.950	.5055
Self Influence	1.329	.5362
Product Knowledge	2.888	.5432
Customer Knowledge	1.743	.7250
Self-Monitoring	-4.660	.0794
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	6.447	.0070
Public Self-Consciousness	- .938	.7293
Private Self-Consciousness	-3.424	.1535
Social Anxiety	-2.091	.3073

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0001$ , Adjusted R-Square: .15

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	.124	.0083
Relative Number of Accounts	4.608	.0109
Percentage of New Customers	- .793	.0031
Percentage on Straight Salary	.046	.4752

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Average Number of Calls/Week

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .0187$  , Adjusted R-Square: .06

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Type of Representative	-34.63	.0050
Selling Activities	.04	.9901
Information Management	- 1.74	.5879

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0044$  , Adjusted R-Square: .07

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Modified Rebuy	- 1.79	.4059
Straight Rebuy	10.64	.0017

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .1148$ , Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Long-term Relationship	14.63	.0520
Cooperative Relationship	2.54	.2825
Customer Orientation	- 8.71	.0952

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .0283$ , Adjusted R-Square: .09

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Commitment Orientation	-16.97	.0723
Manipulation Influence	- 3.66	.1779
Company Influence	1.47	.7210
Self Influence	1.19	.5506
Product Knowledge	5.39	.2221
Customer Knowledge	- 3.02	.5114
Self-Monitoring	- 4.72	.0556
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	4.95	.0248
Public Self-Consciousness	- 3.20	.2049
Private Self-Consciousness	.36	.8723
Social Anxiety	- 2.93	.1238

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0012$ , Adjusted R-Square: .11

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Number of Accounts	- .15	.0008
Relative Number of Accounts	2.39	.1683
Percentage of New Customers	- .51	.0487
Percentage on Straight Salary	.06	.3442

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Number of Closes/Week

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .5342$  , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Type of Representative	-.662	.2511
Selling Activities	.066	.6323
Information Management	-.107	.4791

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0495$  , Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.217	.0328
Straight Rebuy	.169	.2779

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .8921$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Long-term Relationship	-.221	.5291
Cooperative Relationship	-.035	.7496
Customer Orientation	.018	.9394

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .2705$ , Adjusted R-Square: .02

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Commitment Orientation	-.531	.2371
Manipulation Influence	-.035	.7858
Company Influence	.136	.4876
Self Influence	.116	.2224
Product Knowledge	.435	.0405
Customer Knowledge	-.069	.7517
Self-Monitoring	.289	.0148
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.033	.7513
Public Self-Consciousness	-.102	.3958
Private Self-Consciousness	-.025	.8148
Social Anxiety	.150	.1000

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0001$  Adjusted R-Square: .39

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Number of Accounts	-.0004	.8005
Relative Number of Accounts	.565	.0001
Percentage of New Customers	-.003	.7319
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.001	.5229

Table 25. Multiple Regression Results of Each Situational Characteristic on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Number of Calls/Week

Situational Characteristic: Sales Position Characteristics  
 $p = .5471$  , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Type of Representative	-.309	.6359
Selling Activities	.094	.5507
Information Management	-.214	.2146

Situational Characteristic: Customer Buying Task  
 $p = .0379$  , Adjusted R-Square: .04

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.168	.1426
Straight Rebuy	.358	.0438

Situational Characteristic: Salesperson/Customer Relationship  
 $p = .3667$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Long-term Relationship	.343	.3831
Cooperative Relationship	.182	.1437
Customer Orientation	-.231	.3977

Situational Characteristic: Personal Resources  
 $p = .6431$ , Adjusted R-Square: .00

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Commitment Orientation	-.372	.4748
Manipulation Influence	-.145	.3347
Company Influence	.265	.2458
Self Influence	-.138	.2124
Product Knowledge	-.216	.3766
Customer Knowledge	.124	.6261
Self-Monitoring	.052	.7040
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	-.005	.9693
Public Self-Consciousness	-.144	.3042
Private Self-Consciousness	-.098	.4249
Social Anxiety	-.049	.6404

Situational Characteristic: Managerial Variables  
 $p = .0006$ , Adjusted R-Square: .12

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Number of Accounts	.005	.0483
Relative Number of Accounts	.287	.0016
Percentage of New Customers	-.001	.9120
Percentage on Straight Salary	.0002	.9388

regression equations. The equations consisted entirely of situational characteristics. An overview of the situational characteristics role in the development of the performance multiple regression equations can be found in Figure 30. The overview indicates that the customer's buying task, personal resources, and managerial variables were most influential in explaining the variation in the performance variables.

The next step in the analysis of hypothesis 2 included an examination of the interactions between the adaptive behavior and situational variables and the effect of adaptive behavior on performance. Based on conclusions drawn from previous results, four reasons are given for this analysis not being undertaken. First, there exists no significant ( $p < .05$ ) correlations between any of the adaptive behavior and performance variables. Second, none of the multiple regression equations utilizing the adaptive behavior variables as the regressors and performance variables as the dependent variable were significant. Third, the multiple regression equations utilizing adaptive behavior and situational variables to explain performance indicated that the situational variables were significantly related to performance, and adaptive behavior variables were not related to performance. Fourth, building upon the previous reasons, if any interaction existed between adaptive behavior and situational characteristics and this interaction were significantly related to performance, it could be implied that the reason for the significant interaction was not the adaptive behavior variable (i.e., it has already been demonstrated that adaptive behavior was not related to performance), but rather the strength of the significant relationships between the situational variables and performance. For these reasons, it was concluded that the use of multiple regression techniques provided no support for hypothesis 2.

**Summary:** Support was not found for hypothesis 2. Multiple regression results indicated that the adaptive behavior variables were not significantly related to performance. Analyses did indicate that situational characteristics were good indicators of performance. In particular, the customer's buying task, personal resources, and managerial variables were found to be significant ( $p < .05$ ) predictors of performance. Since any adaptive behavior/situational



Table 26. Final Multiple Regression Results of Situational and Adaptive Behavior Variables on Performance

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume for 1987

p = .0011, Adjusted R-Square: .07

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Product Knowledge	.548	.0119
Relative Number of Accounts	.310	.0065

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume for 1988

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .19

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Relative Number of Accounts	.421	.0001
Product Knowledge	.474	.0104
Modified Rebuy	-.323	.0149
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.007	.0524

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Volume 1987&1988

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .12

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Relative Number of Accounts	.357	.0004
Product Knowledge	.457	.0181
Modified Rebuy	-.258	.0580

Performance Variable: Relative Sales Quota 1988

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .27

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Modified Rebuy	-.413	.0003
Product Knowledge	.472	.0023
Relative Number of Accounts	.359	.0001
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.008	.0111
Private Self-Consciousness	.215	.0408
Social Anxiety	-.164	.0543

Table 26. Final Multiple Regression Results of Situational and Adaptive Behavior Variables on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Selling Expenses 1988

p = .0095, Adjusted R-Square: .03

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Percentage on Straight Salary	.010	.0095

Performance Variable: Average Number of Closes/Week

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .28

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Relative Number of Accounts	4.16	.0031
Straight Rebuy	9.11	.0006
Private Self-Consciousness	-3.80	.0291
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	4.65	.0044
Self-Monitoring	-4.55	.0108
Percentage of New Customers	-.31	.0371
Number of Accounts	.06	.1140

Performance Variable: Average Number of Calls/Week

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .28

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  T </u>
Number of Accounts	.13	.0001
Straight Rebuy	8.18	.0004
Self-Monitoring	-5.43	.0005
Type of Representative	-16.05	.0157
Public Self-Consciousness	-4.44	.0048
Motivation to Adapt Behavior	3.52	.0160
Relative Number of Accounts	1.99	.0957

Table 26. Final Multiple Regression Results of Situational and Adaptive Behavior Variables on Performance (con't)

Performance Variable: Relative Number of Closes/Week

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .30

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Relative Number of Accounts	.439	.0001
Modified Rebuy	-.206	.0090
Percentage of New Customers	.018	.0160
Percentage on Straight Salary	-.005	.0283
Manipulation Influence	.207	.0180
Cooperative Relationship	.176	.0631

Performance Variable: Relative Number of Calls/Week

p = .0001, Adjusted R-Square: .22

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Prob. &gt;  t </u>
Relative Number of Accounts	.376	.0001
Number of Accounts	.004	.0224
Self Influence Orientation	-.172	.0273
Cooperative Relationship	.318	.0014
Self-Monitoring	.174	.0473

Performance Variables

Sales Vol. 1987      Sales Vol. 1988      Sales Vol. Avg. 1987-88

Selling Position Char.:			
Type of Representative			
Selling Activities			
Information Management			
Customer Buy Task:			
Modified Rebuy		X	X
Straight Rebuy			
Salesperson/Customer Relationship:			
Long-term Relationship			
Cooperative Relationship			
Customer Orientation			
Personal Resources:			
Commitment Orientation			
Manipulation Influence			
Company Influence			
Self Influence			
Product Knowledge	X	X	X
Customer Knowledge			
Self-Monitoring			
Motivation to Adapt			
Public Self-Consciousness			
Private Self-Consciousness			
Social Anxiety			
Managerial Variables:			
Number of Accounts			
Relative Number of Accounts	X	X	X
Percentage of New Customers			
Percentage of Straight Salary		X	

Legend: X= indicates a significant indicator of Performance utilizing Multiple Regression

Figure 30. Overview of Significant Situational Variables Used in Multiple Regressions of Performance

Performance Variables

	Sales Quota 1988	Selling Exp. 1988	Avg. Number Closes/Week
<b>Selling Position Char.:</b>			
Type of Representative			
Selling Activities			
Information Management			
<b>Customer Buy Task:</b>			
Modified Rebuy	X		
Straight Rebuy			X
<b>Salesperson/Customer Relationship:</b>			
Long-term Relationship			
Cooperative Relationship			
Customer Orientation			
<b>Personal Resources:</b>			
Commitment Orientation			
Manipulation Influence			
Company Influence			
Self Influence			
Product Knowledge	X		
Customer Knowledge			
Self-Monitoring			X
Motivation to Adapt			X
Public Self-Consciousness			
Private Self-Consciousness	X		X
Social Anxiety	X		
<b>Managerial Variables:</b>			
Number of Accounts			X
Relative Number of Accounts	X		X
Percentage of New Customers			X
Percentage of Straight Salary	X	X	

Legend: X= indicates a significant indicator of  
Performance  
utilizing Multiple Regression

Figure 30. Overview of Significant Situational Variables  
Used in Multiple Regressions of Performance  
(con't)

Performance Variables

	Avg. Number Calls/Week	Relative Closes/Week	Relative Call
<b>Selling Position Char.:</b>			
Type of Representative	X		
Selling Activities			
Information Management			
<b>Customer Buy Task:</b>			
Modified Rebuy		X	
Straight Rebuy	X		
<b>Salesperson/Customer Relationship:</b>			
Long-term Relationship			
Cooperative Relationship		X	X
Customer Orientation			
<b>Personal Resources:</b>			
Commitment Orientation			
Manipulation Influence		X	
Company Influence			
Self Influence			X
Product Knowledge			
Customer Knowledge			
Self-Monitoring	X		X
Motivation to Adapt	X		
Public Self-Consciousness	X		
Private Self-Consciousness			
Social Anxiety			
<b>Managerial Variables:</b>			
Number of Accounts	X		X
Relative Number of Accounts	X	X	X
Percentage of New Customers		X	
Percentage of Straight Salary		X	

Legend: X= indicates a significant indicator of Performance  
utilizing Multiple Regression

Figure 30. Overview of Significant Situational Variables Used in Multiple Regressions of Performance (con't)

variable interaction term would only obtain significance through the strength of the direct relationship that the situational variable has with performance, it is concluded that hypothesis 2 is not supported.

The next section provides a brief introduction to linear structural relations (i.e., LISREL) prior to an examination of hypotheses 1 and 2.

## ***Linear Structural Relations (LISREL)***

This section will provide a brief introduction to the use of LISREL as an analytical technique. Three LISREL models that address the testing of hypotheses 1 and 2 will be presented and discussed.

### **LISREL Results**

Three LISREL models were created for testing hypotheses 1 and 2. The first model provides an initial starting point. Following the first model, changes were made in the model specification. Hayduk (1987, p. 177) suggests that "model modifications should be nine-tenths theory driven and only one-tenth data driven." These changes were based on a closer examination of the scale items that comprised the observed variables, and upon changes that were indicated by the modification indices. The analyses of these models will include an examination of parameter estimates (i.e., LISREL's printing of warning messages), squared multiple correlations for the observable variables and structural equations, coefficients of determination for the observable variables and structural equations, Goodness of Fit Index, modification indices, and interpretation of the T-values. Joreskog and Sorbom (1986) suggest

that these are appropriate methods for judging the overall fit of a LISREL model. The three models will be presented next.

### **Model 1**

The first LISREL model represents an examination of the relationships between the situational characteristics and adaptive behavior (see Figure 31). The purpose for this model is to create a baseline for the examination of future LISREL models. Prior to this LISREL run, only one change was made in the relationship of the observable variables to the latent constructs. Based on a review of the observable variables, product and customer knowledge were grouped together to create a separate latent construct. As Table 27 indicates, several problems occurred. First, warning messages were printed indicating possible problems with the parameter estimates. Second, the squared multiple correlations for the observable variable indicate that several variables (i.e., cooperative relationships, manipulation influence, personal influence, self-monitoring, public self-consciousness, private self-consciousness, social anxiety, relative number of accounts, percentage of new customers, and percentage on straight salary) were unreliable when used as indicators of the latent constructs (see Table 27). Third, the squared multiple correlations for the structural equations (i.e., the strength of the relationship between the situational characteristics and adaptive behavior) were both zero indicating that the LISREL model lacks overall fit. Fourth, the coefficient of determination for the observed dependent variables was .945 and for the independent variables, .979, suggesting that there is a strong relationship among the independent and dependent variables.

Lastly, the fifth (i.e., coefficient of determination for the structural equations), sixth (i.e., Goodness of Fit Index), seventh (i.e., modification indices), and eighth (i.e., T-values) analyses were not printed, indicating serious problems with the model. Based on these LISREL results,



**Sales Position Char.:**  
 Type of Representative  
 Selling Activities  
 Information Management

**Customer Buying Task:**  
 Modified Rebuy

**Salesperson/Customer Relationship:**  
 Long-term Relationship  
 Cooperative Relationship  
 Customer Orientation

**Personal Resources:**  
 Commitment Orientation  
 Manipulation Influence  
 Company Influence  
 Self Influence  
 Motivation to Adapt Behavior  
 Public Self-Consciousness  
 Private Self-Consciousness  
 Social Anxiety

**Knowledge:**  
 Product Knowledge  
 Customer Knowledge

**Managerial Variables:**  
 Number of Accounts  
 Relative Number of Accounts  
 Percentage of New Customers  
 Percentage on Straight Salary

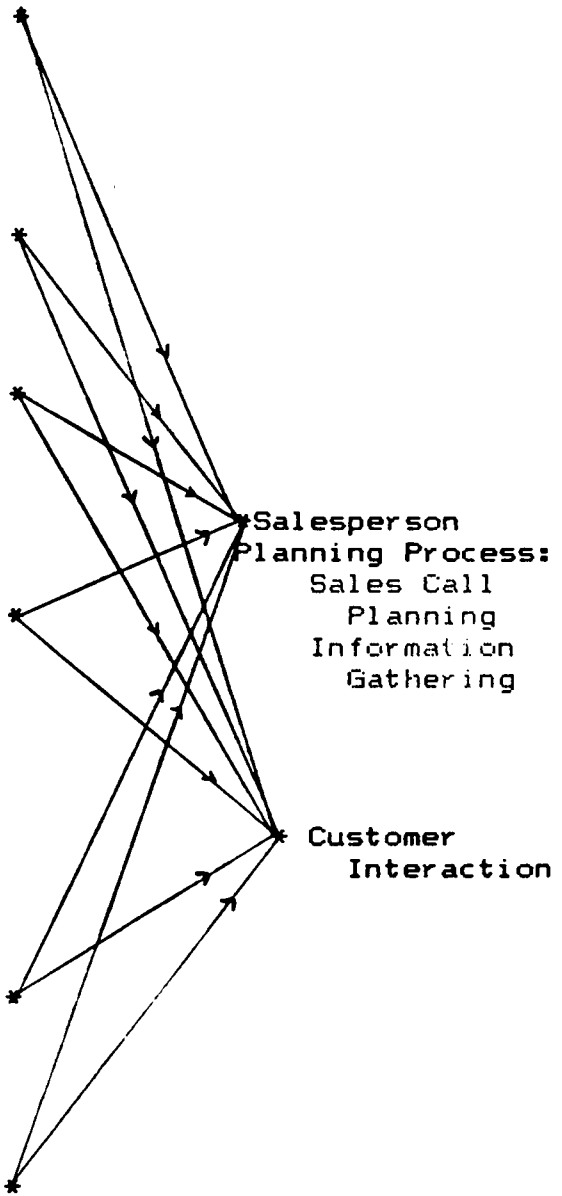


Diagram of LISREL Model 1

Figure 31

Table 27. LISREL Results for Model 1

1. Warning Messages indicated unreasonable parameter estimates.
2. Squared Multiple Correlations of Observations:
 

Sales Call Planning	.590
Information Gathering	.443
Customer Interaction	.540
Type of Representative	.696
Selling Activities	.744
Information Management	.581
Modified Rebuy	.692
Long-Term Relationship	.451
Cooperative Relationship	.118
Customer Orientation	.520
Commitment Orientation	.482
Manipulation Influence Orientation	.010
Company Influence Orientation	.333
Self Influence Orientation	.001
Motivation To Adapt Behavior	.004
Public Self-Consciousness	.016
Private Self-Consciousness	.001
Social Anxiety	.113
Product Knowledge	.399
Customer Knowledge	.667
Number of Accounts	.436
Relative Number of Accounts	.137
Percentage of New Customers	.020
Percentage on Straight Salary	.009
3. Squared Multiple Correlations for Structural Equations:
 

Sales Person Planning Process	.000
Customer Interaction	.000
4. Coefficient of Determination for Variables:
 

Dependent Variables	.945
Independent Variables	.979
5. Coefficient of Determination for Structural Equations: Not provided by LISREL
6. Goodness of Fit Index: Not Provided by LISREL
7. Next suggested modification: Not Provided by LISREL
8. T-Values: Not Provided by LISREL

those observable variables with low squared multiple correlations (i.e., previously cited) were eliminated from the model. The next section will present Model 2.

## ***Model 2***

Utilizing the analyses of Model 1 as a starting point, additional LISREL programs were run prior to reaching the solution presented here as model 2 (see Figure 32). The changes in the model that allowed for the model 2 solution include the elimination of a managerial variable (i.e., number of accounts), the correlation of certain error terms, and the creation of a new latent construct. First, once the three managerial variables (i.e., relative number of calls, percentage of new customers, and percentage on straight salary) were eliminated, the number of accounts variable exhibited a low squared multiple correlation (the multiple regression results also indicated that no relationship existed between the managerial factors and adaptive behavior). Second, the modification indices suggested that allowing certain error terms to be correlated would improve the fit of the model. Since the measurement instrument was based entirely on paper and pencil results by a single person, it is reasonable to expect that error terms might be correlated. The three separate pairs of error terms that were allowed to correlate for Model 2 include two scale items within the customer interaction variable, the error term between customer knowledge and information management, and the error term between customer orientation and commitment orientation. Third, a new latent construct was created. The new construct is called "orientation" and consists of commitment orientation (i.e., a personal resource variable), company influence (i.e., a personal resources variable), long-term relationship (i.e., a salesperson/customer relationship variable), and customer-company satisfaction (i.e., a salesperson customer relationship variable). This latent construct may be defined as a desire to be successful in the job and in their relations with their customers. Once these three changes were made, a solution (i.e., Model 2) was

**Sales Position Char.:**  
 Type of Representative  
 Selling Activities  
 Information Management

**Customer Buying Task:**  
 Modified Rebuy

**Orientation:**  
 Commitment Orientation  
 Company Influence  
 Long-Term Relationship  
 Customer Orientation

**Knowledge:**  
 Product Knowledge  
 Customer Knowledge

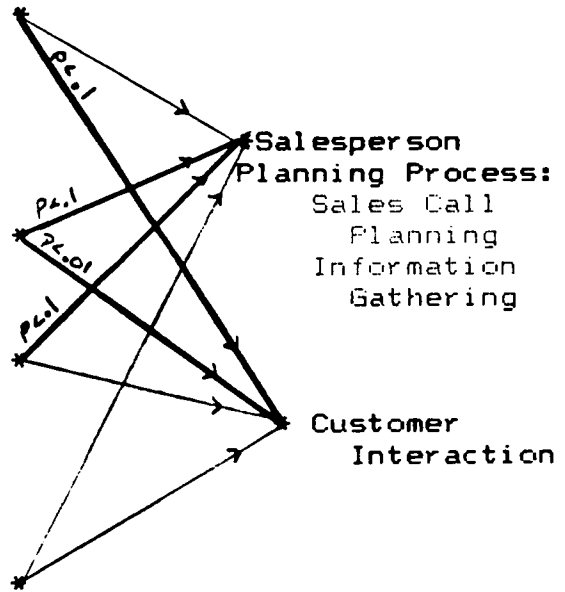


Diagram of LISREL Model 2

Figure 32

developed by LISREL that can be used to examine hypothesis 1. The evaluation of Model 2 and an interpretation of the results follow.

The results of the eight evaluative criteria can be found in Table 28. First, no warning messages were printed indicating adequate parameter estimates. Second, the squared multiple correlations for the observed variables were adequate. They ranged from .303 (i.e., long-term relationship) to .966 (i.e., modified rebuy customer buying task). Third, the squared multiple correlation for the structural equations leading to salesperson planning process was good (i.e., squared multiple correlation = .693), but was low for the structural equations leading to customer interaction (i.e., squared multiple correlation = .114). Fourth, the coefficients of determination for the dependent and independent variables were .941 and .999, respectively. Fifth, the coefficient of determination for the structural equations was .719. Sixth, the Goodness of Fit index was good at .912, and after it was adjusted for the degrees of freedom in the model, the index was .867. Seventh, LISREL indicated that the next modification in the model should incorporate a direct relationship between selling activities (i.e., a sales position characteristic) and the customer buying task latent construct. This was not undertaken because allowing a variable within the sales position characteristics construct to be related to the customer buying task construct would destabilize the sales position characteristics latent construct making it uninterpretable. The fact that this relationship was suggested by the LISREL program is an indication that this model provides the best theoretically justified fit to the current data. Eighth, the T-values indicate that several significant relationships exist (see Figure 32 and Table 28); these will be discussed next.

Utilizing the T-value interpretation criteria (i.e., a T-value of 1.28 is significant at  $\alpha = .10$ , a T-value of 1.64 is significant at  $\alpha = .05$ , and a T-value of 2.3 is significant at  $\alpha = .01$ ) four significant relationships were found. First, the sales position characteristics to customer interaction relationship is significant at  $\alpha = .10$  ( $t = 1.323$ ). Second, the relationship between customer buying task and salesperson planning process is significant at  $\alpha = .10$  ( $t = 1.460$ ). Third, the customer buying task to customer interaction

Table 28. LISREL Results for Model 2

1. No warning messages printed, suggesting reasonable parameter estimates.
2. Squared Multiple Correlations of Observations:
 

Sales Call Planning	.356
Information Gathering	.688
Customer Interaction	.510
Type of Representative	.221
Selling Activities	.676
Information Management	.798
Modified Rebuy	.966
Long-Term Relationship	.245
Customer Orientation	.363
Commitment Orientation	.341
Company Influence Orientation	.559
Product Knowledge	.461
Customer Knowledge	.720
3. Squared Multiple Correlations for Structural Equations:
 

Sales Person Planning Process	.588
Customer Interaction	.124
4. Coefficient of Determination for Variables:
 

Dependent Variables	.943
Independent Variables	.999
5. Coefficient of Determination for Structural Equations: .630
6. Goodness of Fit Index: .912
7. Next suggested modification: a relationship between the variable modified rebuy and latent construct-orientation
8. T-Values of Relationships:
 

Dependent Variable: Sales Person Planning Process		
Sales Position Characteristics	.496	(not sig.)
Customer Buying Task	1.460	(p < .10)
Orientation	1.288	(p < .10)
Knowledge	.930	(not sig.)
Dependent Variable: Customer Interaction		
Sales Position Characteristics	1.323	(p < .10)
Customer Buying Task	2.295	(p < .01)
Orientation	.692	(not sig.)
Knowledge	-.845	(not sig.)

relationship is significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $t = 2.295$ ). Fourth, the relationship between orientation and salesperson planning process is significant at  $\alpha = .10$  ( $t = 1.288$ ).

For purposes of evaluating hypothesis 1, support was found through the analysis of Model 2. Three of the situational characteristics (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer buying task, and orientation) were found to be significantly related to adaptive behavior (i.e., salesperson planning process and customer interaction). Knowledge was found to be not significantly related to adaptive behavior. The next model to be presented will be used to explore the relationships between the situational and adaptive behavior constructs with performance.

### ***Model 3***

Utilizing Model 2 as a starting point, Model 3 was created to explore the relationships between situational characteristics, adaptive behavior, and performance (see Figure 33). Prior to the completion of Model 3, three additional changes were made to Model 2. First, the managerial variables were added back to the model since the multiple regression equations indicated a strong relationship exists between the managerial variables and performance. After several iterations only two managerial variables (i.e., number of accounts and relative number of accounts) were left in the final model. The managerial variables, percentage of new customers and percentage of straight salary as compensation, were eliminated because of their low squared multiple correlations (i.e., .026 and .017, respectively). Second, the modification indices suggested that two additional error terms would improve the fit of the model. These two pairs of correlated error terms consisted of one of the customer interaction scale items with information gathering, and average number of calls/week with relative number of closes/week. As was indicated in the discussion of Model 2, correlated error terms are possible due to the use of a "paper and pencil" measurement instrument. Third, the performance indicators were split into two groups. The first group is comprised of those

**Sales Position Char.:**  
 Type of Representative  
 Selling Activities  
 Information Management

**Customer Buying Task:**  
 Modified Rebuy

**Orientation:**  
 Commitment Orientation  
 Company Influence  
 Long-Term Relationship  
 Customer--Orientation

**Knowledge:**  
 Product Knowledge  
 Customer Knowledge

**Managerial Variables:**  
 Number of Accounts  
 Relative Number of Accounts

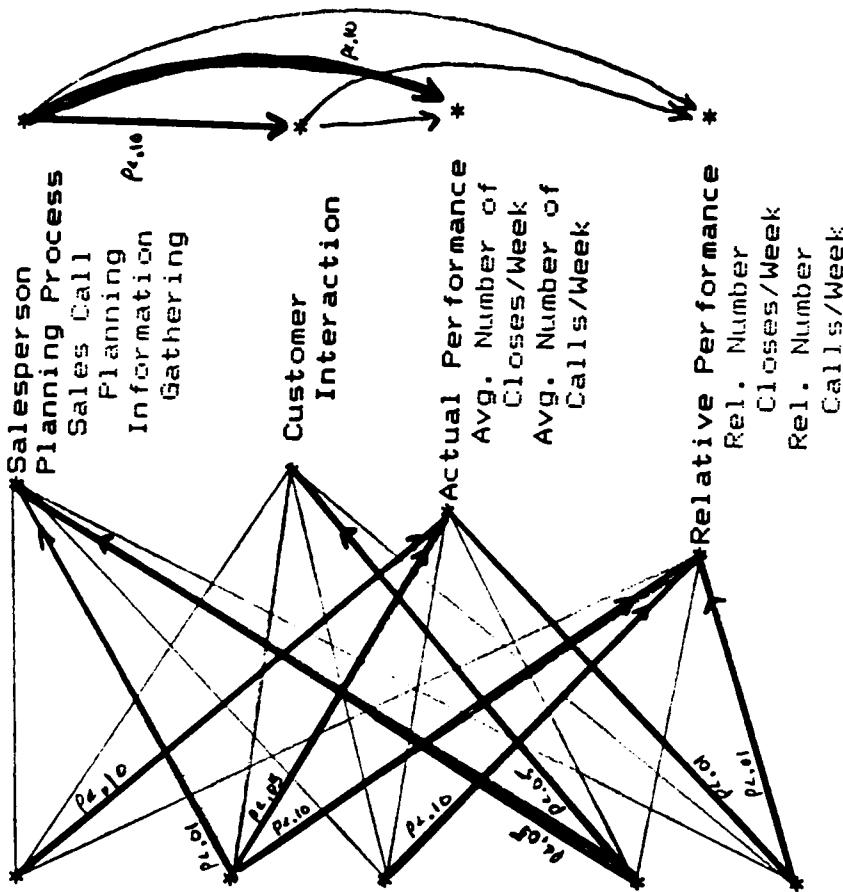


Diagram of LISREL Model 3

Figure 33

Diagram of LISREL Model 3

Figure 33



performance measures (i.e., number of calls and closes/week) that were not scaled. This indicator was simply called "performance." The second performance indicator is comprised of scaled items (i.e., relative number of calls and closes/week, 7 point scale). This indicator has been renamed "relative performance".

The results of the eight evaluative criteria for Model 3 can be found in Table 29. First, no warnings were printed by the LISREL program, indicating that adequate parameters were estimated. Second, the squared multiple correlations for the observed variables ranged from .280 for long-term relationships to .799 for the information management. Third, the squared multiple correlations for the structural equations were adequate for the equations leading to salesperson planning, performance indicators (i.e., number of calls and closes/week), and relative performance indicators (i.e., relative number of calls and closes/week), but was poor for the customer interaction equations. Fourth, the coefficients of determination for the dependent and independent variables were both .997. Fifth, the coefficient of determination for the structural equations was .922. Sixth, the Goodness of Fit Index was .878, and after adjusting for the degrees of freedom was .820. Seventh, the modification indices suggested that the variable commitment orientation should be an indicator of sales position characteristics. It was taken as a signal that no further changes should be made in the model when the modification index suggested that an "orientation" variable should be a measure of "sales position characteristics". Eighth, the LISREL program identified eleven causal paths (see Figure 33). These paths included salesperson planning process to customer interaction ( $p < .10$ ) and performance ( $p < .10$ ); sales position characteristics to performance ( $p < .10$ ); customer buying task to salesperson planning process ( $p < .10$ ), performance ( $p < .10$ ), and relative performance ( $p < .10$ ); orientation to relative performance ( $p < .10$ ); knowledge to salesperson planning process ( $p < .05$ ) and customer interaction ( $p < .10$ ); and managerial variables to performance ( $p < .01$ ) and relative performance ( $p < .01$ ).

Once model 3 was created, it became possible to examine hypothesis 2. One method to explore for moderators would involve including all of the interaction terms as directly observable variables. This method was not attempted because it would involve the estimation

Table 29. LISREL Results for Model 3

1. No warning messages printed, suggesting reasonable parameter estimates.
2. Squared Multiple Correlations of Observations:
 

Sales Call Planning	.366
Information Gathering	.668
Customer Interaction	.474
Number of Closes	.682
Number of Calls	.752
Relative Number of Closes	.568
Relative Number of Calls	.402
Type of Representative	.126
Selling Activities	.560
Information Management	.791
Modified Rebuy	.706
Long-Term Relationship	.280
Customer Orientation	.341
Commitment Orientation	.573
Company Influence Orientation	.524
Product Knowledge	.400
Customer Knowledge	.638
Number of Accounts	.242
Relative Number of Accounts	.606
3. Squared Multiple Correlations for Structural Equations:
 

Sales Person Planning Process	.621
Customer Interaction	.146
Performance	.361
Relative Performance	.718
4. Coefficient of Determination for Variables:
 

Dependent Variables	.997
Independent Variables	.997
5. Coefficient of Determination for Structural Equations: .922
6. Goodness of Fit Index: .878
7. Next suggested modification: a relationship between the variable company influence orientation and latent construct-sales position characteristics

Table 29. LISREL Results for Model 3 (con't)

8. T-Values of Relationships:

<b>Dependent Variable: Sales Person Planning Process</b>	
Sales Position Characteristics	.725 (not sig.)
Customer Buying Task	2.471 (p < .01)
Orientation	-.421 (not sig.)
Knowledge	1.852 (p < .05)
Managerial Variables	-.583 (not sig.)

<b>Dependent Variable: Customer Interaction</b>	
Sales Position Characteristics	.791 (not sig.)
Customer Buying Task	.208 (not sig.)
Orientation	.677 (not sig.)
Knowledge	-1.332 (p < .10)
Managerial Variables	.651 (not sig.)
Sales Person Planning Process	1.493 (p < .10)

<b>Dependent Variable: Performance</b>	
Sales Position Characteristics	-1.341 (p < .10)
Customer Buying Task	-1.924 (p < .05)
Orientation	1.116 (not sig.)
Knowledge	-.221 (not sig.)
Managerial Variables	3.138 (p < .01)
Sales Person Planning Process	1.547 (p < .10)
Customer Interaction	-.696 (not sig.)

<b>Dependent Variable: Relative Performance</b>	
Sales Position Characteristics	-.636 (not sig.)
Customer Buying Task	-1.628 (p < .10)
Orientation	1.610 (p < .10)
Knowledge	-.082 (not sig.)
Managerial Variables	4.025 (p < .01)
Sales Person Planning Process	.473 (not sig.)
Customer Interaction	.463 (not sig.)

of 397 parameters using a maximum of 330 observations. A second method involves dividing the eleven situational variables into two groups utilizing a median split. Once the two groups were formed, twenty-two LISREL programs can be run to examine the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance. The ability of LISREL to provide reasonable parameter estimates, and produce chi-square or goodness of fit indices can be used to evaluate the LISREL models. If the parameter estimates are unreasonable LISREL may not produce chi-square or goodness of fit indices. Unreasonable parameter estimates imply that the situational variable was not successfully moderating the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. The results of the LISREL program, see Table 30, indicate that many of the parameter estimates had unreasonable values. Several of the LISREL programs did provide goodness of fit indices even though the parameter estimates were unreasonable. These Goodness of Fit Indices ranged from 0 to .82. Since the Goodness of Fit Index for model 3 was .88, none of the proposed moderating models were considered successful. While improvement in parameter estimates might be possible by increasing the number of correlations between error terms and allowing for new relationships to occur between latent constructs, the new model would have no basis for comparison. Therefore, it can be concluded that hypothesis 2 was not supported. The next section will summarize the LISREL results.

## ***Summary of LISREL Results***

The LISREL analyses identified partial support for hypothesis 1. Three of the situational characteristics (i.e., sales position characteristics, customer buying task, and orientation) consisting of ten situational variables (i.e., type of representative, selling activities, information management, modified rebuy, customer buying task, commitment orientation, company

Table 30. LISREL Results Utilizing Split Sample Analyses

<u>Variable (median split)</u>	<u>Parameter Estimates</u>	<u>Chi-Square Value</u>	<u>Goodness of Fit</u>
<b>Selling Activities</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	unreasonable	227	.79
<b>Information Management</b>			
> median	unreasonable	-2674	0
< median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
<b>Modified Rebuy</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
<b>Commitment Orientation</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	reasonable	244	.79
<b>Company Influence</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
<b>Long-term Relationship</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
<b>Customer/Company Influence</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	unreasonable	235	.79
<b>Product Knowledge</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	unreasonable	230	.77
<b>Customer Knowledge</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	reasonable	209	.81
<b>Number of Accounts</b>			
> median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
< median	unreasonable	not provided	not provided
<b>Relative Number of Accounts</b>			
> median	unreasonable	-1649	0
< median	unreasonable	269	.82

influence orientation, long-term relationship, customer orientation, product and customer knowledge) were significantly related to the salesperson's planning process.

The LISREL analyses did not support hypothesis 2. The results implied that the situational characteristics are not moderating the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. The LISREL Model 3 does indicate that several situational characteristics are directly related to performance, although this was not hypothesized. Those situational characteristics that are directly related to performance include sales position characteristics (i.e., type of representative, selling activities, and information management), customer buying task (i.e., modified rebuy), orientation (i.e., commitment orientation, company influence orientation, long-term relationship and customer orientation), and managerial variables (i.e., number of accounts and relative number of accounts). The next chapter will present the conclusions of these results.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusions and Directions for Future Research**

#### ***Overview***

This chapter addresses the conclusions and directions for future research that can be drawn from the present study. First, a review of the study findings will be presented. Second, the implications of the research results will be discussed from theoretical, methodological, and substantive viewpoints. Third, the boundaries and limitations of the research will be addressed. Lastly, suggestions will be made for future research.

#### **Study Findings**

In terms of the proposed hypotheses, partial support was found for the first hypothesis and no support was found for the second hypothesis. Table 31 provides an overview of the multiple regression and LISREL results for hypothesis one. The multiple regression results

in Table 31 are based on the inclusion of all of the situational variables proposed in hypothesis one. The findings suggest that salespeople are more likely to adapt behavior (i.e., plan in certain situations) across customer interactions when the customer buying task is that of a modified rebuy, the salesperson is customer oriented, the salesperson has customer knowledge, and the salesperson is publicly self-consciousness (i.e., the salesperson is aware that he/she affects the customer's behavior). Salespeople are also likely to adapt behavior (i.e., gather information in certain situations) when they are customer oriented, have customer knowledge, are self-monitoring (i.e., the salesperson controls expressive behavior and self-presentation), and are motivated to adapt their behavior. Utilizing the LISREL results to examine hypothesis one, only one significant relationship was identified. Salespeople are more likely to adapt behavior when the customer buying task is that of a modified rebuy.

The second hypothesis stated that adaptive behavior will lead to an increase in performance when certain situational variables (i.e., the same situational variables utilized in hypothesis one) are present. The second hypothesis suggested that the situational variables would moderate the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. Three findings suggested that this hypothesis was not supported. First, utilizing multiple regression analysis none of the adaptive behavior variables were significantly ( $p > .05$ ) related to any of the performance indicators. Second, multiple regression results utilizing situational variables as predictors of performance suggested that there is a direct relationship between the situation and performance. Third, none of the LISREL results utilizing the situational constructs as moderators of the adaptive behavior to performance relationship were significant.

## **Unanticipated Findings**

Four unanticipated findings in this study are manifest in the relationships between the performance indicators with the adaptive behavior and situational variables. First, a multiple regression analysis of the relationship between adaptive behavior and performance indicated



Table 31  
 Summary of P-values for Hypothesis 1  
 Multiple Regression and LISREL Results

Hypothesis 1: A salesperson is more likely to adapt behavior across customer interactions in the following situations:

	Multiple Regression		LISREL Salesperson Planning Process
	Sales Call Planning	Information Gathering	
<b>Sales Position Char.</b>			not sig.
as a trade servicer	.70	.14	
<b>Customer Buying Task</b>			< .10
modified rebuy	.01	.19	
<b>Salesperson/Customer Relations</b>			not sig.
customer oriented	.004	.004	
long-term relationship.	.68	.38	
cooperative relationship	.30	.75	
<b>Personal Resources</b>			not sig.
product knowledge	.81	.93	
customer knowledge	.02	.001	
self-monitoring	.67	.008	
motivation to adapt	.11	.03	
public self-consciousness	.006	.40	
<b>Managerial Variables</b>			not sig.
workload	.49	.76	
straight salary	.74	.18	

that none of the adaptive behavior variables were useful in explaining variations in salesperson performance. As was indicated in Table 22, Chapter 5, the p-values were not significant ( $p > .05$ ) for all of the regression equations that utilized only the adaptive behavior variables as indicators of performance. Second, the final stepwise multiple regression results (i.e., Table 24, Chapter 5), that utilized both adaptive behavior and situational variables as indicators of performance, suggest that the situational variables are the only significant ( $p < .001$ ) predictors of performance. Third, utilizing a LISREL to analyze the relationship between the situational and adaptive behavior constructs, it was found that only three of the situational constructs were related to the two adaptive behavior constructs (i.e., salesperson planning process and customer interaction). The three situational constructs were sales position characteristics, customer buying task, and orientation (i.e., a new situational construct that was developed during the LISREL analysis). Of interest was the lack of relationship between the managerial variable and adaptive behavior constructs, since the managerial variables were significant ( $p < .05$ ) indicators of all but one of the performance variables (i.e., relative sales volume for 1987) when the analysis was performed using multiple regression. Fourth, LISREL model #3 (Figure 33, Chapter 5) identified relationships among the situational, adaptive behavior, and performance constructs that were heretofore not indicated by previous analyses. These relationships include the salesperson planning process with an average performance construct, the salesperson planning process with the customer interaction construct, knowledge with the adaptive behavior constructs, the orientation construct with the relative performance construct, and the managerial variables construct with both the average and relative performance constructs. The next section will discuss the implications of the research.

## ***Implications of the Research***

The implications of the research will be addressed through an examination of the impact that the research findings and results have on theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues. First, the theoretical implications will address the model that was tested in this study and its contribution to marketing thought. Second, methodological implications will discuss the use of the current studies methodology in examining the adaptive behavior construct and its relationship to performance. Lastly, the substantive implications will address the use of the current research findings for management.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The present study has theoretical implications for adaptive behavior, its antecedents, and their relationships to performance. Three areas to be discussed include the implications concerning situational characteristics and adaptive behavior, adaptive behavior and performance, and situational characteristics and performance.

First, results support Hettema's (1979) theory that adaptive behavior is a function of both internal and external stimuli. The situational characteristics that affect adaptive behavior across customer interactions include both the customer's buying task and the salesperson's knowledge. Salespeople who typically sell to customers involved in complex decision-making are more likely to adapt the sales plan by becoming more prepared prior to the customer interaction. The salesperson's knowledge of their products and customers also aids in his/her ability to create unique sales plans that are tailored to the various customers. Results also found that customer knowledge is important to the salesperson's ability to gather information. This suggests that salespeople who take the time to learn more about their customers (i.e.,

the customer's background, company, and industry) will gather information in order to improve the sales call plan.

Results support the proposition that adaptive behavior within the customer interaction is affected by both the salesperson's planning process and the salesperson's knowledge. The ability of the salesperson to develop unique sales plans across customer interactions is beneficial to the salesperson's ability to vary the sales plan during the customer interaction. Perhaps the process of developing a sales plan for the customer provides the salesperson with an enhanced repertoire of alternatives that can be utilized during the customer interaction as the need arises. On the other hand, the salesperson's knowledge reduces the ability of the salesperson to adapt behavior during the customer interaction. At first glance, this appears to be inconsistent with our understanding of adaptive behavior. A closer examination of the components of the knowledge construct indicates that customer knowledge enhances adaptive behavior within the customer interaction and product knowledge undermines adaptive behavior. This implies that having knowledge of the customer will aid the salesperson in utilizing his/her repertoire of alternatives, whereas knowledge of products does not allow for the tailoring of a conversation around customer needs. Therefore, increasing product knowledge would actually reduce the ability of the salesperson to adapt behavior during the customer interaction.

Second, results found that adapting behavior across customer interactions increases the salesperson's average number of closes and calls per week. Thus, results provided some support for the theoretical proposition that adaptive behavior is positively related to performance. Specifically, the ability to adapt behavior across customer interactions may enhance the likelihood that the salesperson's planning process will result in a sales plan that meets the perceived needs of the customer. This, in turn, reduces the time that the salesperson needs to spend with each customer, increases the likelihood that the sales call will result in a close, and increases the average number of calls and closes per week.

Third, results found that both situational characteristics and adaptive behavior (i.e., adaptive behavior across the customer interaction) are directly related to performance. Thus,

results suggest that current models of adaptive behavior in the marketing literature need to be revised to include the effects of situational characteristics in the adaptive behavior to performance relationship.

In examining the ability of situational characteristics to affect performance, four implications can be drawn. First, results found a negative relationship between the customer buying task and the number of calls and closes that the salesperson can make in an average week. This suggests that the degree to which the customer is involved in a complex buying decision (i.e., a modified rebuy) will increase the amount of time that the salesperson needs to spend with each customer. Second, results suggest that increasing the number of accounts in a salesperson's territory creates a better opportunity for the salesperson to call on more accounts and close more sales. Third, a negative relationship between sales position characteristics and average number of calls and closes per week suggests that there is a characteristic of the job that would hinder performance. A closer examination of this relationship indicates that it is the difference in sales positions. These results suggest that trade servicers have fewer customer accounts than order takers or have the same number of customer accounts, but speak to those customer's less frequently than the order takers. Fourth, results found that "orientation" is related to the relative number of closes and calls per week. This implies that either the salespeople's internal drive and relationship to their customers inspires them to out perform their peers, or their commitment to their job leads them to believe that, relative to others, they are higher performers.

Lastly, results found a positive relationship between the salesperson planning process and customer interaction. This implies that a salesperson can gain depth of knowledge during the salesperson planning process and this in turn can aid in adapting behavior within the customer interaction. Thus, the present study provides an enhanced understanding of adaptive behavior. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) indicated that the practice of adaptive selling is moderated by situational characteristics. The use of a moderating relationship was based upon the concept that salespeople need to have elaborate knowledge structures (i.e., breadth) of situations, sales behaviors, and contingencies that link behaviors to situations so

that the salesperson can relate that knowledge to the current customer interaction. The next section will address the methodological implications of the present study.

## **Methodological Implications**

Methodological implications arise from the data collection procedure, scale refinements, performance indicators, and statistical techniques employed in the present study. First, data were collected by having the salespeople complete two separate mail survey instruments. One of the surveys collected data concerning adaptive behavior as it related to their current job; the second survey asked respondents to read a scenario and provide responses to the adaptive behavior questions based on the scenario. The scenarios used in the study identified a potential customer involved in either a modified rebuy or straight rebuy buying task. In order to control for any carry over effect, half of the respondents first received the adaptive behavior questions concerning their current job. The second half of the respondents first received the scenario survey instrument. The results of the study indicate that there was no significant difference produced by the order in which the survey instruments were distributed.

Second, the present study redefined two previously existing scale instruments. First, communication strategies were originally comprised of three orientation strategy scales (i.e., interaction, task, and self; Williams and Spiro 1985). After the scale was factor analyzed, only one scale emerged. That scale was subsequently renamed as "commitment orientation". Second, the five types of influence strategies (i.e., expertise, legitimate, referent, impression management, ingratiation management; Spiro and Perreault 1979) were re-combined into only three categories (i.e., manipulation, company, and self). These findings suggest that either the items chosen to represent the original scales in this study may not have adequately captured the original construct, or that the original scale is specific to a particular type of selling situation. First, the original influence strategy scales utilized four or five items per scale, but the present study utilized only three items per scale in order to shorten the length of the

survey instrument. Second, the communication scales originally consisted of fifteen items, the present study utilized a total of ten items. Third, the original influence strategy scales were developed using equipment salesmen in the construction industry. In the present study, the salespeople in the food industry have a higher turnover and meet with many customers weekly (i.e., on average they make 60 calls per week); this may influence the salesperson's use of influence strategies. Fourth, the communication scales were originally developed as a way to get feedback from customers concerning the salesperson's communication strategies. In the present study, the questions were reworded so that the salesperson could report on their own communication strategy.

Once these four scales (i.e., commitment orientation; manipulation, company, and self influence orientations) were re-examined, they were conceptually redefined as traits of the individual and placed in the model as orientations of the individual. The implication of these results is that adapting scales (i.e., changing the number or items, rewording items to fit a current selling situation) for use in different selling situations may affect construct validity, thus creating the need to re-evaluate the conceptual underpinnings of the items.

Third, the present study utilized several different performance indicators. The results, utilizing multiple regression, suggest that the situational characteristics that would lead to an increase in performance vary depending upon the indicator selected. For example, the situational characteristics that led to an increase in one performance indicator (i.e., relative sales volume for 1987 and 1988) included relative number of accounts, product knowledge, and a modified rebuy customer buying task. The situational characteristics that led to an increase in a second performance indicator (i.e., average number of calls per week) included the number of accounts, a straight rebuy customer buying task, self-monitoring, type of representative, public self-consciousness, motivation to adapt behavior, and relative number of accounts. These results imply that salesperson performance is a multi-faceted construct requiring information from both theoretical research and managerial sources for the appropriate selection of an indicator during model development.

The fourth methodological distinction concerns the use of various types of statistical techniques. The present study utilized both multiple regression and LISREL techniques to examine the relationships between situational characteristics, adaptive behavior, and performance. The use of the multiple regression techniques allowed for the identification of significant relationships between individual situational variables and individual performance indicators. LISREL allowed for the identification of significant relationships among the situational and performance constructs. The results indicate that when individual situational variables (i.e., different scales) are combined to form a unitary construct, the construct may not have the same relationship to performance compared to the individual variables. For example, LISREL indicated that the construct "orientation" is significantly related to performance (i.e., relative number of closes and call per week), whereas none of the individual variables that comprise "orientation" were significantly related to performance in the final multiple regressions. This suggests that the ability to identify significant relationships varies among the statistical techniques as does the level at which the findings can be interpreted. This reinforces the fact that conceptual and methodological issues are intricately linked in research. By utilizing both statistical techniques a broader understanding of the relationships among situational characteristics, adaptive behavior, and performance has been achieved. The next section will address the substantive implications of the study.

## **Substantive Implications**

The findings of the present study provide implications for both the sales manager and the salesperson, depending on the performance indicator selected. In this discussion the implications of six performance indicators will be addressed. These indicators include relative sales volume (i.e., salesperson sales volume relative to other salespeople), average number of closes per week, average number of calls per week, relative number of closes per week (i.e., salesperson number of closes per week relative to other salespeople), and relative



number of calls per week (salesperson number of calls per week relative to other salespeople).

First, results suggest that salesperson sales volume relative to other salespeople can be increased by increasing the salesperson's number of accounts, increasing product knowledge, and reducing the number of contacts with customers involved in a modified rebuy buying task. First, since calling on new accounts is time consuming, sales managers may want to utilize a missionary salesforce whose sole purpose would be to cultivate new accounts that can then be turned over to the salespeople that are being evaluated by their relative sales volume. Second, product knowledge could be increased through the use of seminars or pamphlets to have the salespeople learn about new products, or by providing trial samples of products to salespeople. Third, sales managers may want to aid customers in their search for information by providing the customer with company product catalogs or installing a toll free telephone number so that customers can get information from the company quickly.

Second, salespeople are more likely to meet their quota when the salesperson's number of accounts is high, they possess product knowledge, sell to fewer customers involved in a modified rebuy buying task, are not compensated by straight salary, are publicly self-consciousness, and are not socially anxious. The first three factors have been discussed in the previous section. Providing commissions or bonuses will increase the salesperson's motivation to meet his/her sales quota. Hiring individuals who are publicly self-consciousness could be accomplished by administering a battery of psychological tests (i.e., Myers Briggs Extroversion-Introversion Scale) prior to placement with the company. Training programs that include role play would increase the salesperson's confidence and provide him/her with strategies for dealing with customers, thus reducing any discomfort that the salesperson might experience during the customer interaction.

Third, sales managers may increase their sales representative's average number of closes per week by increasing the sales representative's number of accounts relative to other salespeople, decreasing the percentage of new customers for salespeople being evaluated with this indicator, encouraging customers to rebuy from the company, and hiring individuals

who are not self-monitors. First, as suggested previously, utilizing salespeople whose purpose is to cultivate new accounts would be useful in decreasing the percentage of new customers encountered by the salespeople being evaluated by this performance indicator. At the same time as the new accounts are acquired they might be spread among the salespeople, thus increasing their relative number of accounts. Second, customers can be encouraged to rebuy from the company by providing a cumulative discount policy. Third, hiring individuals who do not have the ability to monitor their environment could be accomplished by administering psychological tests during a secondary screening phase.

Fourth, salespeople may increase their average number of calls per week if they were less publicly self-consciousness. Sales managers may be able to identify this characteristic during the hiring process. This implication may be more relevant for salespeople who are order takers.

Fifth, sales managers may increase their salespeople's number of closes per week relative to other salespeople by increasing the salesperson's relative number of accounts, reducing the number of modified rebuy accounts in the salesperson's territory, and increasing motivation by adding commissions or bonuses to the compensation package. Since, these implications have been addressed in previous sections, this discussion will focus on the implications for the salesperson. The results indicate that salespeople should build a cooperative relationship with their customers by providing them with additional promotional items or performing personal favors.

Sixth, a salesperson may increase his/her number of calls per week relative to other salespeople by increasing the number of accounts, and by utilizing his/her personal reputations or relationships with the customer. The next section will address the boundaries and limitations of the present study.

## ***Boundaries and Limitations***

In order to understand the contribution of any scientific research to marketing thought it is important that an examination of the boundaries and limitations be examined. McGrath and Brinberg (1983, p. 224) state that "we cannot know the scope of a set of findings unless we can establish the limits of those findings. And if a particular finding has no limits ..... then neither does it have any useful meaning." In this section the theoretical, methodological, and substantive boundaries and limitations will be discussed.

### **Theoretical**

In the present study the theoretical specification of the Model of Adaptive Selling Behavior is at issue. The proposed model originally suggested that situational characteristics lead to adaptive behavior and that the adaptive behavior to performance relationship is moderated by the situational characteristics. The results of the current study found that situational characteristics do not moderate the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. Instead, it was found that situational characteristics have a direct relationship to performance. One explanation for this finding lies in the role of salesperson knowledge and its relationship to adaptive behavior. Previous research (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) suggested that in order to practice adaptive selling elaborate knowledge structures were required. If a salesperson possessed an elaborate knowledge structure, then the situational characteristics would be important for cueing the salesperson as to which aspects of knowledge would be important to a particular customer interaction. By reconceptualizing the adaptive behavior construct into two components (i.e., adaptive behavior across and within the customer interaction) the moderating effects of the situational characteristics may have been misspecified. Since situational characteristics are important to the salesperson planning

process (i.e., adaptive behavior across customer interactions), their effect impacts on the adaptive behavior construct, itself, and not the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. While the particular model being tested in this study partially failed, it does provide a better understanding of the relationships among situational characteristics, adaptive behavior, and performance.

## **Methodological**

The methodological boundaries and limitations include the type of study, measurement issues, and statistical procedures utilized in this study. First, the study utilized two levels of scientific inquiry. Descriptive inquiry has as its "goal a careful mapping out of what happens behaviorally" (Rosenthal and Rosnow 1984, p. 23). Through an examination of previous research, the present study met the objectives of descriptive inquiry by laying the groundwork for examining a complex behavioral structure, establishing the boundaries of the research problem, and by suggesting ideas that could be tested in a relational study. The goal of relational inquiry is to describe how "what happens behaviorally changes along with changes in some other set of observations" (Rosenthal and Rosnow 1984, p. 23). The present study accomplished two objectives of relational inquiry. First, it uncovered relations among situational characteristics, adaptive behavior, and performance. Second, the results aided in establishing the validity of the situational and adaptive behavior constructs.

Second, the method of survey distribution precluded the ability to adequately test for carry-over effects from one survey instrument to the second survey instrument. Recall that the present study utilized two survey instruments with half of the respondents receiving one instrument first and half of the respondents receiving the other instrument first. There was a delay of about two weeks between respondents receiving the first and second survey to reduce carry-over effects. However, several respondents returned both surveys at the same time, suggesting that these respondents answered both surveys at the same time. Thus it

was impossible to determine which survey these respondents actually did answer first, and the test of carry-over effects may not have been able to detect any order-of-responding effects.

Third, the choice of performance indicators created a problem in the interpretation of the findings. Since many of the indicators were relative (e.g., relative sales volume, relative number of calls per week), the assumption was made that the salespeople possessed the knowledge to compare themselves with other salespeople in their company. If salespeople are told their relative standing in the company during an evaluation, then this assumption may be correct. Salespeople may also have gained this knowledge through conversations with their colleagues.

Fourth, the statistical procedures utilized in this study included multiple regression and LISREL. First, multiple regression assumes that the error terms are normally distributed, uncorrelated, and have a mean of zero. Two methods for controlling these assumptions include randomization and multi-item measures. In the present study, the presidents of the companies were told to distribute the surveys among the salesforce without regard to experience, time in the company, or sales levels. By utilizing a minimum of three items per scale the ability to tap the construct of interest was improved. Second, LISREL allows the researcher to determine whether or not relationships exist among error terms in the model. In the present study several error terms of items within the same construct were allowed to vary because the possibility of correlated error terms is present when only one method of data collection is utilized.

## **Substantive**

Since this study represented a theoretical test of the adaptive behavior theory, it was important to identify a sample of respondents who possessed certain attributes. Moncrief (1986) identified six sales positions, but in this study only two were utilized (i.e., trade servicers and order takers). The selection of these positions were necessary in order to

provide for a test of the proposed model. One industry in which respondents possessing these attributes were located was the food distribution industry. In addition only the larger companies in this industry employed salespeople occupying both of these positions. For these reasons the boundaries for interpreting the substantive findings of the study are limited to salespeople in the food distribution industry. The next section will address the suggestions for future research.

## ***Suggestions for Future Research***

The findings from this study suggests new areas for academic research. These new areas include the continued exploration of the adaptive behavior construct, examination of different sales positions, replication across industry types, comparisons of objective and subjective measures of performance, and the inclusion of the affect that customer feedback has on situational characteristics and the adaptive behavior construct.

First, In the present study the adaptive behavior construct was conceptualized as a two step process (i.e., adaptive behavior across and within the customer interaction). The measures of adaptive behavior across the customer interaction included sales call planning and information gathering. Since measures of influence strategies and communication strategies failed to perform as expected, future research into the ability or likelihood of salespeople to alter their influence strategies or communication strategies is needed. In addition, the present study focused on whether or not the sales plan was varied during the presentation. Research that expands our understanding of adaptive behavior within the customer interaction is suggested.

Second, the present study utilized only two types of sales positions (i.e., order taker and trade servicer) to provide the best opportunity for identifying the existence of adaptive behavior. Moncrief (1986) indicates that six types of sales positions exist. Since the existence

of adaptive behavior has been empirically verified, future research that addresses the use of adaptive behavior by other sales positions is suggested.

Third, the present study focused on adaptive behavior in the food distribution industry. In this industry approximately sixty customer contacts were made per week with the average number of closes per week being fifty-two. Research in industries where fewer contacts requiring additional salesperson planning occurs may find that adaptive behavior both across and within the customer interaction is a function of the time that the salesperson spends on each account.

Fourth, in the present study the LISREL results indicated that the performance construct, "average number of closes and calls per week", was a separate construct distinct from, "relative number of closes and calls per week". The results also found that the predictors of these two constructs were different. Future research should examine the use of subjective and objective performance indicators in salesperson research.

Fifth, since the present study did not utilize a dyadic approach, empirical research that addresses the role of customer feedback on situational characteristics and the adaptive behavior construct needs to be conducted. In particular, the effect of customer feedback on declarative knowledge and the ability of salespeople to develop new sales plans based on verbal and non-verbal feedback is suggested.

## ***Summary***

In summary, this research provided empirical support for the relationship between situational characteristics and adaptive behavior. While the moderating effect of situational characteristics on the adaptive behavior to performance relationship was not supported, strong support was found for a direct relationship between situational characteristics and performance, and minimal support for the adaptive behavior to performance relationship. It

was also indicated that knowledge (i.e., product and customer) and the customer's buying task are key determinants of adaptive behavior, while it is the managerial variables that most influence performance.



## Chapter 7

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# **Chapter 8**

## **Appendix**

**Dear Distributor Sales Representative:**

**Your company has agreed to participate in the following study. We are trying to determine what kinds of behavior lead to success for salespeople in different types of selling jobs. This study is one of the first of its kind, and your insights into the behavior of salespeople will enable us to learn more about the selling process. Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.**

**This is one part of a two-part series. In order to match the two questionnaires please indicate the last 4 digits of your social security number in the space provided ( \_ \_ \_ \_ ). Of course, your responses will be totally confidential.**

**Your responses are of extreme importance to us. Questions regarding this study can be directed to Dr. Keith at (703) 231-7026. Please return the completed questionnaire along with this cover letter within two weeks. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this study.**

**Janet E. Keith  
Assistant Professor of Marketing**

**Charles D. Bodkin  
Doctoral Candidate in Marketing**

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**Please return to:**

**Charles D. Bodkin  
2016 Pamplin Hall, Box X  
Marketing Department  
The R. B. Pamplin College of Business  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061**



1. For each of the following statements, circle the number which best indicates how you would prepare your sales calls for your current customers. If you perform the activity addressed in the statement very infrequently, circle "1"; if you perform the activity very frequently, circle "7".

	Very Infrequently			Very Frequently			
Before I make a sales call, I evaluate the specific information needs of the buyer I will be meeting.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before a sales call, I consider unique questions the buyer is likely to ask about my company or my products.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before a sales call, I review the details of product line information which may have special interest or particular value to the buyer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In gathering information for a sales call, I reconstruct the details of the last call on the account.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before making a sales call, I collect information on the account's past purchase patterns.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before a sales call, I consciously try to anticipate the events which are likely to occur in the call.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I review past call reports and other sources to determine the past information needs of the account.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. For each of the following statements, circle the number which more closely indicates how you interact with your current customers. For example, if you almost never behave as the statement indicates, circle "1"; if you almost always behave as the statement indicates, circle "7".

	Almost Never			Almost Always			
I genuinely enjoy helping customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am interested in the buyer not only as a customer, but also as a person.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more interested in myself than in the customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers find me easy to talk with.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I work hard to complete the sale.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more interested in listening to the customer than presenting my information.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to establish a personal relationship with my customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My primary concern is to help the customer make a purchase.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I usually dominate the conversation.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I want to do the job well.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. The following questions are concerned with the information you would gather prior to a sales call. If you almost never gather this information, circle "1"; if you almost always gather this information, circle "7".

	Almost Never			Almost Always			
<i>I gather information concerning:</i>							
how my customers might react to my company's prices.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
changes in prices of my customers' goods.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
introductions of my competitors' new products or product modifications.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
how my customers might react to my company.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
changes in my customers' product offerings.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
my competitors' sales force strategies.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
my competitors' distribution policies.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
how my customers might react to my company's product.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
changes in my customers' market(s).....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
my competitors' pricing strategies.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
my customers' expansion plans.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. The following questions are concerned with how you might influence your current customers to purchase your product. If you almost never behave as the statement indicates, circle "1"; if you almost always behave as the statement indicates, circle "7".

	Almost Never						Almost Always							
I try to influence my customers by drawing on my expertise concerning the product.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I stress the general quality of my products relative to that of other suppliers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I exaggerate the extent to which I can bend company policy to help my customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I go out of my way to do personal favors for my customers so that they will be indebted to me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Some of my comments appear to be made casually, but they are actually "planted" with the intent of gaining favorable impressions.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not use my friendly relationship with my customers to my advantage.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I use more general than detailed facts when trying to sell my customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I imply that I do special favors for them that I generally do not do for other customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not stress my reputation with my customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not use my friendship with my customers to get them to place orders with me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers are aware that I expect special consideration because of our friendship.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I discuss quite a bit of technical information with my customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I stress my company's reputation to my customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I make efforts to provide them with promotional items so that they feel an obligation to me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In some situations I try to give the impression that I do not have the authority to act on one of their requests.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Once you have begun speaking to a customer, how likely is it that you would vary the following part of your sales plan? If it is very unlikely that you would vary this part of the sales plan, circle "1". If it is very likely that you would vary this part of the sales plan, circle "7".

	Very Unlikely						Very Likely							
The type of information presented to the customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How the information would be presented to the customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The type of new information to gather from the customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The type of influence used to get the customer to purchase your product.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. The following questions are concerned with the cooperativeness and longevity of salesperson and customer relationships. Please indicate the the degree to which the statement is characteristic of your current sales situations. If the statement is usually false, circle "1", if the statement is usually true, circle "7".

	Usually False						Usually True							
My customers work with me to identify their needs.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers trust me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My satisfied customers will buy from me again.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am under pressure to produce immediate rather than long-term results.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The interests of my customers and myself conflict in this business.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers expect pressure from me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. The statements below describe various ways a salesperson might behave with a customer or prospect. For each statement please indicate how often you behave as described in the statement. If you almost never behave as the statement indicates, circle "1"; if you almost always behave as the statement indicates, circle "7".

	Almost Never							Almost Always						
I try to get my customers to discuss their needs with me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to sell as much as I can rather than try to satisfy my customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to help my customers achieve their goals.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to keep the customer's best interest in mind.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to sell a customer all I can convince him to buy, even if I think it is more than a wise customer would buy.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to achieve my goals by satisfying customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I keep alert for weaknesses in a customer's personality so I can use them to put pressure on him to buy.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. The following section is concerned with your knowledge concerning your product and customers. Please circle the number which indicates the degree to which the statements are characteristic of yourself. If the statement is usually false, circle "1"; if the statement is usually true, circle "7".

	Usually False							Usually True						
I am aware of all of the product lines and items my company sells.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am aware of new company offerings.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am aware of quality improvements which occur among the products I sell.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am aware of the improvements in the features of the products I sell.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I spend time learning about my customer's product offerings.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am aware of the length of experience that the customer has with their company.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I learn about the customer's buying habits.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am aware of any financial difficulties my customers might be having.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. The following section is concerned with a person's ability to interact with others in a social setting. Please indicate the degree to which the statements are characteristic of yourself. If the statement is usually false, circle "1"; if the statement is usually true, circle "7".

	Usually False							Usually True						
At a party I let others keep the jokes and stories going.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I put on a show to impress or entertain others.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would probably make a good actor.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am not good at games like charades or improvisational acting.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I change my behavior to suit different people and different situations.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In a group of people I am the center of attention.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to pay attention to the reactions of others to my behavior in order to avoid being out of place.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It's important to me to fit in to the group I'm with.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At parties I usually try to behave in a manner that makes me fit in.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I am the least bit uncertain as to how to act in a social situation I go to the behavior of others for cues.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. The following statements are concerned with the tendency of individuals to direct their thoughts. Please indicate the degree to which the statements are characteristic of yourself. If the statement is usually false, circle "1"; if the statement is usually true, circle "7".

	Usually False							Usually True						
I'm concerned about the way I present myself.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm self-conscious about the way I look.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I usually worry about making a good impression.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm concerned about what other people think of me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm usually aware of my appearance.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm always trying to figure myself out.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I reflect about myself a lot.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm generally attentive to my inner feelings.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm constantly examining my motives.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm alert to changes in my mood.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It takes me time to overcome my shyness in new situations.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I get embarrassed very easily.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't find it hard to talk to strangers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. The statements below describe characteristics of a selling situation. For each statement indicate the degree to which your customers may be characterized by the statement. If the statement describes almost none of your sales calls, circle "1". If the statement describes almost all of your sales calls, circle "7".

	Almost None							Almost All						
My customers request information prior to closing a sale.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers are already familiar with how my product sells in their store(s).....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers consider alternative suppliers before purchasing from me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers have purchased products similar to my company's offering, but have not purchased from me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers purchase the same products from me on a continuing basis.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers have a great deal of experience purchasing the products I sell.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. The following statements concern various types of selling activities. Please indicate how frequently you perform these activities. If you perform the activity very infrequently, circle "1". If you perform the activity very frequently, circle "7".

	Very Infrequently							Very Frequently						
I search out new leads.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I plan selling activities.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I plan sales presentations.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I check in with supervisors on a regular basis.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I provide technical information to the customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I spend time selecting which products to speak to the customer about.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. The following section is concerned with characteristics of your sales position.

1. How many accounts do you have in your territory \_\_\_\_\_?
2. On average, how many calls do you make in a week? \_\_\_\_\_ customers per week
3. How many sales do you close in an average week? \_\_\_\_\_ sales per week
4. Compared to other salespeople in your company, is the number of accounts in your territory larger or smaller than your co-workers? .....
 

	Larger				Smaller		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Compared to other salespeople in your company, is the number of calls you make in a week less or more than your co-workers? .....
 

	Less				More		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Compared to other salespeople in your company, is the number of sales you close in an average week less or more than your co-workers? .....
 

	Less				More		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Approximately what percentage of your total sales come from:
 

new customers	_____ %
repeat customers	_____ %
Total = 100 %	
8. What percentage of your salary is based on:
 

straight salary	_____ %
commission	_____ %
bonus	_____ %
other	_____ %
Total = 100 %	

14. The following section is needed to provide indicators of success. All responses will be totally confidential. Compared to other salespeople in your company doing work similar to yours, how would rate yourself based on the following criteria? If you consider yourself as below average on the criteria, circle "1"; if you consider yourself as above average circle "10".

	Below Average							Above Average		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Your sales volume for 1987? .....										
2. Your sales volume for 1988? .....										
3. Your sales quota for 1988? .....										
4. Your selling expenses for 1988? .....										

15. Lastly, it is necessary to obtain information concerning your experience. Please fill in the appropriate responses.

1. How many years experience do you have as a salesperson? \_\_\_\_\_ years
2. How many years experience as a salesperson do you have with your current company? \_\_\_\_\_ years
3. What is your approximate age? Under 20 \_\_\_\_\_ 31 to 40 \_\_\_\_\_ 51 to 60 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 70 \_\_\_\_\_  
 21 to 30 \_\_\_\_\_ 41 to 50 \_\_\_\_\_ 61 to 70 \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your cooperation with this study. Please fold and staple the survey in half with the return address and postage showing on the outside prior to mailing.**

**Dear Distributor Sales Representative:**

**Your company has agreed to participate in the following study. We are trying to determine what kinds of behavior lead to success for salespeople in different types of selling jobs. This study is one of the first of its kind, and your insights into the behavior of salespeople will enable us to learn more about the selling process. Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.**

**The questionnaire will begin with a situation which describes a buyer you will be calling on. You will then be asked to respond to a series of questions about this situation. We recognize that your responses will depend on a number of factors other than those presented in the situation. Therefore, we ask that you answer the questions in light of the information provided.**

**This is one part of a two-part series. In order to match the two questionnaires please indicate the last 4 digits of your social security number in the space provided ( \_ \_ \_ \_ ). Of course, your responses will be totally confidential.**

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**Janet E. Keith  
Assistant Professor of Marketing**

**Charles D. Bodkin  
Doctoral Candidate in Marketing**

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Please return to:

**Charles D. Bodkin  
2016 Pamplin, Box W  
Marketing Department  
The R. B. Pamplin College of Business  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061**

**THE SITUATION**

Imagine that, for one of your current restaurant accounts, the customer needs to reorder several products that are used on a regular basis because stock levels are depleted. This customer has a great deal of buying experience. He/She purchases products from you on a continuing basis because your firm offers good delivery, prices, and terms of payment. Soon you will have the opportunity to speak with this customer concerning an order.

1. The first part of the questionnaire is concerned with the customer described in the situation. **REFER TO THIS SITUATION WHEN YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS 1 - 5 OF THIS SECTION.** Although your answers to these questions will depend on a number of other factors please answer as much as possible in light of the information contained in the situation.

	Very Infrequently					Very Frequently	
1. How frequently do you encounter customers similar to this scenario?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. For each of the following statements, circle the number which best indicates how you would prepare your sales calls for the customer described in the situation. If it is very unlikely that you would perform the activity addressed in the statement, circle "1"; if it is very likely that you would perform the activity addressed in the statement, circle "7".

	Very Unlikely					Very Likely	
Before I make this sales call, I would evaluate the specific information needs of the buyer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before this sales call, I would consider the unique questions the buyer is likely to ask about my company or my products.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before this sales call, I would review the details of product line information which may have special interest or particular value to the buyer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before making this sales call, I would collect information on the account's past purchase patterns.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Before this sales call, I would consciously try to anticipate the events which are likely to occur in the call.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would seek information to determine the needs of this account.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. For each of the following statements, circle the number which more closely indicates how you would interact with the customer described in the situation. For example, if it is very unlikely that you would behave as the statement indicates, circle "1"; if it is very likely that you would behave as the statement indicates, circle "7".

	Very Unlikely					Very Likely	
I would genuinely enjoy helping this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be interested in this buyer not only as a customer, but also as a person.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be more interested in myself than in this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This customer would find me easy to talk with.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would work hard to complete this sale.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be more interested in listening to this customer than presenting my own information.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would try to establish a personal relationship with this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My primary concern would be to help this customer make a purchase.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would probably dominate the conversation with this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would want to do the job well.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. The following questions are concerned with the information you would gather prior to the sales call described in the situation. If it is very unlikely that you would gather this information, circle "1"; if it is very likely that you would gather this information, circle "7".

	Very Unlikely						Very Likely
<b>I would gather information concerning:</b>							
how this customer might react to my price.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
prices of this customers' goods.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
introductions of my competitors' new products or product modifications that this customer might be interested in.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
how this customer might react to my company.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
this customers' product offerings.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
my competitors' sales force strategies that might be used with this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
my competitors' distribution policies that might be used with this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
how this customer might react to my product.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
this customers' market(s).....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
my competitors' pricing strategies that might be used with this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
this customers' expansion plans.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. The following questions are concerned with how you might influence the customer described in the situation to purchase your product. If it is very unlikely that you would behave as the statement indicates, circle "1"; if it is very likely that you would behave as the statement indicates, circle "7".

	Very Unlikely						Very Likely
I would try to influence this customer by drawing on my expertise concerning the product.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would stress the general quality of my products relative to that of other suppliers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would exaggerate the extent to which I could bend company policy to help this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would go out of my way to do personal favors for this customer so that he/she would be indebted to me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Some of my comments to this customer would appear to be made casually, but I would actually "plant" them with the intent of gaining favorable impressions.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not use my friendly relationship with this customer to my advantage.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would use more general than detailed facts when trying to sell to this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would imply to this customer that I could do special favors that I generally do not do for other customers.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not stress my reputation with this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not use my friendship with this customer to get him to place orders with me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This customer would be aware that I expect special consideration because of our friendship.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would discuss quite a bit of technical information with this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would stress my company's reputation to this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would make efforts to provide this customer with promotional items so that he/she would feel an obligation to me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In this situation, I might give this customer the impression that I do not have the authority to act on one of his/her requests.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



II. The second part of this questionnaire is concerned with your relationship with all of your *CURRENT* customers.

1. The following statements concern various types of selling activities. Please indicate how frequently you perform these activities. If you perform the activity very infrequently, circle "1". If you perform the activity very frequently, circle "7".

	Very Infrequently				Very Frequently		
Search out new leads.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Plan selling activities.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Plan sales presentations.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Check in with supervisors on a regular basis.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Provide technical information to the customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spend time selecting which products to speak to the customer about.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. The statements below describe customer characteristics. For each statement indicate the degree to which your customers may be characterized by the statement. If the statement describes almost none of your current customers, circle "1". If the statement describes almost all of your current customers, circle "7".

	Almost None				Almost All		
My customers request information prior to closing a sale.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers are already familiar with how my product sells in their store(s).....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers consider alternative suppliers before purchasing from me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers have purchased products similar to my company's offering, but have not purchased from me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers purchase the same products from me on a continuing basis.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My customers have a great deal of experience purchasing the types of products I sell.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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The R. B. Pamplin College of Business  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061**

**THE SITUATION**

Imagine a restaurant is looking for a new supplier of food products which are needed on a regular basis. You have heard that the customer has been comparing the quality, price, product performance, delivery terms, and guarantees of alternative suppliers. Since they are aware of your organization, you have been given the opportunity to speak with a representative of the restaurant concerning an order.

1. The first part of the questionnaire is concerned with the customer described in the situation. *REFER TO THIS SITUATION WHEN YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS 1 - 5 OF THIS SECTION.* Although your answers to these questions will depend on a number of other factors please answer as much as possible in light of the information contained in the situation.

	Very Infrequently			Very Frequently			
1. How frequently do you encounter customers similar to this scenario?.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. For each of the following statements, circle the number which best indicates how you would prepare your sales calls for the customer described in the situation. If it is very unlikely that you would perform the activity addressed in the statement, circle "1"; if it is very likely that you would perform the activity addressed in the statement, circle "7".

	Very Unlikely			Very Likely			
Before I make this sales call, I would evaluate the specific information needs of the buyer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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I would genuinely enjoy helping this customer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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