AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF SALESPERSON TRAITS, ADAPTIVE SELLING, AND SALES PERFORMANCE

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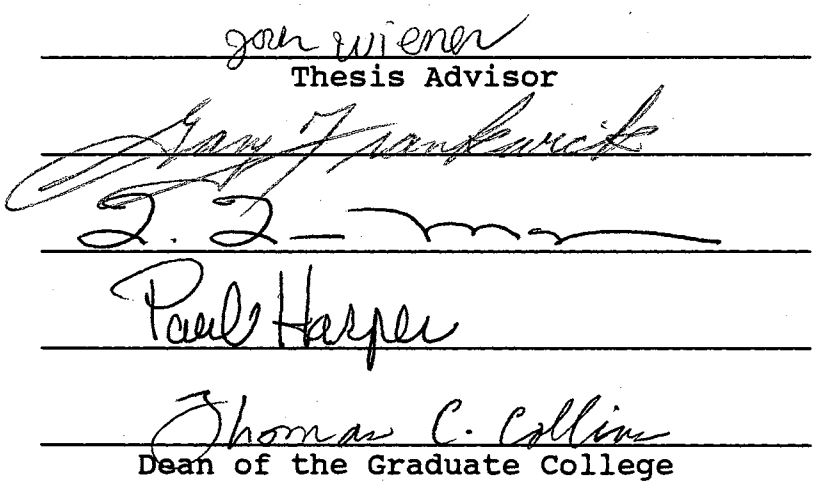

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Faith is defined as the "ASSURANCE of things hoped for, the CONVICTION of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1-2). I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have exhibited faith in me, as well as, reinforced my faith throughout my doctoral program.

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Words cannot adequately express my heart felt gratitude to my family for their support. To my children: Kasey, James, Keley, Kelsey, and Jonathan I am sorry that I missed

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A salesperson's responsibilities include acting as a common denominator between firms and individuals engaged in an exchange. By functioning as an important persuasive link between a company and its customers, a salesperson will attempt to create an effective sales interaction. Thus, personal selling is inherently a dynamic and complex process with success "... depending on the salesperson properly identifying and satisfying the needs of the customer" (Szymanski 1988, p. 65). From a managerial perspective, research focusing on the identification of variables affecting a salesperson's ability to effectively interact with customers is important. Research to date, however, has identified only a limited number of variables that are consistently correlated with effective salesperson performance.

Historically, research concerning the marketing model of personal selling concentrated on uncovering salesperson behaviors, behavioral predispositions, and capabilities related to successful performance (Weitz 1979; 1981). Marketing scholars have investigated the impact of individual traits (e.g., age, education, sex, intelligence, and sales experience) and different types of messages structures (e.g., hard vs soft sell, canned message

person performance (Weaver 1969; Lamont and Lundstrom 1977; Bagozzi 1978; Harrell 1960; Weitz 1979). Surprisingly, research results have been extremely inconsistent and have failed to uncover ideal salesperson traits and influence strategies consistently related to effectiveness in a sales interaction. Weitz (1981) provides one explanation for the inconsistent research results:

> Past research efforts have attempted to uncover universal characteristics or behaviors that enable salespeople to perform successfully across a wide range of situations. Interactions between sales behaviors and aspects of the sales situation have not been considered.

Thus, past research in personal selling overlooked the relationship between the sales situation and salesperson behavior.

Research in personal selling during the 1980's was influenced by the contingency approach proposed by Weitz (1981). This paradigm adopts a dyadic theme and proposes that the effectiveness of sales behaviors depends upon characteristics of the salesperson, customer, and customer-salesperson interaction. In addition, Weitz (1981) proposes that a critical variable affecting a salesperson's performance is the ability of a salesperson to adapt selling behaviors to the selling situation.

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) develop a framework designed to extend and clarify our understanding of a salesperson's ability to practice adaptive selling. The authors advance the notion that salesperson capabilities

(e.g., knowledge of sales situations and behaviors, and information acquisition skills) are necessary to be effective in adaptive selling.

This chapter provides an introduction to the problem situation. It is developed in three parts. The first section examines the adaptive selling approach, the second section introduces the constructs of interest. The final section outlines the remainder of the dissertation.

ADAPTIVE SELLING

The concept of adaptability and its importance in human interaction is certainly nothing new. Aristotle, in his attempt to systematize the art of Rhetoric, specifically stressed the "analysis of and the adaptation to one's audience - that is, the target of persuasion" (Spitzberg and Cupach 1984). In a review of Renaissance writer Stephano Guazzo, Mohrmann (1972) discovered that the ultimate criterion of proper conversational delivery was "decorum." Decorum requires delivery to be adapted with appropriate discretion to the context encounter, in both vocal quality and context. More recently, Wheeless and Lashbrook (1991 p. 243) suggest that:

> Adaptability in human encounters depends on one's perceptions of self, others, and the context of the relationship. It is, in part, a function of consistent behavior in interaction with situation variables that demand the selection of responses among alternatives the person is capable of enacting.

If adaptability is a function of an individual's behavior -

which is based on their ability to evaluate self, others, and the context of the relationship - then it is not surprising that current research in personal selling is interested in discovering variables (e.g., salesperson behaviors, behavioral predispositions, and capabilities) that facilitate salesperson adaptability (Weitz 1981; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986; Spiro and Weitz 1990; Goolsby et al. 1992).

Performance in personal selling has been theorized to encompass three factors, (1) role perceptions, (2) motivation, and (3) ability (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977). The Adaptive Selling Model, proposed by Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986), (see Figure 1) consists of 17 constructs specifically concerned with increasing our understanding of a salesperson's ability to adapt selling behaviors effectively to the demands of the sales situation.

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). Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) posit three salesperson capabilities needed to implement adaptive selling, (1) knowledge of sales situations, (2) behaviors, and (3) information acquisition skills. The authors hypothesize that, to practice adaptive selling effectively,

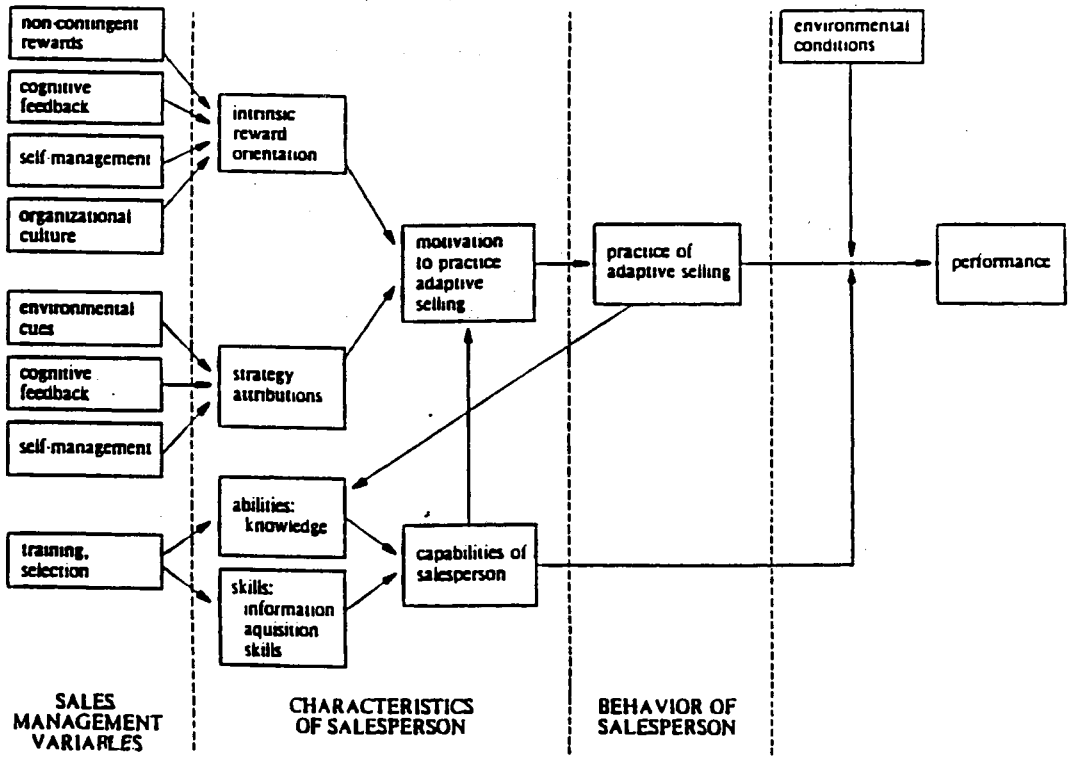

Figure 1. An Adaptive Selling Framework

Source: B. A. Weitz, H. Sujan, and M. Sujan (1986). Knowledge, Motivation, and Adaptive Behavior: A Framework For Improving Selling Effectiveness. Journal of Marketing, 50 (October), p. 175.

salespeople need an elaborate knowledge structure of sales situations, sales behaviors, and contingencies that link specific behaviors to situations. Consequently, a salesperson has an opportunity to develop and implement a sales presentation tailored to each customer. In addition, salespeople can make rapid message adjustments based on the response(s) of the customer during the sales transaction. Personal selling is "the only marketing communication vehicle that allows a marketing message to be adapted to the specific needs and beliefs of each customer" (Spiro and Weitz 1990). Weitz, Sujan and Sujan (1986), however, assert that the first step in testing propositions developed from the adaptive selling model is contingent upon the identification and development of measures of key constructs associated with the practice of adaptive selling.

CONSTRUCTS

By employing the adaptive selling framework, this dissertation focuses on the identification of interpersonal constructs posited to be associated with salesperson adaptability and performance. One objective of this research is to begin to address the issue of developing a more complete model of salesperson adaptability. Moreover, the identification and empirical validation of interpersonal traits that influence a salesperson's ability to practice adaptive selling will advance our understanding of the

larger sales performance construct. Therefore, the current research identifies the following constructs: Salesperson Adaptability, from the personal selling literature, Communicative Adaptability and Interaction Involvement, from the communication literature, and Attributional Complexity, from social psychology, to advance the research investigating the effect of individual traits on the practice of adaptive selling.

A Measure of Adaptive Selling

Spiro and Weitz (1990) integrate and extend prior research findings (Weitz 1978, Spiro and Perreault 1979, Weitz 1979, Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986, Sujan and Weitz 1986) by developing the ADAPTS scale as a measure of salesperson adaptability. Following a procedure similar to the one suggested by Nunnally (1978) Spiro and Weitz (1990) develop a "paper-and-pencil" assessment of the degree to which salespeople are inclined to practice adaptive selling. Initially, a 42 item pool of questions was generated to tap six facets hypothesized to represent a salesperson's predisposition to practice adaptive selling:

1. A recognition that different selling approaches are needed in different sales situations.
2. Confidence in the ability to use a variety of different sales approaches.
3. Confidence in the ability to alter the sales approaches during a customer interaction.
4. A knowledge structure that facilitates the recognition of different sales situations and access to sales strategies appropriate for each situation.

5. The collection of information about the sales situation to facilitate adaption.
6. The actual use of different approaches in different situations.

Principal component factor analysis revealed a five component structure for the data. The eigenvalues of the first five components were 7.24, 2.36, 1.91, 1.27, and 1.07. On the basis of these results, Spiro and Weitz decided to develop a unidimensional scale representing all facets of adaptive selling. The final version of ADAPTS is comprised of 16 items and contains two items from five of the six facets (numbers one, two, three, five and six) posited by Spiro and Weitz (1990) to represent a salesperson's predisposition to practice adaptive selling. Surprisingly, the fourth facet, knowledge structure, was not represented in the final scale. Spiro and Weitz explain that the items created to assess salesperson knowledge were unrelated with the 16 items forming the final scale.

To investigate the nomological validity of the scale, Spiro and Weitz examined simple correlations between ADAPTS and measures of interpersonal flexibility (self-monitoring, empathy, being and opener, androgyny, and locus of control), intrinsic motivation, experience, management style, and performance. The research results indicate that ADAPTS is significantly correlated with the general measures of interpersonal flexibility and intrinsic motivation. However, the antecedents of experience and management style were not significantly correlated with ADAPTS. Surprisingly,

the relationship between ADAPTS and selling effectiveness was inconclusive.

Goolsby, Lagace, and Boorom (1992) partially replicate and extend the work of Spiro and Weitz (1990) by exploring the impact of adaptive psychological traits (self-monitoring, androgyny and intrinsic reward orientation) on sales performance. In addition, the authors investigate the hypothesized relationship of the three adaptive traits across Behrman and Perreault's (1982) five dimensions of sales performance (specifically, ability to meet sales objectives, degree of technical knowledge, tendency to provide information back to the company, ability to control expenses, and performance interactions with customers).

Goolsby et al. (1992) provide support for the postulated impact of the adaptive psychological traits on sales performance. However, their findings also reveal that the effects are highly pinpointed. For example, androgyny was significantly related to the "Sales Interaction" dimension of sales performance, but was not related to the remaining four dimensions. However, each of the sales performance dimensions was predicted by at least one of the adaptive traits in the overall sample. Thus, the authors posit that "the findings strongly suggest that sales personnel who are high in self-monitoring, androgyny and intrinsic reward orientation are more likely to excel across all sales performance dimensions."

Conclusions:

In summary, the adaptive selling scale (ADAPTS) assesses the degree to which salespeople adapt their sales presentations in response to characteristics of the sales interaction. Thus, ADAPTS (Spiro and Weitz 1990) is a global measure of a salesperson's predisposition toward interpersonal adaptability. However, Spiro and Weitz (1990) fail to empirically validate the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and effective sales performance. In addition, a hypothesized facet of adaptive selling (Spiro and Weitz 1990; Weitz et al. 1986), salesperson knowledge structure, is missing from the final version of ADAPTS.

Goolsby et al. (1992) extend the adaptive selling paradigm by investigating the relationship of psychological adaptiveness traits with sales performance. Their investigation indicates a significant and positive relationship between the psychological adaptiveness traits and sales performance. However, their findings also reveal that these effects are highly pinpointed. In addition, Goolsby et al. suggest that a more complete group of adaptive traits is needed to interpret the impact of salesperson adaptability on the selling process.

Communicative Adaptability

Dyadic communication can be defined as:

> "engaging in face-to-face communication... the process of communication entails each person (1) emitting cues and (2) assigning meaning to his/her own and the other's cues. The communication process encompasses behavior and the meanings associated with it (Wilmont 1979).

The concept of communication as an important element in the exchange interaction is certainly nothing new. Capon, Holbrook, and Hulbert (1972) point out in their review of the customer-salesperson interaction literature, that very little research has explored the dyadic sales relationship from a communication perspective. To date, empirical research investigating communication's affect on the dyadic sales interaction has been hindered by the lack of measurement scales capable of capturing the communication construct . Therefore, one purpose of the current research is to investigate one conceptualization of dyadic communication, communicative adaptability, and its relationship with the practice of adaptive selling.

Communicative Adaptability is defined as "the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one's interaction goals and behaviors accordingly" (Duran 1983). Duran (1983) explains that the salient aspects of communicative adaptability are:

1) The requirement of both cognitive (ability to perceive) and behavioral (ability to adapt);

2) Adaptation not only of behaviors but interactive goals;

3) The ability to perceive and adapt to the requirements posed by different communication contexts;

4) The assumption that perceptions of communicative competence reside in the dyad.

The 30 item Communicative Adaptability scale (CAS) is composed of six dimensions which function to measure an individual's ability to adapt to various interaction contexts. An advantage of the Communicative Adaptability scales is that it was designed to specifically investigate communication in a dyadic interaction.

In summary, the Communicative Adaptability construct purports to measure an individual's communicative ability to perceive and adapt to the unique characteristics of a dyadic relationship. The current research uses the Communicative Adaptability scale developed by Duran (1983, 1992) to investigate the relationship between communication, adaptability, and the practice of adaptive selling.

Interaction Involvement

Involvement is a state of existence. Accordingly, an individual is always more or less involved in something. Antil (1984) defines involvement as "the level of perceived importance and/or interest evoked by a stimulus (or stimuli) within a specific situation." Involvement is a function of person, object, and situation. The degree of personal involvement is dependent on the individual's needs and values. Thus, involvement is activated when the individual perceives a stimulus (stimuli) as being instrumental in meeting important needs, goals, or values (Engel, Blackwell,

and Minard 1993).

Conceptual research in personal selling theorizes that performance is influenced by a salesperson's ability to "read the customer." More specifically, a salesperson must evaluate cues and feedback from a sales situation, then develop or modify persuasive selling strategies. It is plausible that the involvement construct mediates a salesperson's ability to collect, analyze, and adapt selling strategies. Therefore, one purpose of the current research is to investigate involvement as a variable affecting the practice of adaptive selling.

Cegala (1981, 1982b, 1984, 1988; Cegala, Savage, Brunner and Conrad 1982) has pioneered research, in the social science domain of communication, focusing on the interpersonal trait of interaction involvement. Interaction involvement is defined as "the extent to which an individual participates with another in conversations" (Cegala 1982). Highly involved individuals typically integrate feelings, thoughts, and experiences with the ongoing dyadic interaction. When an individual experiences low interaction involvement, they may appear to be preoccupied with other thoughts or goals, or distracted, uncertain, and/or withdrawn from the immediate social interaction (Cegala 1982). "When interaction involvement is considered as a more general characteristic, it may be viewed as a trait of interpersonal communication competence" (Cegala 1981, 1982).

The Interaction Involvement Scale is composed of 18 items that cluster into three related factors called "responsiveness", "perceptiveness", and "attentiveness". Responsiveness is an index of an individual's certainty about how to respond in social situations. Perceptiveness is an individual's general sensitivity to: (1) what meanings ought to be applied to others' behavior, and (2) what meanings others have applied to one's own behavior. Attentiveness is the extent to which one tends to heed cues in the immediate social environment, especially from one's dyadic partner (Cegala 1882, 1984). The three dimensions of Interaction Involvement (responsiveness, perceptiveness, and attentiveness) should have an affect on a salesperson's ability to practice adaptive selling. Given that the IIS was specifically developed to investigate effective dyadic interactions, it seems a natural extension to investigate the relationship between a salesperson's adaptability and interaction involvement.

Attributional Complexity

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) propose that adaptive selling is influenced by a salesperson's knowledge of the customer, and sales strategies, as well as, their motivation to alter their behaviors during a sales interaction. The dyadic sales interaction involves anticipating and responding, or adapting, to the needs or behaviors of the

customer. Consequently, the differences in knowledge structures should be an important determinant of effective adaptive selling (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). Therefore, one purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the construct of Attributional Complexity and selling effectiveness.

The construct of Attributional Complexity is based on the notion that some people possess more complex attributional schemata than others (Fletcher et al. 1986). Thus, the central principle underlying the Attributional Complexity construct and the dimensions of its scale is that all of the dimensions of the Attributional Complexity scale (ACS) are related in a consistent fashion; that is, people who are more complex on one attributional dimension will be more complex on the other dimensions. The 28 item ACS is composed of seven attributional constructs, that range along a simple-complex continuum (Fletcher et al. 1986).

The current research uses the ACS to investigate the relationship between a representation of knowledge structure and the practice of adaptive selling (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986: Spiro and Weitz 1990).

CONTRIBUTIONS

Without doubt, the ultimate concern for sales practitioners and researchers has been to answer the question "what variables facilitate effective sales

performance?" For decades, research in personal selling has attempted to discover universally effective sales behaviors and behavioral predispositions related to successful performance (Weitz 1979; 1981; Spiro and Weitz 1990; Goolsby et al. 1992).

Conceptually, salesperson adaptability is widely recognized and accepted as an important interpersonal capability that relates to effective sales performance (cf. Weitz 1979; 1981; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986; Spiro and Weitz 1990; Goolsby et al. 1992; Alessandra et al. 1987; and Manning and Reece 1990). However there is a lack of empirical evidence that validates the relationship. The only study (Spiro and Weitz 1990) in the adaptive selling stream to use a measure of a salesperson's tendency to practice adaptive selling (ADAPTS) used a deficient measure of sales performance. The only study (Goolsby et al. 1992) to use a valid measure of salesperson performance (Behrman and Perrault 1982; Lagacee and Howell 1988) failed to measure a salesperson's tendency to practice adaptive selling.

Consequently, a major purpose for this dissertation is to investigate the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) and salesperson performance (as measured by Behrman and Perrault's salesperson performance scale).

In addition, the current research adds to the growing

literature investigating the influence of person-specific characteristics or traits (e.g., self-monitoring, androgyny, empathy, locus of control) posited to facilitate the practice of adaptive selling. Following the lead of Spiro and Weitz (1990) and Goolsby et al. (1992), the current research explores the relationship between two interpersonal communication traits, interaction involvement and communicative adaptability, and the practice of adaptive selling. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that a salesperson's knowledge structure will affect their ability to practice adaptive selling. Therefore, one purpose of the current research is to explore the relationship between attributional complexity, a conceptualization of knowledge structure, and the practice of adaptive selling.

In summary, the contributions of this dissertation focus on the investigation of:

(1) the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) and sales performance.

(2) the relationship between salesperson adaptability (as measured by ADAPTS) and the interpersonal communication traits of Interaction Involvement and Communicative Adaptability.

(3) the relationship between the interpersonal trait of Attributional Complexity (a representation of a type of salesperson knowledge structure) and salesperson adaptability (as measured by ADAPTS).

DISSERTATION ORGANIZATION

This dissertation is organized into five distinct

chapters. As an introduction to the dissertation, the first chapter reviews the scope, nature and purpose of this study. The second chapter explicates the constructs of adaptive selling, sales performance, interaction involvement, attributional complexity, and communicative adaptability. In addition, Chapter Two develops the hypothesized linkage between the practice of adaptive selling and the constructs of Communicative Adaptability, Interaction Involvement, and Attributional Complexity. Chapter three presents the research methodology to be utilized in carrying out the study. The research results are presented in chapter four, where the findings are assessed for each of the hypotheses regarding the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and the interpersonal communication and knowledge constructs; and the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and sales performance. Chapter five presents the research results in light of their managerial implications along with limitations of this study to be addressed in future research endeavors.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptive Selling

Academic and practitioner interest in understanding the impact of a salesperson's behavior on selling performance has intensified during the last decade. Both academic and practitioner personal selling literature, routinely discusses the "ideal" behavior of a salesperson. Instead of merely selling products or taking "orders," today's salesperson should attempt to monitor the dyadic sales interaction and then develop a customer oriented selling strategy that facilitates an effective customer interaction. (e.g., Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986; Weitz, Castleberry, and Tanner 1992; Alessandra, Cathcart, and Wexler 1988; Anderson 1991; Manning and Reece 1990; Saxe and Weitz 1982;). Thus, salespeople have an opportunity to develop and implement a sales presentation tailored to each customer. An important intra-personal variable impacting the development of a customer oriented selling strategy is the notion of salesperson adaptability.

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) posit that the ability of a salesperson to adapt sales behaviors to the demands of the selling situation will impact his/her effectiveness. However, most empirical research has largely ignored the

adaptive nature of personal selling (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986).

ADAPTION

Adaptation is a concept with a long history in biology, referring to the ways in which "fit" is brought about between living systems (Hallen, Johanson, and Seyed-Mohamed). Adaptation also has been used in human and cultural ecology (Hawley 1950, 1968; Steward 1968) to denote aspects of the interaction between social units and their environments. Cultural ecology (Alderson 1965) treats the adaptations that bring about balance between organized behavior systems and their environments as central elements in the functionalist theory of marketing. In human ecology, symbiotic adaptations are singled out as adaptations taking place between two units or organisms that are independent of each other. (Hawley 1968).

The adaptation construct has had an influence in organizational theory. Two major aspects of adaptation have been stressed; (1) the contingency theory focusing on the organization-environment interface (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967) and, (2) the behavioral theory emphasizing the dynamic or history-dependent aspects of adaptations and their role in organizational change (Cyert and March 1963; March 1988).

Marketing strategy has also been influenced by the adaptation construct. An adaptive dimension of strategic

marketing management is the ability of a firm to respond over time to changing conditions and opportunities in the environment (Kotler 1991, Walker, Boyd, and Larreche 1992). Following the tradition in biology, international marketing strategy research has focused on the issue of standardization versus local adaptation of marketing programs (Buzzell 1968; Keegan 1969; Levitt 1983), implying that adaptation is not only a matter of general "fit" between a firm and its environment or market, but also a matter of specific "fit" in relation to different consumer segments.

Marketing channels researchers propose that adaptation is a significant feature in the dynamics of suppliers and customers developing lasting exchange relationships. (c.f., Hallen, Johanson, and Seyed-Mohamed 1991; Dywer and Oh 1988; Heide and John 1988; Jackson 1985). One or both of the parties may make adaptations to bring about a fit between their needs and capabilities. In addition, adaptation may be necessary in an ongoing relationship as the exchange partners are exposed to changing business conditions (Hallen, Johanson, and Seyed-Mohamed 1991). Hence, one can expect that suppliers adapt to the needs of specific important customers, as well as, customers adapting to the capabilities of specific suppliers. Correspondingly, a natural extension of adaptability and its role in relationship building is in the domain of dyadic

sales interactions.

Adaptation and Personal Selling

Kotler (1991) defines personal selling as "person-to-person interaction between a buyer and seller wherein the seller's purpose is to persuade the buyer to accept a point of view, or convince the buyer to take a course of action, or to develop a customer relationship." A basic conceptualization of persuasive competence is an individual's ability to adapt effectively to the surrounding environment over time to achieve goals. Moreover, no other aspect of competence and effective social functioning seems so universally accepted as the ability to adapt to changing environmental and social conditions (Spitzberg and Cupach 1984).

Sales Process Model

The sales management literature acknowledges that a percentage of the variance associated with salesperson performance is related to the environment in which the salesperson operates. Thus, all of the variance cannot be attributed to the individual salesperson's activities and behaviors (Cravens and Woodruff 1972; Lucas, Weinberg, and Clowes 1975; Weitz 1978). However, research in the domain of personal selling (c.f., Weitz 1978, 1981; Spiro and Weitz 1991; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1992) emphasizes the need to

identify and clarify behavioral factors associated with individual differences and their relationship to selling effectiveness.

Weitz (1978) develops the sales process model to clarify and facilitate the study of the effect(s) of specific salesperson abilities with sales performance. The descriptive multistage model (see Figure 2) illustrates that a salesperson's persuasive success is related to his/her ability to perform the following five activities: (1) developing impressions, (2) formulating strategies, (3) transmitting messages, (4) evaluating reactions, and (5) making appropriate adjustments. The model is referred to as ISTEA for "impression, strategy, transmission, evaluation, and adjustment." As illustrated in Figure 2, the model focuses on a salesperson's performance with a specific customer after initial contact has been established. The sequence of dyadic selling activities described in the ISTEA model can occur in one interaction or may involve several separate interactions over time.

The starting sales activity in the ISTEA model (Weitz 1978) involves the salesperson combining information gained through past experience with information relevant to the current interaction. By observing the target customer during the interaction, and projecting him/herself into the target customer's decision-making situation the salesperson

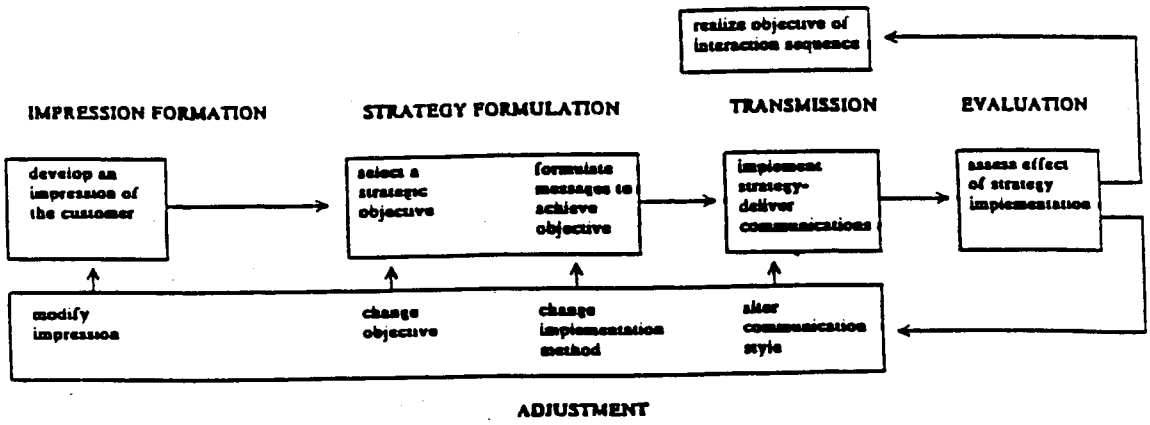

Figure 2. ISTEA Sales Process Model

begins to develop an impression of the customer.

During the second stage, salespeople formulate communication strategy based on impression(s) of the customer. Included are an objective for the strategy, a method for implementing the strategy, and specific message formats.

Once communication strategy is formulated, the salesperson transmits the message to the customer. As the message is delivered, the salesperson must also evaluate feedback from the customer. Specifically, observing the customer's reactions and soliciting his/her opinions. The evaluation of the feedback presents the salesperson with several options; the salesperson can continue to implement the same strategy, make adjustments by either reformulating his/her impression of the customer or selecting a new strategic objective, or changing the method of achieving the strategic objective. (Weitz 1978).

In summary, the ISTEA model suggests that the salesperson engages in five activities in attempting to influence a customer's decision. In addition, a salesperson has an opportunity to collect information about each customer and to develop persuasive messages that are maximally effective. Evaluations based on feedback from the customer facilitate adjustments in the selling process. Thus, Weitz supports the notion that adaptation is a fundamental aspect of the selling process. Finally, the ISTEA model provides a theoretical basis for identifying the adaptive skills and behaviors related to successful performance.

The Contingency Model

Expanding the basic themes presented in the ISTEA model, Weitz (1981) develops a contingency perspective of salesperson effectiveness. Salesperson effectiveness is formulated as a function of the interactions between four categories of contingencies:

1. Selling behaviors.
2. Resources of the salesperson.
3. Characteristics of the Salesperson-customer interaction.
4. Characteristics of the customer's buying task.

In addition, Weitz (1981) explains that the dyadic nature of the contingency approach "... suggests that effectiveness in sales interactions is moderated by or depends on characteristics of both the salesperson and the customer"

(p.88). More specifically, salesperson effectiveness is viewed as the "first-order interaction between behaviors and characteristics associated with the salesperson, the customer, and the dyad" (Weitz 1981, p. 91). In addition, Weitz identified adaptive selling as one of the contingency components included in the selling behavior.

An Adaptive Selling Framework

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) develop a model proposing that adaptive selling is influenced by a salesperson's knowledge of customer types and sales strategies as well as their motivation to alter the direction of their behavior. More specifically, the authors provide a framework (see Figure 3) designed to facilitate research directed toward clarifying: (1) our understanding of a salesperson's motivation to practice adaptive selling, (2) adaptive selling capabilities, and (3) the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and selling performance.

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). The authors explain that a salesperson's abilities and skills moderate

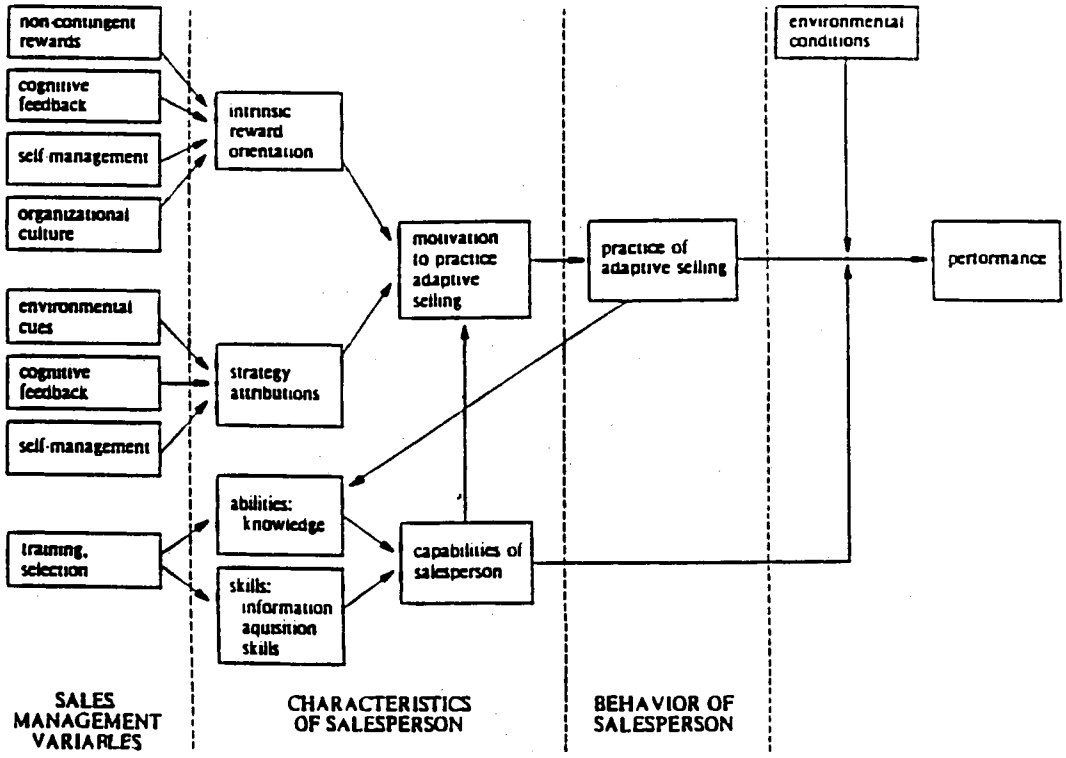

Figure 2. An Adaptive Selling Framework

Source: B.A. Weitz, H. Sujan, and M. Sujan (1986). Knowledge, Motivation, and Adaptive Behavior: A Framework for Improving Selling Effectiveness. Journal of Marketing, 50 (October), p. 175.

the effectiveness of practicing adaptive selling. Moreover,"to practice adaptive selling effectively, salespeople need an elaborate knowledge structure of sales situations, sales behaviors, and contingencies that link specific behaviors to situations" (p. 176). The importance of the knowledge component utilized in the adaptive framework (Weitz et al. 1986) is congruent with and compliments the impression formation and strategy formulation stages of the ISTEA model (Weitz 1978). Thus, the effective utilization of salesperson knowledge is contingent upon the salesperson's ability to relate knowledge acquired in previous sales situations to feedback collected about the customer during the interaction in which they are currently engaged.

In spite of its apparent importance, a paucity of empirical research exists that directly investigates adaptive selling. However, research exists supporting the notion that salespeople practice adaptive selling. For example, Spiro and Perreault (1979) found that a variety of sales approaches, relating to the nature of the sales encounter, are used by salespeople. Empirical support for a hypothesized relationship between "working smarter" (equated to the practice of adaptive selling) and performance is provided by Sujan and Weitz (1986). The authors found a significant relationship between "working smarter" and performance. However, the authors acknowledge, a limitation

of their study was that they used a two item scale to capture the meaning of adaptive selling.

Conclusions

Weitz (1981) asserts that to be an effective salesperson will necessitate the utilization of a contingency approach to selling. Persuasive strategy will be selected on the basis of its fit or match with the specific situations encountered during the sale interaction. The concept of adaptive selling is a fundamental dimension of the contingency framework (Weitz 1981) and represents one of the main components of the ISTEA model (Weitz 1978). The practice of adaptive selling is based on the principle of a salesperson modifying or adapting selling behaviors, contingent on the assessment of the sales interaction. It is postulated that by adapting behavior to the demands of a dyadic transaction, a positive effect on sales performance will occur. It is clear, that the measurement of a salesperson's tendency to practice adaptive selling is crucial to developing a more complete understanding of the adaptability construct.

A Measure of Adaptive Selling

Spiro and Weitz (1990) integrate and extend the prior research findings(Weitz 1978, Spiro and Perreault 1979, Weitz 1979, Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986, Sujan and Weitz

1986) and develop ADAPTS as a primary measure of salesperson adaptability. Following a procedure similar to the one suggested by Nunnally (1978) Spiro and Weitz (1990) develop a "paper-and-pencil" assessment of the degree to which salespeople are inclined to practice adaptive selling. A 42 item pool of questions was generated initially to tap six facets of adaptive selling. A salesperson's predisposition to practice adaptive selling is based on the following six facets:

1. A recognition that different selling approaches are needed in different sales situations.
2. Confidence in the ability to use a variety of different sales approaches.
3. Confidence in the ability to alter the sales approaches during a customer interaction.
4. A knowledge structure that facilitates the recognition of different sales situations and access to sales strategies appropriate for each situation.
5. The collection of information about the sales situation to facilitate adaption.
6. The actual use of different approaches in different situations.

Questionnaires were sent to 500 salespeople in 10 divisions of a single national manufacturer of diagnostic equipment and supplies. A 54% response rate yielded 268 usable questionnaires. Standard scale purification techniques were used to test the factor structure and reliability of the measures.

Principle component factor analysis revealed a five component structure for the data. The reported eigenvalues for the first five factors were 7.24, 2.36, 1.91, 1.27, and 1.07. The factor loadings did not correspond to the a

priori conceptualizations of the facets of adaptive selling. However, items representing five of the six facets did load significantly on the first component. On the basis of these results, Spiro and Weitz decided to develop one scale representing all facets of adaptive selling rather than separate, multi-item scales for each facet. Item-reduction techniques were used to construct the unidimensional scale. The final sixteen-scale had a reported coefficient alpha of .85.

The final scale (ADAPTS) contains two items from five of the six facets (numbers one, two, three, five and six) posited by Spiro and Weitz (1990) to represent a salesperson's predisposition to practice adaptive selling. Thus, the ADAPTS scale is comprised of 16 items representing five facets perceived to capture a salesperson's predisposition to practice adaptive selling. The authors explain that two factors, personality traits and antecedents of the practice of adaptive selling, represent the foundation for the ADAPTS scale.

Salespeople first must believe that customers have different beliefs and needs and that these customer differences result in a need to alter sales presentations accordingly. The first factor of the ADAPTS scale, personality traits, reflects five aspects of interpersonal flexibility that are hypothesized to be related to the degree to which a salesperson practices adaptive selling

(Spiro and Weitz 1990). To assess the nomological validity of the ADAPTS scale, simple correlations were examined between ADAPTS items and general personality measures of interpersonal flexibility.

Self-monitoring. The theory of self-monitoring (Snyder 1979) suggests that individuals have a consistent pattern in terms of the degree to which they alter their self presentation in response to situation cues. People high in self-monitoring should demonstrate a high degree of flexibility and adaptiveness (cross-situational variability) as they alter their self presentation in response to situational cues. In contrast, low self-monitoring individuals regard themselves as quite rigid and consistent in their self presentation. Spiro and Weitz (1990) hypothesized that three components of the revised self-monitoring scale developed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984) would relate to the practice of adaptive selling; (1) the ability to modify self-presentation, (2) sensitivity to expressive behavior by others, and (3) cross-situational variability. However, the ADAPTS research results indicate that cross-situational variability was not related to ADAPTS. The authors posit this lack of relationship may be due to differences in the concept of interpersonal flexibility in business (sales) situations and the social environment examined by items in the self-monitoring scales.

Androgyny. Is the degree to which individuals feel that they are characterized by traits culturally associated with both men and women. Specifically, androgynous people perceive themselves as being both assertive/instrumental (dominant) and yielding/ expressive (nurturant)(Bem 1974; Sprio and Weitz 1990). Thus, for the androgynous person, the specific interaction pattern adopted depends on the situational appropriateness of the behavior. Conversely, the interaction pattern of strongly sex-typed individuals is limited to behaviors stereotypically associated with their perceived sex roles (Bem 1974). Hence, androgyny is related to flexibility in dyadic interactions - an aspect of adaptive selling. Empirical support for the flexibility-androgyny relationship is provided by Wiggins and Holzmuller (1981). Additionally, Spiro and Weitz (1990) found androgyny to be related to the practice of adaptive selling.

Empathy. Fundamentally, empathy is the reaction of individuals to the observed experiences of other individuals. Spiro and Weitz integrate empathy scales developed by Davis (1983) and Johnson, Cheek, and Smither 1983). The authors conceptualize the dimensions of perspective taking, empathetic concern, and social self-confidence as possessing a positive relationship to the practice of adaptive selling. Perspective taking and empathetic concern are associated with aspects of adaptive selling such as the perception that customers differ in

terms of needs and the collection of information to facilitate adaptation. Social self-confidence indicates the degree to which an individual is confident in social situations. Socially self-confident salespeople would perceive themselves as being socially adept, assertive, and perhaps slightly "cocky". Moreover, Spiro and Weitz propose that a socially self-confident salespeople would be more likely to use different sales approaches and, thus, alter their sales approaches during sales transaction.

Openers. Individuals differ in the degree to which they are predisposed to "open up" or elicit intimate information from other people (Miller, Berg, and Archer 1983). In other words, certain individuals seem to be more adept at getting other people to talk about themselves. Thus, the "opener" personality trait is conceptually related to the salesperson's ability to collect information about customer needs in adaptive selling.

Locus of Control. Is conceptualized as a predisposition in the perception of what caused a reward (or favorable outcome) and how individuals react to the reward on the basis of this perception (Rotter 1966). If an "individual perceives that an event's outcome is contingent upon his/her own behavior or permanent characteristics, this is an "internal" locus of control. An individual who perceives that an event's outcome is due to luck, chance,

fate, or is simply unpredictable, has an "external" locus of control.

Paulhus (1983) has developed a locus of control scale consisting of three sub-scales, personal efficacy, interpersonal control, and socio political control. Conceptually, personal efficacy and interpersonal locus of control relate to the level of confidence salespeople have in using differing sales strategies (e.g., canned vs individualized sales approach) and, in the confidence to adapt sales tactics during a dyadic interaction.

Interpersonal control involves the perception of control of others in dyadic and group situations. In sales transactions a relationship is established between the salesperson and the buyer. Control of a sales interaction arises from the ability to adapt to the different buyer characteristics that may be encountered. If the salesperson controls the situation, he/she will be more likely to make the sale. Thus, Sprio and Weitz (1990) hypothesized that control would impact the practice of adaptive selling.

Personal efficacy measures control over the nonsocial environment in situations of personal achievement. In sales, the salesperson must be able to solve nonsocial problem, such as deciding how to cover a territory, time management decisions concerning solving administrative problems and paperwork between sales encounters. A salesperson high in personal efficacy will do what he/she

can to master his/her environment. Therefore, Spiro and Weitz (1990) predicted that individuals ranking higher in personal efficacy will be more likely to practice adaptive selling.

The second factor providing the infrastructure for the ADAPTS scale is labeled "antecedents of adaptive selling." The antecedents of adaptive selling are represented by four components: 1) intrinsic motivation, 2) salesperson experience, 3) management style, and 4) performance.

Intrinsic Motivation. Spiro and Weitz (1990) define intrinsic motivation as the motivation to seek "rewards derived directly from or inherent in the task or job itself--associated with the content of the task or job." The salesperson who is intrinsically motivated attains rewards from the physical act of selling.

Experience. Spiro and Weitz believe that experience facilitates the recognition of a wider variety of selling situations. Experience describes the improvement of sales skills and the development of more elaborate knowledge of selling situations, customer types, and potential selling strategies (Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986).

Management Style. Spiro and Weitz (1990) incorporate three dimensions of supervisory behavior into the ADAPTS scale; 1) initiation of structure, 2) production emphasis, and 3) tolerance of freedom. The first two dimensions of supervisory behavior are hypothesized to inhibit the

practice of adaptive selling by encouraging salespeople to use a well defined set of influence approaches while discouraging experimentation with new sales approaches. Spiro and Weitz hypothesized that the third dimension of supervisory behavior, tolerance for freedom, might encourage the practice of adaptive selling. The three dimensions of managerial style were measured by using the LBDQXII scales (Stogdill 1963). These measures are based on the salesperson's perception of his/her sales manager's behavior.

Performance. Performance is comprised of two measures, self-report and a manager-provided assessment. Although there has been considerable debate in the sales literature concerning the inadequacies of performance measures (c.f., Churchill et al. 1985; Landy and Farr 1980; Behrman and Perreault 1982) Spiro and Weitz (1990) conclude " because two global measures, each of which may be emphasizing different aspects of performance and each of which has its own particular biases, are better than one, we examine these two measures separately."

Conclusions. The analysis provided by Sprio and Weitz (1990) indicates that ADAPTS and the five general measures of interpersonal flexibility are correlated significantly ($p < .001$). ADAPTS is related significantly to the antecedent of intrinsic motivation, but not to experience or managerial style. Spiro and Weitz conclude the lack of relationship

with experience may be due to a ceiling effect. The mean experience of respondents is only eight years, and thus, the respondents may not have differentiated in terms of knowledge gained through experience.

The antecedent of managerial style, as measured by Spiro and Weitz, did not seem to affect the degree to which salespeople practice adaptive selling. One possible explanation for this finding is that Spiro and Weitz did not fully assess the managerial style construct.

The relationship between the antecedent of performance and ADAPTS is inconclusive. The ADAPTS scale is significantly related to a self-assessment of performance, it is unrelated to the management ratings of performance.

Goolsby, Lagace, and Boorom (1992) attempt to clarify the impact of three psychological traits (self-monitoring, androgyny, and intrinsic rewards) on salesperson performance, Goolsby et al. (1993) investigate the relationship of the three adaptiveness traits across Behrman and Perreault's (1982) five dimensions of sales performance; specifically, ability to meet sales objectives, degree of technical knowledge, tendency to provide information back to the company, ability to control expenses, and performance interactions with customers. The hypotheses were investigated by entering adaptiveness traits (self-monitoring, androgyny, intrinsic rewards) as independent

variables in a set of regression equations with each sales performance dimensions serving as a dependent variable.

Self-Monitoring and Performance. Self-monitoring is conceptualized as a two dimensional construct; (c.f. Snyder 1979; Spiro and Weitz 1990) ability to modify self-presentation and sensitivity to express behaviors to others. The authors' findings suggest that modify is statistically significant predictor of meeting sales objects, sensitivity is not. In fact modify is the only variable in the study significantly related to this important performance measure.

With regards to "Sales Interactions", modify is not statistically significant, but sensitivity is, suggesting that being sensitive to the expressive behavior of others is more predictive of performance in sales interactions than is the ability to modify behavior. Goolsby et al. (1993) interpret these findings and suggest that the dimensions of the self-monitoring construct have highly focused impacts on selling effectiveness. In fact, neither self-monitoring dimension is significant in predicting "overall performance" (specifically, the adaptive characteristics of self-monitoring are not related to the dimensions of degree of technical knowledge, tendency to provide information to the company, and ability to control expenses). The authors posit that this is the reason why previous studies of self-monitoring have yielded either insignificant or inconsistent results.

Androgyny and Performance. The psychological trait of androgyny is statistically significant with "Sales Interactions", but is not related to "Sales Objectives". These results suggest, while androgyny impacts the ability to interact effectively with customers, androgyny may not ultimately lead to improved performance in meeting sales objectives. Goolsby et al. (1993) explain "...the impact of androgyny is sufficiently strong to be significantly related to our overall measure of performance, similar to self-monitoring, androgyny impacts sales performance, but this impact is highly focused."

Intrinsic Motivation and Performance. The findings concerning the psychological trait of intrinsic motivation suggest a positive relationship with three facets of perceived sales performance; "Technical Knowledge", "Provide Information", and "Control Expenses". On the contrary, no significant relationship surfaces with "Sales Objective" and "Sales Interactions". Intrinsic motivation is significant in predicting overall performance. Analogous with androgyny and self-monitoring, intrinsic motivation has a highly focused impact on performance. Moreover, intrinsic motivation is predictive of non-interaction aspects of sales performance; whereas, androgyny and self-monitoring relate more directly to interactive, dyadic salesperson capabilities.

Conclusions

The findings of the Goolsby et al. (1993) add to our understanding of the impact of adaptive psychological traits on sales performance. The authors' findings reveal that the psychological traits of self-monitoring, androgyny, and intrinsic rewards possess highly pinpointed affects on performance. Additionally, the findings strongly suggest that sales personnel who are high in self-monitoring, androgyny, and intrinsic reward orientation are more likely to excel across all sales performance dimensions. However, the authors point out that "...adaptiveness affects sales performance, but to gain the full impact requires a complete complement of these psychological traits."

A Measure of Sales Performance

Historically, sales performance has been measured by quantitative company data (dollars, unit sales, contribution to profit). However, the quantitative measures are problematic and may ignore the dynamics of the industrial markets that sales people operate in (Forrester 1961). Self-rating scales have received criticism that they are biased by the salesperson's perception of what he/she does well, not by a balanced perspective of performance on different, important dimensions. Churchill et al. (1985) conducted a Meta-analysis on the determinants of salesperson performance. The problematic area of self-report measures

was investigated, and the authors conclude "...there is no basis for generalizations that higher correlations can be expected when particular types of performance measures are used as criteria" (p. 113). In addition Behrman and Perrault (1982) state:

> "self-report evaluations are most appropriate when responses can be confidential, when much of the effort is not directly observable by the manager, when aspects of performance are not reflected in quantitative data, when multi-company samples are used, and when a reliable scale has been developed to tap different aspects of performance" (p.357).

Scale Development

Behrman and Perrault (1982) utilize a procedure similar to the one suggested by Nunnally (1978) to develop their measure of sales performance. A pool of one hundred items were generated to assess seven categories of sales performance, (1) achieving quantity and quality sales objectives, (2)controlling unnecessary expenses, (3) developing and maintaining customer goodwill, (4) providing information to the company and following company policy, (5) developing and using technical knowledge, (6) giving high quality sales presentations and working well with customers, (7) working well with other personnel in the firm. A panel of expert judges (researchers involved in sales performance research) were utilized to reduce item ambiguity and to obtain feedback concerning the seven categories posited as encompassing sales performance. At the end of the review

process 65 items remained for the seven performance dimensions.

A questionnaire, containing the remaining 65 items, was distributed to 219 sales representatives and 43 sales managers of a participating company: 200 (91 percent) of the salespeople and 42 manager (98 percent) participated. Item-to-total correlation was utilized to initiate the scale purification process and resulted in 25 items being deleted. Exploratory factor analysis revealed a six factor solution for the remaining 40 scale items. However, the sixth factor had an eigenvalue of less than one, and the loading for the remaining items cross-loaded with other factors. At this point in the analysis, Behrman and Perrault determined that the item pool represented a five factor structure for industrial sales performance (sales objective, technical knowledge, providing information, controlling expenses, sales presentations).

Reliability of the performance scale was assessed by generating alpha coefficients for the scale items - all items were over .75. Predictive validity of the scale was assessed by comparing the correlations of the self-report performance sub-components with comparable performance component evaluations generated by the participating sales managers. The analysis indicated the presence of predictive validity.

In summary, Behrman and Perrault (1982) develop a self-report paper-and-pencil self-assessment of salesperson performance. The measurement instrument utilizes five dimensions hypothesized to capture industrial sales performance.

ADAPTIVE COMMUNICATION

Personal selling is differentiated from all other promotion techniques because it represents the only "face-to-face" communication with potential customers. "The role of personal selling is to establish and maintain a dynamic and flexible communicative relationship between parties in a marketing exchange" (Nickels 1984). The notion of "flexibility" conveys that the salesperson can design and adapt his/her sales communication to fit the particular needs of prospective clients; it is situation specific. Intuitively, the notion that a competent salesperson will perceive the need to adapt sales appeals to the communicative differences among their clients possesses a high degree of face validity. Goolsby, et al. (1993) state "...communication effectiveness is of central importance in understanding the role of adaptiveness in sales interactions." Accordingly, research focusing on clarifying the relationship between adaptive communication and sales effectiveness appears to be warranted.

Clearly, the dyadic sales process can not transpire without communication. Communication can be defined as "a transactional process between two or more parties whereby meaning is exchanged through intentional use of symbols" (Engel, Warshaw, and Kinnear 1991). The goal of a salesperson's communication is to bring about an intended response; to persuade the customer. In addition, the communicative act is transactional in nature; messages are created and exchanged based on the situational variables impacting the sales dyad. Thus, it has been noted either implicitly or explicitly that adaptability/flexibility is an important dimension of salesperson communication. However, contemporary personal selling research provides little information concerning the dimensions or structure of adaptive communication. Moreover, academic research focusing on adaptive communication has been stymied due to the scarcity of reliable, and valid measurement scales.

Therefore, one purpose of the current research is to integrate measurement scales, developed in the social science domain of communication, that assess the adaptive qualities of communication into the marketing literature. The evaluation and application of the Communicative Adaptability scale (Duran 1992) and the Interaction Involvement scale (Cegala 1984) will initiate the process of filling the measurement void existing in the marketing communication literature.

Communicative Adaptability

The construct of communicative adaptability has evolved from the conceptualization of communication competence; "... is a function of one's ability to adapt to differing social constraints" (Duran 1983). The most basic form of communication competence is fundamental competence, "an individual's ability to adapt effectively to the surrounding environment over time" (Spitzberg and Cupach 1984, p. 35). The critical feature of this definition to the current study is the focus upon adaptability, which is universally accepted component of communication competence (Bochner and Kelly 1974; Brunner and Phelps 1979; Duran and Kelly 1984; Foote and Cottrell 1955). Conceptualizations of the adaptive nature of communication competence are concerned with the cognitive and perceptual processes involved with the ability to adapt one's communicative behaviors across contexts. Specifically, adaptability is accomplished by perceiving contextual parameters and enacting communication appropriate to the setting (Duran 1992). As a result, researchers in this area are concerned with the psychological process that facilitate cross-contextual performance. Concepts such as role taking, flexibility, behavioral repertoires, and style flexing aid in this process (Duran 1992, 1983).

A second approach to the study of communication competence involves social competence models. This approach

has attempted to identify traits that enhance communicative performance, resulting in a number of different characteristics related to competence (Spitzberg and Cupach 1984). Duran (1983) defines communicative adaptability as "the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one's interaction goals and behaviors accordingly" (p. 320). Thus, communicative adaptability is proposed as a component of social communication competence (Duran 1992) Further, adaptability is one component that aids in the effective and appropriate management of social interactions.

Duran (1983) develops the following salient aspects of communicative adaptability: (1) The requirement of both cognitive (ability to perceive) and behavioral (ability to adapt) skills, (2) Adaptation not only of behaviors but also interaction goals, (3) The ability to perceive and adapt to the requirements posed by different communication contexts, and (4) The assumption that perceptions of communicative competence reside in the dyad (p. 320). Communicative adaptability is conceptualized as a dispositional ability and is measured at the molar-level (Cupach and Spitzberg 1983).

As noted by Spitzberg and Cupach (1989), the key components of adaptability are the possession of a diverse behavioral repertoire and the ability to adapt to the physical, social, and relational context. The Communicative Adaptability Scale (CAS) is composed of six dimensions which

function to measure an individual's ability to adapt to various interaction contexts. The first dimension of the CAS is Social Experience.

Social Experience. This dimension measures an individual's desire and experience with communication in novel social contexts. The result of these experiences is the development and refinement of a social communication repertoire. Such a repertoire enables an individual to interact in various social contexts with different individuals.

Social Composure. This dimension measures how cool, calm, and collected an individual is in a social situation. Such composure is necessary to provide an individual with the confidence to approach a novel social setting and to engage in conversations with others who possibly are not previously known. Social composure contributes to a competent interaction by aiding in accurate perceptions of the social encounter.

Social Confirmation. Is the acknowledgement of the others line or projected self-image. Social confirmation serves to acknowledge and affirm the image that one's partner is attempting to assert (e.g., communication style). Social confirmation aids in the adaptation of the relational context by virtue of recognizing and confirming the projected social image of one's partner.

Appropriate Disclosure. The fourth dimension acknowledges the need to self-disclose within the constraints of the dyadic interaction as indicated by the other. Appropriate disclosure measures an individual's sensitivity to the cues of the other which indicates how intimately one should disclose. Thus, this dimension functions to provide information as to how one's partner is presenting himself/herself and how the other is responding to the way the interaction is transpiring. Further, this dimension measures one's sensitivity to the cues of the other as an indication of how much to adapt his/her level of self disclosure.

Articulation. The fifth dimension measures an individual's ability to clearly express his/her ideas. By tapping an individual's satisfaction with word choice, pronunciation, and grammatical structure the articulation dimension focuses on the expression of ideas in a manner appropriate to the social context. Thus, articulation, like self disclosure, assumes adaptability.

Wit. This dimension not only measures how humorous a person is, but also the use of humor to diffuse social tension. Novel social settings often create social tension and wit is a positive means of handling the anxiety present in a dyadic interaction. Wit aids an individual in handling an awkward situation. Functioning as a verbal acknowledgement of anxiety or tension, wit allows an

individual to deal with irregularities present between the physical, social, and/or relational context. Therefore, wit is an adaptive response to tense social interactions.

Scale Development

The predecessor of the Communicative Adaptability Scale (CAS) was developed by Duran and Wheeless (1980) who generated 67 items, 31 of which were drawn from existing communication measures and the remaining created to tap the dimensions of social experience, adaptability, empathy, and rewarding impression. The initial scale items were designed in five-point Likert response format, and administered along with McCroskey's (1978) Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) and a measure of self-esteem. The sample domain consisted of 831 college students. Employing factor analysis, the authors discovered three factors explaining 33% of the variance: Social Adaptability (e.g., "I am sensitive to others' needs of the moment"), Rewarding Impression (e.g., "I find it easy to get along with new people"), and Meaning Centered Empathy (e.g., "I am a good listener"). The resulting measure, referred to as the Social Management Scale, was the first iteration of the Communicative Adaptability Scale (Duran 1983).

The scale purification process continued in an attempt to increase the percentage of variance accounted for by the CAS measure. An open-ended questionnaire was distributed to

600 faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students asking them to, "list those behaviors and/or abilities that you feel describe a socially competent communicator--those people who handle themselves will in various social situations and seem to be able to talk with different types of people in different settings." The responses were content analyzed and four additional dimensions emerged: Social Composure, Wit, Appropriate Disclosure, and Articulation.

The CAS-SR scale was then administered to two samples: 162 primary and secondary teachers and 697 college students. Once again, factor analysis was used, resulting in a five-factor oblique solution in the first sample (social confirmation, articulation, social experience/composure, wit, appropriate disclosure). In the second sample, a six-factor oblique solution emerged explaining 40% of the variance (Social Composure and Experience loaded as separate factors. Duran (1992) explains that "the six factor structure has remained consistent across ten studies...with students and adults for total sample size of 4000 participants" (p.259). The average alpha reliabilities, based on ten samples, for the CAS dimensions are: Social Experience, .80; Social Confirmation, .84; Social Composure, .82; Appropriate Disclosure, .76; Articulation, .80; and Wit, .74.

Conclusions

In summary, the dimensions of the CAS function in different ways to aid in the process of adaptation to the demands of various social and relational contexts (Duran 1992). The CAS is a dispositionally based construct enabling one to investigate the process by which individuals perform competently across various contexts. Duran and Kelly (1984) explain that the advantage of this approach is that it can lead to explanations of how people are able to be competent in a number of contexts which require different communication skills. "Although, the influence of the dimensions of the CAS may extend beyond social contexts, the dimensions were conceived to describe competence in social communication contexts" (Duran 1992, p. 258). Thus, research utilizing the CAS, in a personal selling context, may provide additional understanding of the relationship between adaptive communication and effective sales performance.

Interaction Involvement

There are two dominant approaches to research investigating the construct of communication competence. One approach views communication competence as a situationally determined phenomenon and is therefore event-focused (Cupach and Spitzberg 1984; Spitzberg and Hecht 1984; Sptizberg 1986). The second approach views

communication competence as a disposition or trait of individuals, emphasizing what people bring to a dyadic interaction (c.f. O'Keefe and Delia 1982; Wiemann and Backlund 1980; Duran and Kelly 1984). Of particular interest to the present study is a trait of communication competence, Interaction Involvement, developed by Cegala (1981; 1983; 1984; 1988).

Interaction involvement is define as "the extent to which an individual participates with another in conversation" (Cegala 1981). Interaction involvement focuses on the degree to which a speaker participates in conversations by being sensitive to the evolving flow of the conversation and by integrating his/her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with the on-going interaction (Cegala 1982). This entails a focus on conscious intention and attention on self, other, and the evolving situation. When highly involved communicators are sensitive to self as a social object, they consider the meaning of circumstances as they arise during an interaction and adapt to them accordingly. On the other hand, when communicators are low in interaction involvement they are removed psychologically and communicatively from the ongoing interaction (Cegala 1984). Thus, when interaction involvement is considered as a more general characteristic, it may be viewed as a trait of interpersonal communication competence. In addition, the interaction involvement construct measures the adaptive

nature of an individual's involvement level during a dyadic interaction.

Scale Development

Cegala, in an extended program of research (1981; 1982a; 1982b;1982c; Cegala and Rippey 1984; Cegala et al. 1982; Villaume and Cegala 1988), has focused on development and validation of a paper-and-pencil, self report measure designed to evaluate the interaction involvement construct. Cegala (1981) defines interpersonal communication as:

> a social interaction where individuals show mutual attentiveness and reciprocally influence one another through their intended and unintended symbolic behavior. This definition may apply to fact-to-face interactions or to some electronically mediated interactions like those on the telephone, intercom, etc. Of central importance to interpersonal communication is the dynamic interplay of speaker/listener roles, i.e., those contexts allow for, in fact demand, the dynamic exchange of speaker/listener roles among participants. (p. 109)

The notion of interaction involvement is essentially grounded in a view of competence formulated by Goffman (1963; 1967). Based upon Cegala's interpretations of Goffman's writings, interaction involvement was first conceived and reported as two dimensional construct. Each dimension represents a fundamental component necessary for competent interpersonal communication. The first dimension, Attentiveness, represents the extent to which an individual is cognizant of stimuli that comprise the immediate environment. The second dimension, Perceptiveness,

represents the extent to which one is knowledgeable of the meanings that others assign to one's behavior, and secondly, the meanings that one ought to assign to the dyadic partner's behavior (Cegala 1981).

Study One The purpose of study one was two fold: (1) to initiate the scale purification process, and (2) to assess the extent to which involvement scores could predict goal achievement.

A total sample population of 1,802 participated in the extensive scale purification process. The items comprising the interaction involvement scale (IIS) were designed to describe social behavior that appeared related to Goffman's (1967) conceptualization of social behavior, i.e., attentiveness and perceptiveness.

Initially, the IIS consisted of 18 items scaled on a 7-point, Likert-type continuum, ranging from "very much like me" to "not at all like me" with assigned numerical values 1 through 7 respectively (Cegala 1981). A sample population of 668 individuals completed the interaction involvement scale and was composed of 77% undergraduate students, 11% high school students (mean age 17), and the remaining 12% consisted of non-student adults ranging in age from 18 through 74 years.

Data were submitted to a principle components factor analysis with an oblique rotation. The criterion for factor rotation was set at an eigenvalue of 1.0 or greater. Recall

that perceptiveness, as derived from Goffman, refers to one's ability to (1) assign me appropriate meaning/ interpretations to other's behavior and to (2) understand what meanings/interpretations others have assigned to one's behavior. Attentiveness, as derived from Goffman, refers to one's cognizance of another's communicative behavior (Cegala 1981). The results of the analysis were as hypothesized by the author (Cegala 1982). However, factor one, perceptiveness, was partly comprised of items that emphasize an overt dimension of behavior that was only implied by the Goffman's concept of perceptiveness. The unanticipated findings lead to a third study (Cegala 1984) designed to clarify the dimensions of Interaction Involvement.

The purpose of part two of study one was to test the extent to which involvement scores could predict goal achievement. The subject pool consisted of 258 undergraduate students in four communication courses. Ninety-three subject were selected on the basis of their involvement scores. Subjects qualified for inclusion if they scored in the top and bottom 20% of the distribution. From the 93 subjects pool, 42 individuals participated in the study. There were twenty-two males and twenty-two females.

The procedure for the study consisted of the forty-two subjects being paired in dyads on the basis of involvement scores (i.e., one high, one low), gender (i.e., same sex),

and availability (Cegala 1981). Subjects were told that the purpose of the study was to observe communication patterns among strangers. Thus, their task would be a brief conversation with their dyadic partner about whatever they wanted. In addition, one member of the dyad was informed that an additional dimension of the study was to learn how readily a person would share personal information with a stranger. The confederate was then asked if he or she would assist in this part of the study by attempting to acquire specified information from their dyadic partner during the course of the upcoming conversation. The dependent variable was the degree and kind of success each subject had in acquiring information from his/her dyad partner. Data were subjected to discriminant analysis, resulting in a significant discriminant function comprised of the perceptiveness factor only. The other-oriented perceptiveness factor and attentiveness factors were not significant predictors (even though both were significant in univariate F tests). The "hit ratio," which is the percentage of statistical units correctly classified by the discriminant function, of the perceptiveness factor was 70%. Thus indicating that the perceptiveness dimension of the IIS is a powerful predictor of goal achievement.

In summary, the data reported in the first study provide support for the factorial validity of the interaction involvement scale. Three factors emerged in

this analysis, and the author emphasizes that "...they have repeatedly emerged in several samples of subjects in previous, unpublished research" (Cegala 1981, p. 119). The second analysis of study one provides support for the construct validity of the interaction involvement scale by examining the overt communication behaviors of high- and low- involved individuals. Approximately 19% of the variance in subjects' communicative behavior was accounted for by the perceptiveness factor of the involvement scale. Although the results are less supportive of the other-oriented perceptiveness and attentiveness factors, Cegala (1981) emphasizes that the results should not be interpreted to mean that the factors are unrelated to competent interpersonal communication.

Following the lead of Cegala (1981), Redmon, Eifert, and Gordon (1983) use a similar design to conduct interviews to obtain information about an individual's dating preferences. The research design utilizes a confederate interviewee trained to be evasive during the interaction. The evasiveness factor was intended to force the interviewer to be persistent in obtaining rather sensitive information. The results indicate that highly involved persons were more effective in managing interview topics and questions to obtain the needed information. By combining the findings of Cegala (1981) and Redmon et al. (1983) it can be suggested

that highly involved persons are more effective in dyadic interactions than low-involved individuals.

Cegala et al. (1982) clarify and extend the interaction involvement research agenda. This study is divided into three related research investigations: research investigation one re-interprets the factor pattern of the IIS, investigation two examines the renamed IIS factors and their relationship with several parallel concepts. The third investigation explores the possible non-verbal manifestation of interaction involvement.

Investigation One

Initially, interaction involvement was conceived and reported (Cegala 1981) as a two dimensional construct; attentiveness and perceptiveness. However, the results of a factor analysis conducted by Cegala in 1981 produced a three dimensional solution. The author's first interpretation of the factor solution yielded a two-dimensional construct comprised of an attentiveness factor and a perceptiveness factors with two dimensions. However, the relatively low correlations between the two perceptiveness dimensions ($r = .40$) seemed puzzling. Thus, the Cegala et al. (1982) determined that it was important to reexamine the factor structure of the IIS.

The reappraisal of the first perceptiveness dimension suggests that it was partly comprised of items that

emphasize an overt dimension of behavior that is only implied by the concept of perceptiveness (Cegala 1981; Cegala et al. 1982). Items such as "saying the right lines" or "relating or responding to others" refer to an overt communication behavior. As you will recall, Goffman's (1967) concept of perceptiveness was focused more on covert behavior associated with perceptiveness. Thus, the authors' reappraisal of the first perceptiveness factor suggests that it is composed of social skill and perceptiveness items. The authors conclude that the perceptiveness label is inappropriate and rename the first factor "responsiveness." Responsiveness is defined as a tendency to react mentally to one's social circumstances and adapt by knowing what to say and when to say it. Accordingly, responsiveness is an index of an individual's tendency to deliver lines appropriate to the dyadic situation (Cegala et al. 1982).

The second perceptiveness dimension, is now more accurately labeled "Perceptiveness," and describes covert behavior and includes both self- and other-oriented perceptiveness items. The third is "Attentiveness" and has been consistently called so throughout the data collection process (Cegala 1981; Cegala et al. 1982).

In summary, the reinterpretation and clarification of factor one (now called responsiveness) is important for the following reasons. First, interaction involvement was initially conceived as primarily a cognitive dimension of

interpersonal communication competence with implications for overt behavior. The augmented version of the IIS suggests that it is a more direct measure of an individual's overt communication behavior. Secondly, the addition of a third dimension correlates well with the findings of the Cegala (1981). As previously mentioned, the results of Cegala (1981) indicate that highly involved individuals are significantly more successful than were low involved individuals in eliciting personal information from a dyad partner. Moreover, mulitivariate discriminant analysis revealed that only one factor was a significant predictor of group membership. The first factor, now interpreted as responsiveness, was most significant in accounting for an individual's overt communication behavior. Cegala et al. (1982) comment that "these findings seem consistent with the meaning of responsiveness..." (p. 233). Given the reinterpretation of the IIS, it seems especially important to demonstrate that the scale dimensions are related, in predictable ways, to other constructs.

Investigation Two

The second investigation focuses on how the trait of interaction involvement relates to the personality traits of extroversion, neuroticism, self-consciousness, communication apprehension, and communication competence.

Extroversion, Neuroticism and Interaction Involvement. Based on an extensive literature review, Cegala et al. (1982) conceptualize the relationship between the dimensions of the IIS and the human personality traits of extroversion and neuroticism. The authors hypothesizes that emotional anxiety will cause an individual to focus on inner thoughts and feelings, thus adversely affecting their ability to monitor the external environment. This disruption of feedback from the external environment is conceptually related to an individual exhibiting low interaction involvement, i.e., the individual may appear preoccupied, distracted, uncertain, or withdrawn from the immediate social interaction. Therefore, the attentiveness dimension of the IIS and neuroticism are expected to relate inversely.

A second core element of neuroses is the element of fear. It seems reasonable to assume that individuals that exhibit a low interaction involvement level could possess an uncertainty or fear of social interactions. This notion is supported by previous research results (Cegala 1982b) that indicate that low involved people are significantly low in self-esteem and assertiveness. Given the role of self-esteem in human interactions (Becker 1962) and its relationship to neuroticism (Eysenck 1977; Krohn 1978) the authors hypothesizes an inverse correlation between the dimension of responsiveness and neuroticism.

Cegala et al. identify two dimensions of extroversion, sociability and impulsiveness, that are hypothesized as being related to interaction involvement. Based on previous research in the domain of interpersonal communication (Cegala 1982c) and psychology (Eysenck 1977) the authors anticipate the following relationships to occur, (1) responsiveness is expected to correlate positively with sociability, and (2) impulsiveness will be negatively related to attentiveness.

In summary, Cegala et al. generate the following hypotheses regarding interaction involvement and personality traits associated with neuroticism and extroversion:

1. Attentiveness will correlate negatively with neuroticism and impulsiveness.

2. Responsiveness will correlate negatively with neuroticism, but positively with sociability.

Self-Consciousness and Interaction Involvement.

Self-consciousness is the tendency of persons to direct their attention either inward on self or outward (Cegala et al. 1982, p. 236). A three factor self-consciousness scale developed by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) is utilized by Cegala et al. to investigate the relationship between self-consciousness and interaction involvement. Cegala et al. (1982) explain the three factors of self-consciousness as: (1) private self-consciousness which is concerned with the extent of one's reflection on thoughts

and feelings about the self, (2) public self-consciousness, or one's general awareness of self as a social object, and (3) social anxiety, which is defined as discomfort in the presence of others (p. 237).

The authors explain the relevance of self-consciousness to interaction involvement seems most connected with the responsiveness and perceptiveness factors. The following hypotheses were generated to investigate the relationship between self-consciousness and interaction involvement:

3. Responsiveness will correlate negatively with social anxiety.

4. Perceptiveness will correlate positively with private and public self-consciousness.

Communication Apprehension and Interaction Involvement.

Communication apprehension is one's fear or anxiety about communicating with others (Cegala et al. 1982). Given the previous discussion linking the responsiveness factor of the IIS with neuroticism, it seems reasonable to expect an inverse relationship between communication apprehension and responsiveness. Cegala et al. utilize a communication apprehension scale developed by McCroskey (1981) to investigate the relationship between communication apprehension and interaction involvement in a dyadic encounter as well as a public speaking scenario. It is hypothesized that:

5. The responsiveness factor will relate negatively to communication apprehension in interpersonal settings, but not in public speaking contexts.

Communication Competence and Interaction Involvement.

The dimensions of interaction involvement are considered to be fundamental to competent interpersonal communication (Cegala 1982; 1982b; 1982c). Cegala et al. utilize Wiemann's (1977) communication competence scale to investigate the relationship between interaction involvement and communication competence. Wiemann's (1977) scale measures behavioral flexibility, interaction management, affiliation/support empathy, and social relaxation. The authors' general expectation is that all three of the IIS factors will relate positively to the five dimensions of communicative competence. However, past research findings (Cegala 1982c) indicate that perceptiveness correlated most significantly with Wiemann's (1977) five dimensions of competence. Accordingly, the authors hypothesized the following:

6. All three IIS factors will correlate positively with the dimensions of communicative competence, with the perceptiveness factor showing the strongest relationship to competence.

Results. The sample population for this study consisted of 326 undergraduates, 137 male and 189 females. The sample represented a diverse cross section of college majors - including students studying in the fields of communication, engineering and business. All subjects completed Cegala's

(1982) IIS, the Esyenck Personality Inventory, Form A (Esyenck and Esyenck 1968) the self-consciousness scale (Fenigstein et al. 1975), McCroskey's PRCA (1981), and Wiemann's (1977) competence scale. Prior to computing the main analyses, t-tests were computed on all the variables, comparing males and females. The results indicate significant differences ($p \leq .02$) on: perceptiveness, private self-consciousness, social anxiety, communication apprehension, and all of the sub-tests of communicative competence except social relaxation (Cegala et al. 1982). Accordingly, the authors decided to separate the sample by sex for all of the analysis.

The IIS data were factor analyzed using the same model as reported in study one. Factor scores were generated using a least squares method. The Eysenck Personality Inventory was scored by computing a neuroticism sum score, and sub-scale scores for extroversion (sociability and impulsiveness). The self-consciousness scale was factor analyzed using the same model as reported in study one. The results were comparable to those reported in Feningstein et al. (1975). McCrosky's PRCA and Wiemann's communication competence scales were scored according to the published directions to result in sub-scale scores for each questionnaire. The internal reliability estimates for each scale utilized in the study are as follows: IIS = .90; E = .74; N = .70; SC = .86; CA = .90; CC = .85 (Cegala 1982).

Pearson product moment correlations were used to test the hypotheses. The minimum acceptance criterion for a correlation coefficient was $p \leq .01$.

The research results were reported by Cegala et al. (1982) as follows:

Hypothesis One	Is concerned with relationship between interaction involvement and the identified core components of neuroticism and extroversion. Hypothesis one predicted negative correlations between attentiveness and neuroticism and impulsiveness. The data clearly supports ($p \leq .01$) H1 for males, but only partially supports H1 for the females. Impulsiveness is not significantly correlated with attentiveness for the females.
Hypothesis Two	Predicts that responsiveness will correlate negatively with neuroticism and positively with sociability. The data indicate support of this hypothesis for both sexes.
Hypothesis Three	Predicts a negative correlation between responsiveness and social anxiety. The data supports this hypothesis for males and females.
Hypothesis Four	Predicts a positive correlation between perceptiveness and private and public self-consciousness. The data reveal only partial support for the predicted relationships due to an apparent sex difference. Males' perceptiveness correlated significantly with private self-consciousness but not with public self-consciousness. The opposite result was true for females.
Hypothesis Five	Predicts a negative correlation between responsiveness and communication apprehension in interpersonal contexts but not public speaking. The results support the hypothesis for both males and females. An unexpected result was that males' perceptiveness is

	significantly negatively correlated to communication apprehension in all contexts.
Hypothesis Six	Focuses on the correlation between the five dimensions of communication competence and the three factors comprising interaction involvement. The data indicate only partial support for this hypothesis. While all three IIS factors correlate positively with the competence dimensions, not all of the correlations are significant.

Conclusions

The composite results of study one and two appear to support the conceptual framework of interaction involvement (Cegala et al. 1982). However, the data indicate that there is an apparent gender difference between respondents. To aid in further interpretation, the authors conducted a stepwise, multiple regression analyses on each IIS factor separately for males and females. The results focusing on the pertinent predictor variables indicate the following:

Responsiveness - The major difference between genders is that nonresponsiveness is an index of communication apprehension for females and not for males. Cegala et al. interpret this to mean that nonresponsiveness may indicate a tendency toward introverted neuroticism and behavioral inflexibility. When the authors combine the analysis of this study with previous research results (Cegala 1981) they conclude that "the current research provides additional support for the interpretation of responsiveness as a factor

concerned with one's overt communication adaptability" (Cegala et al. 1982, p. 242).

Perceptiveness - The gender differences for perceptiveness are considerably more diverse than they were with the dimension of responsiveness. The only commonalty between males and females appears to be that perceptiveness is an index of a lack of communication apprehension. A Male's perceptiveness appears to relate to their ability to empathize and their tendency toward private self-consciousness. A Female's perceptiveness appears related to public self-consciousness, that is, awareness of self as a social object. In addition, females' affiliation/support are related to their perceptiveness rather than their ability to empathize with the other person.

The data suggest that perceptive individuals are more inclined to be cognizant of self. Moreover, individuals who are uncertain of self/other meanings during social encounters may experience communication anxiety, as the data in study two suggests.

Investigation Three

This study synthesizes and reports the findings of previously unpublished research on the nonverbal manifestations of interaction involvement. Specifically, this exploratory study provides an indication of possible

non-verbal behaviors indexing high and low interaction involvement.

The subjects of this study were 20 male and 20 female college students who were used in the Cegala (1981) study. The subjects were selected on the basis of their total IIS scores. Each dyad contained one high and low involvement person. The dyad partners were matched by gender. The dyadic interactions were video taped, and the subjects were coded for various nonverbal behaviors. The non-verbal gestures were coded according to a classification scheme developed by Freedman (1972). The generated scores were used as one data set in a canonical analysis while the second data set consisted of the nonverbal predictors.

The data indicate that responsiveness and perceptiveness are the most significant predictors of males' nonverbal behavior. For females the data indicate that responsiveness plays the most significant role in predicting nonverbal behavior while perceptiveness and attentiveness contribute equally. Cegala (1982) summarizes the analysis:

1. Males' responsiveness and perceptiveness are most related to nonverbal manifestations of interaction involvement.

2. The extent of males' body movements during speaking appears to be an index of low interaction involvement.

3. Females' responsiveness is most related to nonverbal manifestations of interaction involvement.

4. Females' body focused movement during speaking appears to be an index of low interaction

> involvement, but object focused gesturing and other discrete body movements during speaking appear to index high interaction involvement.

Conclusions

The scale purification process for the IIS provides data supportive of the concept of interaction involvement. Factor analysis has consistently revealed a three dimension structure for the IIS, responsiveness, perceptiveness, and attentiveness. Extensive analysis focusing on the IIS in dyadic setting by Cegala (1981; 1982; 1982a; 1982b; 1982c; Cegala et al. 1982) suggests that interaction involvement focuses on the degree to which a speaker participates in conversation by being sensitive to the evolving flow of the conversation and by integrating his/her thoughts, feelings and behaviors with the on-going interaction. When highly involved individual's are sensitive to self as a social object, they consider the meanings of circumstances as they arise in conversation and respond to them accordingly. On the other hand, low-involved individuals are often psychologically removed from conversations, unresponsive to their dyadic partner, and uncertain about appropriate goals for their interactions.

Given prior communication research focusing on interaction involvement and the constructs adaptive qualities, the current study proposes that a logical

extension is to explore the relationship between interaction involvement and the practice of adaptive selling.

Attributional Complexity

The importance of sales knowledge and effective selling performance has been recognized by both researchers and practitioners. For example, Weitz (1978) proposes that one of the first activities a salesperson engages in is the process of combining information gained through past experience with information relevant to the specific interaction, i.e., the development of an impression of the customer. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) propose that salespeople's knowledge about their customers and selling strategies critically affects their performance. Thus, the "cognitive selling paradigm" (Mackintosh et al. 1992; Leigh and McGraw 1989; Leigh and Rethans 1984; Leong, Busch, and John 1989; Sujan, Sujan, and Bettman 1988; Szymanski 1988; Szymanski and Churchill 1990; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) focuses on linking selling behavior to the underlying knowledge structures of the salesperson. An individual's knowledge structure consists of a declarative component and a procedural component (e.g., Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986; Leigh and Rethans 1984). Declarative knowledge is the set of stored situational cues and facts which allow the salesperson to recognize and categorize selling situations. In a selling context, a salesperson's declarative knowledge

structures contain information about different types of customers and selling situations (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986; Leigh and Rethans 1984). Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, consists of selling routines, actions, strategies, or heuristics that apply to different selling situations (e.g., the sequence of events in closing a sale).

Current cognitive selling research (e.g., Mackintosh et al. 1992; Leong, Busch, and Roedder John 1989; Sujan, Sujan, and Bettman 1988; Szymanski 1988; Szymanski and Churchill 1990) has investigated potential differences in knowledge structures between more effective and less effective salespeople. Sujan, Sujan, and Bettman's (1988) found that more and less effective salespeople do not differ in the number of categories spontaneously generated but they are different in the qualitative nature of categories. The effective salespeople possess categories that contain more detailed descriptors of both customer traits and strategies to guide behavior. There is also evidence that the categories of more effective performers' overlap in terms of sales strategies and customer traits an thus, allow effective salespeople to perceive greater similarities across categories of customers.

Leong et al. (1989) propose that salespeople need an elaborate knowledge base to enable them to size up sales situations, classify prospects, and select appropriate sales strategies. More specifically, effective selling should be

facilitated by at least two types of knowledge structures: category structures and script structures. Category structures contain information needed to describe and classify different types of customers (e.g., customer's traits, motives and behaviors). Script structures include information about sequences of events and actions commonly encountered in sales situations. The script structures can be used to guide a salesperson's behavior when they encounter similar situations.

The authors investigate how the scripts of effective salespeople differ from those of less effective salespeople across two types of sales situations: (1) typical situations frequently faced by salespeople and (2) less typical situations encountered by the sales force. The results suggests that effective salespeople have more elaborate, more distinct, and more hypothetical scripts. Thus, the authors conclude that their findings support the hypothesized relationship between performance and knowledge bases of salespeople. Leong et al. suggest that the mechanism whereby knowledge affects sales performance appears to be adaptability. "Effective salespeople have more distinctive scripts for different selling situations and consider more contingencies that might happen with each sales situation. These dimensions of sales scripts appear to be related directly to a salesperson's ability to adapt to different sales situations" (p. 174). Thus, as suggested

by Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) salesperson knowledge impacts sales effectiveness by increasing the ability to adapt to different sales situations.

Szymanski and Churchill (1990) use the cognitive paradigm to test for differences in the declarative knowledge of salespeople in regard to evaluating prospects. They found that although more and less effective salespeople had the same number of evaluation cues stored in memory, there were significant differences in the structure of the cues. In addition, they found that some of the evaluation cues were weighted quite differently by more and less successful salespeople. Building on the cognitive selling paradigm, Mackintosh et al. (1992) assess differences between the knowledge structures of more and less effective salespeople (as determined by sales manager evaluations or objective sales performance) and relationship building. The data support the contention that higher performing salespeople place more emphasis on relationship building earlier in the sales process and that the cognitive structures concerning relationship building activities differ between higher and lower performing salespeople.

In summary, the preceding studies suggest that more effective salespeople have different cognitive structures than less effective salespeople. In addition, support exists for the notion that the ability of a salesperson to adapt to the selling situation is moderated by salesperson

knowledge. However, research needs to investigate personal factors or traits that promote the development of a salesperson's cognitive structure and allows them to be more successful in sales interactions (Szymanski 1988).

Attributional Complexity

The construct of attributional complexity originates from the research focusing on the classic attribution models conceptualized by Heider (1958), Jones and Davis (1965), and Kelley (1967). Fletcher et al., (1986) draw from the research agenda theorizing that attribution is a complex and cognitive process (Kelley 1983; Ross and Fletcher 1985). More specifically, Fletcher et al. embrace the notion that some people possess more complex attributional schemata than others.

Fletcher et al. (1986) conceptualize cognitive complexity as a general personality trait that extends across all areas of cognitive functioning. Moreover, the notion of schema complexity is tied to such variables as "the degree of knowledge" and "interest in a given area" and thus, to some extent, is domain specific. The foundation for cognitive complexity is typically defined in terms of two concepts: differentiation and integration (Fletcher et al. 1986). The authors define differentiation as the number of dimensions or characteristics involved when the person perceives or evaluates (social) stimuli; the more dimensions

used the more complex the cognitive structure. Integration is defined in terms of the organizational complexity of the connections among the differentiated characteristics (Fletcher et al. 1986, p. 876). The authors explain that due to its lack of definite organization, integration complexity measures tend to be more complicated than measures of differentiation. Thus, high complexity is indicated by such things as the comparison of alternative views, and the existence of sophisticated causal theorizing.

Fletcher et al. (1986) postulate seven attributional constructs, that range along a simple-complex dimension, as encompassing the structure of the Attributional Complexity Scale (ACS).

1. Level of interest or motivation. Attributionally complex individuals should possess higher levels of intrinsic motivation to explain and understand human behavior. Therefore, the attributionally complex individual should be more curious and interested in the whys and wherefores of human behavior than their simpler counterparts.

2. Preference for complex rather than simple explanations. Explanations that contain more causes are more complex than explanations with fewer causes. Those individuals with more complex schemata should tend to generate more causes in their causal accounts than people with simpler schemata.

This dimension is similar to the concept of differentiation discussed earlier.

3. Presence of metacognition concerning explanations. The authors define metacognition as the tendency to think about the underlying processes involved in causal attribution. The development of metacognitive abilities is generally regarded as a relatively sophisticated, higher order set of cognitive functions that occur late in the developmental sequence (Flavell 1979). Accordingly, the authors postulate that attributional metacognitive thinking represents the complex end of the continuum.

4. Awareness of the extent to which people's behavior is a function of interaction with others. Fletcher et al. explain that a fundamental principle of social psychology states that a person's behavior is, in part, a function of the social situation. It seems plausible that those individuals with more complex attributional schemata would be more aware of the power of the social situation both in terms of the influence other people have on their own behavior and in terms of the impact their own behavior has on others in interactional (dyadic) settings. Therefore, the authors postulate that attributionally complex individuals, in the formation of causal attributions, will tend to notice and use information gathered from behavioral interactions to a greater extent than attributionally simple individuals. In a sales context, the attributionally

complex salesperson will generate and utilize impressions of the buyer to a greater extent than attributionally simple salespeople.

5. Tendency to infer abstract or causally complex internal attributions. The authors postulate that all internal dispositional attributions are not created equal. For instance, some dispositions seem to be summary terms for specific behaviors (e.g., punctuality, talkativeness), whereas other refer to much more abstract cognitive mental structures (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, abilities). Therefore, the authors assume that the tendency to infer abstract or causally complex internal explanations is associated with increased attributional complexity.

6. Tendency to infer abstract, contemporary, external causal attributions. The authors hypothesize that external causes operate along two dimensions, which range along a simple-complex continuum. The first external causal dimension may be seen as radiating out spatially and contemporaneously from the person: A person's behavior may be perceived as a function of concrete and perceptually salient events, function of the immediate environment (state/atmosphere that is spatially contiguous to the person e.g., lighting, size of the room, other people's behavior toward the individual), as a function of the wider community, as a function of the wider society and its institutions, and so on. The more physically removed the

cause is from the person the more abstract it tends to become, and the corresponding causal links become more indirect. The authors postulate that this dimension operates along a simple-complex continuum - with the attributionally complex individual forming more concrete attributions.

7. Tendency to infer external causes operating from the past. This temporal causal dimension is postulated as operating along a simple-complex continuum, with the more distant causes representing the complex end of the dimension. For instance, coming from a dysfunctional family could make the individual insecure, which could cause their marriage to break up, which in turn, could lead to alcohol abuse.

In summary, "the central hypothesis underlying the development of this scale is that the attributional constructs just described are all related in a consistent fashion; that is, people who are more complex on one attributional dimension will be more complex on the other dimensions" (Fletcher et al. 1986, p. 877).

Scale Development Process

The purification process for the Attributional Complexity Scale parallels the procedure suggested by Churchill (1979). Fletcher et al. (1986) present data

concerning the reliability, internal validity, and external validity of the scale.

Study One. The Attributional Complexity Scale was developed from a pool of 45 items that were derived from the seven complexity dimensions described earlier. The questions generated for the dimensions of the ACS were checked for face validity and comprehensibility with several small samples, and statistical checks for internal reliability were carried out. Factor analysis indicated that 28 items, four items per dimension, measured each of the seven attributional constructs. Thus, the initial study examined the internal reliability, factorial structure, and test-retest reliability of the scale.

The analysis population for study one was 289 students at Illinois State University. The data were factor analyzed by a principal-components analysis and one main factor emerged accounting for 21.4% of the variance. All factors loaded positively and significantly on the first unrotated factor. The internal reliability analysis confirmed the factor analysis results. With few exceptions, the corrected item-total correlations were positive and moderately strong (Fletcher et al. 1986) and the internal reliability coefficient was .85. The test-retest correlation was .80. Thus, the data indicate that the scale possess adequate internal reliability and test-retest reliability.

The authors conducted additional analysis that summed and correlated each of the four questions measuring each attributional construct with the other attributional construct totals. The alpha coefficients range from .39 to .68. The individual alpha coefficients were significantly lower than the over-all alpha score for the ACS. Fletcher et al. explain that the low alpha scores resulted from the inclusion of only four items in each of the sub-scales. However, the correlations among the seven constructs are all positive and significant ($p < .001$; mean $r=.40$). Lastly, the authors tested for gender differences and found that women are significantly more complex than men ($p < .001$). In summary, the patterns of correlations suggests that all attributional subsets contribute to the general construct of attributional complexity.

Study Two. Study two assesses the convergent and discriminant validity of the Attributional Complexity Scale. To establish the discriminant validity of the ACS, the authors administered the Crowne Marlow (1964) Social Desirability Scale; to establish that the responses on the scale did not represent socially desirable response. In addition, the authors compared the respondents ACT scores to their ACS score; this was to establish that the ACS was not simply a measure of the respondents intelligence. To establish that the ACS is not a measure of attributional style, rather than a measure of attributional complexity,

the authors administered Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. The authors argue that the ACS measures people's tendency to place the locus of control internally, rather than externally. In summary, study two predicted that there would be no significant relationship between attributional complexity and social desirability, academic ability (ACT), and internal-external locus of control.

As predicted, the discriminant correlations were all nonsignificant. The correlations between the Attributional Complexity Scale and the other scales were as follows: Social Desirability, r=.12, Internal-External Locus of Control, r=-.01, ACT scores, r=.01 (Fletcher et al. 1986).

Convergent validity was assessed based on the correlations between the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo and Petty 1982) and a Dogmatism Scale (Troldahl and Powell 19650. The authors postulated that the need for cognition is related to the need to understand the world and, also, to the tendency to enjoy thinking and problem solving across personal and impersonal domains. Thus, they postulate a moderately positive correlation between Cacioppo and Petty's (1982) scale and the ACS.

The second correlation analysis investigates the convergent validity of the ACS by assessing the relationship between attributional complexity and dogmatism. The authors argue that people who are more complex are more aware of the

problems and the uncertainties that accompany explanations of behavior. Therefore, the authors predict that attributional complex people will be less dogmatic than their more simple counterparts.

The predicted significant correlation between attributionally complex individuals and dogmatism was not supported. As predicted, the correlation between ACS and the Need for Cognition was positive and significant ($p < .001$). This suggests that people who enjoy thinking and problem solving have general need to understand people's behavior. In summary, the correlation between the Need for Cognition Scale and the ACS suggests the presence of convergent validity.

Study Three. This study assesses the concurrent validity of the ACS. The authors postulate that psychology students, by the very nature of their academic field of study, would develop more attributionally complex schemata than natural science students. A second purpose of study three was to re-assess the relationship between attributional complexity and intelligence. Fletcher et al. postulate that natural science majors (physics, chemistry, mathematics) are no less gifted academically than psychology majors. Thus, if the predictions between the groups levels of attributional complexity were confirmed, it would provide additional support for the notion that attributional complexity is not a measure of an individual's intelligence.

Finally, one purpose for the third study was to confirm the gender differences discovered in study one.

A 2 x 2 analysis of variance research design yield the following results; the main effect for subject major was significant ($F[1,90] = 21.6$, $p < .001$). Neither the main effect for gender nor the interaction effect was significant. As predicted psychology majors were significantly more complex than natural science majors.

Study Four and Five. Studies four and five produced evidence for the external validity of the ACS. In study four, subjects were asked to write a personality description of a close friend. It was hypothesized that subjects with complex attributional schemata would be more likely to spontaneously mention causes in their descriptions than would subjects with simpler attributional schemata. The predicted results were confirmed, subjects who were more complex spontaneously mentioned causes for a close friends personality more often than did simple subjects. The authors argued that this type of causal reasoning embodies more complex categories of causal judgement. Thus, attributionally complex individuals would appear to have such causes embedded in their personality schemata to a greater extent than do simpler individuals.

In study five, subjects were supplied with a number of behavioral statements and asked to choose from a range of causal options the cause that best explains each event. One

of the causal options was a more complex causal attribution than the others. The authors hypothesized that attributionally complex people would tend to choose the more complex explanations than would those with simpler schemata. Again, the predicted results were confirmed, the more attributionally complex the subjects were, the more they preferred a complex causal attribution for simple behavioral events.

In summary, the authors conclude that "the results of these studies provide encouraging support for the internal and external validity of the Attributional Complexity Scales" (Fletcher et al. 1986, p. 882). In addition, the authors explain that the ACS attempts to consider individual difference in cognitive schemata to help to more fully understand the relationship between cognitive processes and behavior.

The attributional complexity research agenda has continued to grow and expand its analytic focus. Three studies suggest that high Attributional Complexity is associated with increased accuracy in inferring dispositions from behavioral criteria. First, Funder and Harris (1986) found that Attributional Complexity was significantly and positively correlated with the ability to interpret nonverbal information. Second, Fletcher, Bull, and Reeder (1988) had subjects read essays whose authors had been randomly assigned to write an essay either defending or

attacking the view that homosexuality should be illegal (i.e., the authors had no choice concerning the direction of the essay). Attributionally Complex individuals, as measured by the ACS, were significantly more accurate in assessing their partner's true attitudes (these were assessed prior to the writing of the essays), but only in conditions where they were enabled to carry out in-depth processing of the essays.

The third study in the attributional complexity research stream (Fletcher, Grigg, and Bull 1988) investigates the causal inference process in relation to personality impression. More specifically, the authors study the role played by individual differences in attributional schema complexity in the organization and accuracy of personality impressions. Schema complexity is measured by utilizing the Attributional Complexity Scale. The authors hypothesize that attributionally complex subjects will produce more accurate personality impressions than simple subjects. However, this difference would only become apparent when the goal of the conversations was personality appraisal. The goal of personality appraisal was postulated to create the needed motivation for the attributionally complex individuals to exploit their superior expertise in trait inference. The authors measured accuracy of trait attributions in terms of agreement between self and partner personality ratings, using a scale that sampled a broad

range of representative dispositions. The personality scale developed for this purpose was based on Norman's (1963) five factor model of personality: Extroversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Intellect.

Subjects participating in the study had a 15 minute conversation under goal conditions (to ascertain personality appraisal) that manipulated the motivation to carry out in-depth dispositional processing. The authors predicted that, under high motivational conditions, subjects with complex attributional schemata would be more likely than subjects with simple schemata to produce more complex and more accurate personality impressions of their partners. In addition, it was hypothesized that subjects would generally produce relatively accurate trait judgments related to Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, but be less accurate on traits related to Neuroticism and Intellect.

The results indicate, as predicted, attributionally complex subjects produced significantly more complex personality descriptions than simple subjects, but only when the goal was personality appraisal. Thus, attributional complexity subjects became more accurate when the dispositional inference process was explicitly encouraged. There was general support for the hypothesis that personality judgments for Extroversion, Agreeableness, and

Conscientiousness were more accurate than the personality judgments for Neuroticism and Intellect.

Conclusions

The results confirm the authors proposition that causal attribution processes are integrally involved in the formation of person impressions. Fletcher et al. hypothesize that:

> ... causal inferences between personal dispositions and other items in person impressions are one important source of the "cognitive glue", that enables the elements in person impressions to be organized into cognitive units for storage and retrieval. If we are right, then people with complex attributional schemata should be able to store and recall personality impressions more efficiently than those with simple schemata; but again if our prior theorizing is correct, this tendency should be enhanced when effortful in-depth processing takes place. (p. 75)

Given the positive research results concerning Attributional Complexity, the current study postulates that this construct could provide additional explanation for a salesperson's ability to practice adaptive selling. More specifically, a salesperson high in attributional complexity should be better able to assess buyer communication and behavior cues (personality impressions) and correctly adapt to the dyadic interaction. In addition, it is plausible to characterize the sales interaction as an "in-depth processing" situation (or possessing a higher involvement level); so following the explanation provided by Fletcher et al. (1988) a salesperson should be able to better evaluate

their dyadic partner, and formulate appropriate behavior(s).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Recent findings by Spiro and Weitz (1990) and Goolsby, Lagace, and Boorom (1992) support the conceptualized positive relationship between salesperson adaptability and selling effectiveness. However, empirical validation of the adaptability-sales performance relationship is lacking.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model (Figure 4) represents the managerial and academic purpose of the current research. As previously discussed, one purpose of this dissertation focuses on investigating the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and sales performance (cf. Spiro and Weitz 1990; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). In addition, there is a call for research to investigate addition interpersonal variable/traits and their impact on the practice of adaptive selling. Thus, the current research proposes to investigate the direct effects of the interpersonal variables of interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity with the practice of adaptive selling.

Hypotheses

Current research in the domain of personal selling

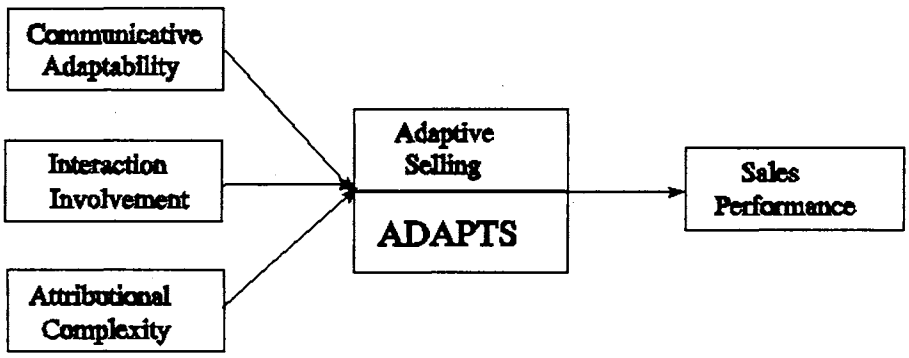

Figure 4. Conceptual Model

provides equivocal support for the positive association between a salesperson's practice of adaptive selling and sales effectiveness (cf. Spiro and Weitz 1990; Goolsby et al. 1992). Explanations for the lack of empirical validation range from poor conceptualization and measure of sales performance (Spiro and Weitz 1990) to a partial measure of salesperson adaptability (Goolsby et al. 1992). Therefore, the current research uses Spiro and Weitz's ADAPTS scale to measure a salesperson's tendency to practice adaptive selling and to utilize the sales performance measure (Behrman and Perreault 1982) employed by Goolsby et al. (1992) to validate that a positive and significant relationship exists between salesperson adaptability and sales effectiveness. Analogous with the research design of Goolsby et al. (1992), the current research proposes to investigate the relationship between specific dimensions of sales performance and adaptability. More specifically, it is hypothesized that a salesperson high in adaptability will be better able to meet sales objectives and have a differential advantage in customer interactions. Based on previous research (Spiro and Weitz 1990; Goolsby et al. 1992) there is equivocal support for a hypothesized relationship with the remaining performance dimensions (degree of technical knowledge, tendency to provide information back to the company, and the ability to control expenses). This is due, in part, to the fact that these

dimensions are not specifically "customer related." However, given the lack of clarity associated with the relationship between the dimensions of sales performance and adaptability, the notion that the practice of adaptive selling might have an affect on "Total Performance" warrants further investigation. Therefore, I offer the following hypotheses:

H1: The practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) will have a positive relationship with a salesperson's performance in customer interactions.

H2: The practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) will have a positive relationship with a salesperson's ability to meet sales objectives.

H3: The practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) will have a positive relationship with Total Performance; represented by a summated score of Behrman and Perrault's (1982) sales performance scale.

Research investigating salesperson adaptability attempted to link personality traits (e.g., self-monitoring, androgyny, empathy, being and opener, and locus of control) to the practice of adaptive selling. Research findings indicate the impact of the personality traits on sales performance is significant and positive. (Goolsby et al. 1992; Spiro and Weitz 1990). Nevertheless, the findings reveal that these impacts are highly focused.

Researchers investigating the adaptive selling paradigm (cf. Weitz 1979; 1981; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986; Goolsby et al. 1992) posit that a salesperson's capability, communication skill(s), will mediate the relationship

between adaptiveness and performance. More specifically, Goolsby et al. (1992) assert "...that including measures of communication skills will enhance the explanatory power of current models and are needed to increase our understanding of sales performance." Accordingly, the current research proposes to employ the constructs of interaction involvement and communicative adaptability to investigate the relationship between communication, the practice of adaptive selling, and sales performance. Therefore, I offer the following hypotheses:

H4: Interaction involvement is positively related with the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS).

H5: Communicative adaptability is positively related with the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS).

The importance of sales knowledge has been recognized by both researchers and practitioners (e.g., Weitz, 1978; Spiro and Weitz 1990; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986; Sujan, Sujan, and Bettman 1988; Szymanski and Churchill 1990). Although, empirical research investigating the linkage between knowledge and the practice of adaptive selling is lacking. Spiro and Weitz (1990) initially conceptualized knowledge structure as one of the six dimensions associated with the practice of adaptive selling. Specifically, "(1) an elaborate knowledge structure of sales situations will enable salespeople to recognize different types of categories of situations and to retrieve, from memory, an

appropriate sales approach and (2) an ability to collect information to facilitate the process of matching sales situations to categories in memory. Salespeople having these capabilities will be effective in practicing adaptive selling..." (p. 62). Moreover, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) emphasize that knowledge structure may moderate the practice of adaptive selling. Therefore, I offer the following hypothesis:

H6: Attributional Complexity is positively related to the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The current research is designed to investigate the previously discussed hypotheses. First, the sampling plan is presented; included is a discussion of the questionnaire design. Next, the data collection method is described. Finally, the data analysis procedures are presented.

Sampling Plan

A sampling plan was developed to insure that industrial salespeople were included in the study and to attempt to correct for non-response bias. The present study enlists the sales personnel of two, medium sized, specialty companies as the first sample of the salesperson population. The second sample of the salesperson population is a convenience sample of industrial salespeople.

Historically, response rates for research in the domain of personal selling have been disappointing (Churchill et al. 1985). In an attempt to correct for non-response bias, the participating companies' sales managers provided a cover-letter that accompanied each research questionnaire. The cover-letter encouraged the sales personnel to participate in the current research project. In addition, a follow-up reminder/thank you card was be mailed to all the sales representatives in the sample population. The reminder card served to (1) remind the salesperson to complete their questionnaire, or (2) to thank the salesperson for participating in the research project.

The second sample of the salesperson population is a convenience sample of industrial salespeople. Each participant was contacted by this researcher, prior to administering the questionnaire, in an effort to improve the response rate.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire has three components (1) the cover letter, (2) the measurement scales and demographic questions, and (3) the return postage and address. The cover letter is incorporated in the questionnaire's design to encourage salesperson participation.

The second component of the questionnaire consists of the measurement instruments and the demographic questions. A

six page, 112-item survey questionnaire was developed to obtain a salesperson's responses concerning their (1) tendency to practice adaptive selling (Spiro and Weitz 1990, ADAPTS scale), communicative adaptability (Duran 1983), interaction involvement (Cegala 1982), attributional complexity (Fletcher et al. 1986), and sales effectiveness (Behrman and Perreault 1982, five dimensions of salesperson performance). The measurement scales for each of the constructs are structured as Likert scales with a bi-polar design. The use of Likert scales yields interval scaled data required for statistical analysis associated with path analysis. The measurement scales utilize both positively and negatively worded items to control for yea/nay saying. The demographic section of the questionnaire focuses on individual characteristics that could affect a salesperson's performance (e.g., years of sales experience, type of sales, etc.).

The final feature of the questionnaire is the return address and postage. This component facilitates a simple return process for the questionnaire. The questionnaire is presented in the Appendix.

Data Collection

A mail survey was conducted to identify a salesperson's perceptions on the practice of adaptive selling, interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, attributional

complexity, and performance. As previously discussed, a cover letter from the participating company's sales managers was integrated into the questionnaire's design. The letter specifically requested the respondents to evaluate some relevant variables associated with personal selling. Confidentiality was assured for respondents in the cover letter. In addressing a potential source of error, it is important that respondents understand that their responses are aggregated in the study and that their individual answers will not be divulged to anyone --- especially their company.

For control and following-up, identification codes are used to identify the specific sampling unit organization. Denoting specific company and organizational unit, the codes also provide input for further statistical analysis. The total data collection period, including follow-up mailings, was eight weeks.

Data Analysis Procedures

The Path Analysis technique was employed to investigate and estimate (1) the direct effects of interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity with salesperson adaptability, and (2) although not hypothesized, path analysis provided an estimation of the direct effects of interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity with selling

performance (see Figure 4). Structural equation modeling was not utilized for data analysis due to the very robust psychometric properties of the measurement scales utilized in the current research. In addition, the conceptual model for the current research is recursive; that is, there are only one-way causal flows in the model (see Figure 4).

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of data analyses associated with each research question. Following a description of the respondents participating in the investigation, the empirical relationships among salesperson adaptability and sales effectiveness are evaluated. In addition, the relationships between salesperson adaptability and the communication variables of interaction involvement and communicative adaptability are discussed. Finally, the empirical relationship between salesperson adaptability and attributional complexity is discussed. Six hypotheses, as address in Chapter III, are empirically investigated in the following section.

To help the reader, Table I defines all of the symbols used in the upcoming tables and figures.

Data Collection

Field Survey Respondents

Following solicitation by the researcher, two organizations expressed a willingness to participate in my study. In addition, 55 manufacture and industrial sales representatives from various firms were solicited to participate in the research investigation. Care was taken to use sales personnel that matched the profile specified in

TABLE I
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Salesperson Adaptability	A
Sales Effectiveness	E
Interaction Involvement	I
Communicative Adaptability	T
Attributional Complexity	C
Salesperson Age	AGE
Years of Past High School Education	EDU
Total Years of Sales Experience	EXP
Total Years of Sales Experience With Your Current Company	EXB
Time in Current Sales Territory	EXT
Average Hours Per Week Interacting With Your Customers	CI
Percentage of Sales Quota (most recent year)	Q
Percentage of New Customers in the Last Year	NPC
Percentage of New Customer in the Last Five Years	FPC

Dimensions of Sales Effectiveness

Feedback	EFB
Customer Interaction	ECI
Meeting Sales Objectives	ESO
Product/Company Knowledge	EK

the previously discussed sample survey design (see p. 91-92) Access to the sales representatives of the two cooperating firms, plus the independently solicited sales personnel, resulted in a convenience sample of 416 individuals. Of the 416 surveys distributed, 190 completed surveys were returned in usable form, resulting in a return rate of 46 percent. Table 2 summarizes the demographics of the study.

TABLE II
SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Variable	Mean
AGE	39.34
EDU-Education beyond high school	3.20
EXP-Total sales experience	15.29
EXB-Total sales experience with company	9.27
EXT-Total sales experience in current territory	8.05
HRS-Hours per week interacting with customers	29.91
Q-Sales quota attained in most recent year	100.28
NPC-Percentage of new customers/last year	9.56
FPC-Percentage of new customers/last five years	26.98

The research methodology called for the participating companies to furnish the researcher with mailing labels for each of their sales representatives. In addition, the national sales manager or vice president of sales/marketing provided an introductory cover-letter that encouraged the sale representatives to participate in the current research.

The questionnaire was designed to be an all inclusive survey package: (1) the first component of the questionnaire contained the letter from sales/marketing manager, (2) the questionnaire's design included a detachable mailing label;

this feature was utilized to help insure the anonymity of each participant, (3) the third feature was the survey instrument containing the measurement scales for ADAPTS (Spiro and Weitz 1991), communicative adaptability (Duran 1983), interaction involvement (Cegala 1981) attributional complexity (Fletcher et al., 1986) and salesperson effectiveness (Behrman and Perrault 1982). In addition, several demographic variables were collected with the questionnaire to allow profiling of the respondents and provide certain co-variates for possible use in later stages of analysis (see Table 2). The fourth feature of the questionnaire was a built-in return address and postage. After completing the survey, participants were instructed to remove the mailing label containing their name and address and were instructed to mailed their responses back to the researcher. In exchange for their cooperation, the participating firms were offered summary reports detailing the results of the research investigation.

Ten days after the initial distribution of the questionnaires, a reminder card was mailed to each salesperson to: (1) thank those individuals that had already mailed back the completed survey instrument or, (2) to encourage the participation of those individuals that had not already performed the task of completing the questionnaire. In addition, one week following the researcher generated reminder card, the sales managers

distributed a notice through their company's intra-organizational communication network encouraging the sales force to complete the questionnaire. These steps were included in the sample survey design in an attempt to control for any error stemming from non-response bias.

DATA ANALYSIS

Following the original research design (pp. 91-100), the hypotheses utilized to investigate the relationship between salesperson adaptability and selling effectiveness are evaluated first. The hypothesized relationship between the variables of interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity are then presented. Finally, the question of whether the relationships between concepts result from direct or indirect effects of the relevant variables is explored.

Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach alpha was generated to assess the reliability for each of the measurement scales utilized in the current research: (1) ADAPTS = .87, (2) salesperson performance = .92, (3) communicative adaptability = .87, (4) interaction involvement = .92, and (5) attributional complexity = .89. According to Nunnally (1967) and Peter (1979) the alpha levels are very acceptable for basic research.

Adaptability and Effectiveness

The Path analysis technique was employed to investigate the hypotheses, as well as, to explore and estimate (1) indirect effects of interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity with salesperson adaptability, and (2) although not hypothesized, path analysis also provides an estimation of the direct effects of interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity with selling performance. However, it should be noted that

> "...the method of path coefficients is not intended to accomplish the impossible task of deducing causal relationships from the values of the correlation coefficients. It is intended to combine quantitative information given by the correlations with such qualitative information a may be at hand on causal relations to give a quantitative interpretation" (Wright 1934, p. 193).

Following the path analytic procedure outlined by Dillon and Goldstein (1984), the estimate of the path coefficients are represented by standardized regression weights. The analysis consists of three stages, (1) Model 1 is a univariate regression with sale effectiveness as the dependent variable and salesperson adaptability as the independent variable (cf. Table III), (2) Model 2 is a multivariate regression with salesperson adaptability as the dependent variable and interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity as the independent variables (cf. Table V), (3) Model 3 is a multivariate regression where salesperson effectiveness is the dependent variable and salesperson adaptability,

interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity are the independent variables (Table IV), (4) although not hypothesized, the direct effects between salesperson effectiveness (the dependent variable) and interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, and attributional complexity (Table VI) are assessed.

To help the reader, Table III presents the hypotheses under investigation in the current research.

TABLE III

H1:	The practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) will have a positive relationship with a salesperson's performance in customer interactions.
H2:	The practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) will have a positive relationship with a salesperson's ability to meet sales objectives.
H3:	The practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS) will have a positive relationship with Total Performance; represented by a summated score of Behrman and Perrault's (1982) sales performance scale.
H4:	Interaction involvement is positively related with the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS).
H5:	Communicative adaptability is positively related with the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS).
H6:	Attributional Complexity is positively related to the practice of adaptive selling (as measured by ADAPTS).

RESULTS

Results in Table V indicate that the practice of adaptive selling is related to the two dimensions of

salesperson performance (analogous with Goolsby et al. 1992). In addition the research results in Table I and IV indicate that there is significant relationship between ADAPTS and the global measure of salesperson performance.

Results in Table VI indicate (at the .1 significance level) interaction involvement and communicative adaptability,and attributional complexity are related to the practice of adaptive selling.

Results in Table VII, also indicate that there are negative direct effects between salesperson performance and interaction involvement and attributional complexity. The relationship was unexpected.

In summary, the results support hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 and advance the hypothesized relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and salesperson performance. The results indicate that there is moderate support for hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 which investigate the relationship between the person-specific-traits of interaction involvement, attributional complexity, and communicative adaptability.

Table IV

Regression Results for "The Practice of Adaptive Selling" as Predictor Variable and "Salesperson Performance" as Dependent Variable

	Salesperson Performance		
	beta	t	Significance Level
ADAPTS	.20	2.79	.0006
			Adjusted R^2 = .08

Table V

Regression Results for "Person Specific Traits" as Predictor Variables and "Dimensions of Salesperson Performance" as Dependent Variable

	Sales Performance Dimensions		
	beta	t	Significance Level
	Meet Sales Objectives		
ADAPTS	.18	2.500	.013
Interaction Involvement	-.16	-2.205	.028
Attributional Complexity	-.10	-1.496	.136
Communicative Adaptability	-.05	-0.663	.508
			Adjusted R^2 =.04
	Effective Customer Interactions		
ADAPTS	.23	3.070	.003
Interaction Involvement	-.09	-1.241	.216
Attributional Complexity	-.16	-2.257	.025
Communicative Adaptability	-.04	-0.600	.216
			Adjusted R^2 =.05

Table VI

Regression Results for "Person Specific Traits" as Predictor Variables and "ADAPTS" as Dependent Variable

	ADAPTS		
	beta	t	Significance Level
Interaction Involvement	.16	1.78	.07
Attributional Complexity	.14	1.656	.09
Communicative Adaptability	.45	3.501	.0006
			Adjusted R^2 =.08

Table VII

Regression Results for "ADAPTS, Interaction Involvement, Communicative Adaptability, Attributional Complexity" as Predictor Variables and "Salesperson Performance" as Dependent Variable

	Salesperson Performance		
	beta	t	Significance Level
ADAPTS	.26	3.546	.0005
Interaction Involvement	-.25	-2.640	.009
Attributional Complexity	-.21	-2.334	.020
Communicative Adaptability	-.06	-0.393	.695
			Adjusted R^2 =.09

CHAPTER V

Discussion and Implications

The discussion of this study follows in four parts. First, the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and selling effectiveness is reviewed, followed by a discussion of the relationship between interaction involvement, communicative adaptability, attributional complexity, and the practice of adaptive selling. Third, the research findings are reviewed and the implications for researchers and practitioners are developed. Last, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are presented.

The Practice of Adaptive Selling and Sales Performance

The current study investigates the research question "What impact does the practice of adaptive selling have on salesperson performance?" Investigation of the posited relation between adaptability and sales performance rests on the ability to measure each of the constructs of interest. Spiro and Weitz (1990) developed a measure of a salesperson's tendency to alter or adapt their sales presentation in response to the perceived nature of the sales situation. One of the surprising results of Spiro and Weitz's (1990) research was the lack of significant relationship between ADAPTS and their measure of sales performance. Thus, one essential goal of the current

research was to clarify the ADAPTS - sales performance relationship. This was accomplished by employing a more complete formulation of sales performance and by investigating the predictive validity of ADAPTS.

The construct of sale performance is represented by the measurement scale developed by Behrman and Perrault (1982). This global measure assesses five dimensions critically impacting the performance of a salesperson. The significant correlation between ADAPTS and sales performance ($p = .0006$) provides empirical evidence that extends our previous understanding of the relationship between the two constructs. The significant relationship between ADAPTS and performance increases our knowledge regarding the adaptability construct and provides both encouragement and a vehicle for further study of the individual determinants of the practice of adaptive selling.

Interaction Involvement and Communicative Adaptability

Previous research (Spiro and Weitz 1990, Goolsby et al. 1992) investigating the relationship between the practice of adaptive selling and adaptive psychological traits (e.g., androgyny, intrinsic reward orientation, self-monitoring, empathy locus of control) has established that the adaptive psychological traits are indicants of salesperson adaptability. However, a much theorized component of salesperson adaptability, communication, is absent from

previous research. The current research employs the construct of communicative adaptability to represent communication. Communicative Adaptability is defined as "the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one's interaction goals and behaviors accordingly" (Duran 1983). Two of the facets utilized by Spiro and Weitz (1990) to conceptualize a salesperson's predisposition to practice adaptive selling are , (1) confidence in the ability to use a variety of different sales approaches, and (2) confidence in the ability to alter the sales approach during a customer interaction. Thus, the communicative adaptability construct represents a measure of an individual's communicative ability to perceive and adapt to the unique characteristics of a dyadic/sales interaction. The research results indicate that the relationship between communicative adaptability and ADAPTS is significant ($p = .0005$). However, the research findings also indicate that there is not a direct relationship between communicative adaptability and sales performance, suggesting that communicative adaptability moderates a salesperson's ability to practice adaptive selling.

Interaction involvement is defined as "the extent to which an individual participates with another in conversations" (Cegala 1982). One of the predispositions utilized by Spiro and Weitz (1990) to conceptualize adaptive selling was the ability of an individual to

"...collect information about the sales situation to facilitate adaption." Thus, an individual exhibiting high interaction involvement should be able to detect selling signals during the sales interaction which then provide necessary input for adapting selling strategies. The research results indicate that interaction involvement is significantly ($p = .016$) correlated with ADAPTS. Again, the findings suggest that interaction involvement moderates a salesperson ability to practice adaptive selling.

Attributional Complexity

The importance of sales knowledge and its impact on effective selling performance has been recognized by both researchers and practitioners. For example, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) propose that salespeople's knowledge about their customers and selling strategies critically affects their performance. Spiro and Weitz (1990) suggest that knowledge related capabilities are necessary to practice adaptive selling. More specifically, (1) an elaborate knowledge structure of sales situations that enables salespeople to recognize different types of categories of situations and to retrieve, from memory, an appropriate sales approach associated with the category and (2) the ability to collect information to facilitate the process of matching sales situations to categories in memory. Salesperson knowledge structure is represented by the

construct of Attributional Complexity which is based on the notion that some people possess more complex attributional schemata than others (Fletcher et al. 1986). A person exhibiting a high degree of attributional complexity will cite more interactive causes (attributions) for the occurrence of events or behaviors. The ability to recognize interactive causes of occurrence during a relationship, i.e., a sales interaction, could prove to be a valuable asset for a salesperson.

The research results indicate that attributional complexity is not significantly correlated ($p = .109$) with adaptability. This finding is somewhat surprising given that attributional complexity was designed to assess an individuals cognitive processes during a dyadic interaction. One plausible explanation for the lack of relationship may be due to differences in the nature and purpose of dyadic sales interactions. The overriding purpose of a sales interaction is persuasion. Salespeople must focus on interpreting behavioral cues and feedback so that they can formulate effective sales strategy and therefore, may not make complex attributions about customer behavior.

Although not hypothesize, the research design included an exploratory investigation of attributional complexity's relationship with four of the dimensions of salesperson performance (Behrman and Perrault 1982). The research results indicate that there was not a significant

relationship with the dimensions of salesperson performance during a customer interaction (ECI). This analysis provides additional support for the findings concerning the relationship between attributional complexity and ADAPTS. The research results investigating attributional complexity's relationship with the second dimensions (the ability to meet sales objectives-ESO) and the fourth dimension (tendency to provide feedback-EF) of the scale indicate that there are not any significant relationships.

Finally, the findings relating to the correlation between the third dimension, degree of technical knowledge, and attributional complexity indicate that there is a inverse significant ($p = .03$) relationship. The inverse relationship may be due to the different types of knowledge represented by the two constructs of interest. The acquisition and degree of technical knowledge represents a salesperson's ability to study and encapsulate product and company knowledge. Attributional complexity represents an individual's ability to develop attributions concerning behaviors and events during the sales interaction. While both types of knowledge structure are important, they appear to represent different interpersonal capabilities.

An overriding purpose that guided the current research was to clarify inconsistencies in previous adaptiveness research and to explore the relationship between interpersonal communication constructs (communicative

adaptability and interaction involvement) and attributional complexity. In summary, this study's empirical findings support the positive relationship between salesperson adaptability and selling performance. In addition, the positive relationship between the communication constructs and ADAPTS strongly suggests that sales personnel who are high in interaction involvement and communicative adaptability are more likely to possess the ability to practice adaptive selling.

Study Limitations

The current study, as with similarly constructed research, is not void of limitations. First, all items measured are self-report items and may reflect some bias, especially those representing performance. However, research analyzing the determinants of sales performance (cf. Churchill et al. 1985) concludes that self-report measures of sales performance do not demonstrate any particular upward bias. The mean selling effectiveness score for this study was 3.8 with a standard deviation of .51 demonstrating sufficient variability to conclude that a tendency toward an upward bias did not add unwanted "noise" to the current study. Additionally, the sample is essentially a convenience sample and may not reflect the general domain of sales professionals. Therefore, the generalizability of the current study's findings to all

salespeople is cautioned. However, due to the exploratory nature of the current research, and the fact that a larger sample domain could introduce unwanted variability (Churchill et al., 1985) it could be argued that the sample is acceptable.

An additional limitation of a study of this nature is the inability to establish causality. Assertions of causality are best made through experimental research. Consequently, the conclusions drawn from the current study are restricted to supporting association rather than drawing definitive cause and effect conclusions.

Research Implications

The purposes of this study were, first, to examine the relationship between salesperson adaptability (as measured by ADAPTS) and sales performance. Second, to investigate the relationship between interpersonal communication constructs (i.e., communicative adaptability and interaction involvement) and the practice of adaptive selling and, third, to explore the relationship between attributional complexity, a knowledge structure component, and the practice of adaptive selling. Toward the first goal, this study demonstrates that salesperson adaptability has an impact on selling performance. Unlike any previous research, the current investigation has explored the effect of interpersonal communication, and one conceptualization of

knowledge structure on the practice of adaptive selling and sales performance.

Addressing some of the limitations of this study, replications are encouraged in order to verify results. Central among issues to be addressed in future research would include a sample design that includes a mixture of industry, service, and selling situation types to allow generalization of findings.

Because ADAPTS assesses the practice of salespeople, it is not useful in screening or selecting candidates for sales positions who do not have sales experience. Therefore, to increase the managerial validity of the adaptive research paradigm, future research should strive to define more precisely the behavioral variables associated with the practice of adaptive selling. For instance, what impact do effective listening skills have on the practice of adaptive selling? Are there additional interpersonal communication and knowledge constructs that explain additional variance associated with the practice of adaptive selling? With additional validation, these behavioral measures could be used as selection tests to determine the adaptive selling potential of inexperienced sales candidates.

Managerial Implications

The current research indicates that salespeople might improve their performance if they attempted to improve their

ability to adapt their selling behaviors. This suggests that sales training should stress the importance of a salesperson being able to identify and adjust their selling behaviors to a particular prospects, and selling situation. In addition, the moderating effect that communicative adaptability has on a salesperson's ability to practice adaptive selling suggests that communicative skills should be emphasized through out a salesperson's career.

The practice of adaptive selling has much potential explanatory power in marketing. It is hoped that the results of this research investigation will encourage more study and further understanding of the adaptability construct.

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APPENDIX

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you respond to you by circling the appropriate number.

		DISAGREE						AGREE
1.	Each customer requires a unique approach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	When I feel that may sales approach is not working, I can easily change to another approach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I like to experiment with different sales approaches.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I am very flexible in the selling approach I use.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I feel that most buyers can be dealt with in pretty much the same manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I don't change my approach from one customer to another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I can easily use a wide variety of selling approaches.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I use a set sales approach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	It is easy for me to modify my sales presentation if the situation calls for it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Basically I use the same approach with most customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	I am very sensitive to the needs of my customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I find it difficult to adapt my presentation style to certain buyers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	I vary my sales style from situation to situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	I try to understand how one customer differs from another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	I feel confident that I can effectively change my planned presentation when necessary.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	I treat all of my buyers pretty much the same.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

These questions have been designed to investigate the different ways people think about themselves and other people. There are no right or wrong answers, so answer each question honestly and accurately as you can. Each of the questions has a scale ranging from -3 to +3 (-3 = strongly disagree, -2 = moderately disagree, -1 = slightly disagree, 0 = neither agree or disagree, +1 = slightly agree, +2 = moderately agree, +3 = strongly agree. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling the appropriate number.

		STRONGLY DISAGREE						STRONGLY AGREE
1.	I don't usually bother to analyze and explain people's behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
2.	Once I have figured out a single cause for a person's behavior I don't usually go any further.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
3.	I believe it is important to analyze and understand our own thinking process.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
4.	I think a lot about the influence that I have on other people's behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
5.	I have found that the relationships between a person's attitudes, beliefs, and character traits are usually simple and straightforward.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
6.	If I see people behaving in a really strange or unusual manner I usually put it down to the fact that they are strange or unusual people and don't bother to explain it any further.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
7.	I have thought a lot about the family background and personal history of people who are close to me, in order to understand why they are the sort of people they are.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
8.	I don't enjoy getting into discussions where the causes for people's behavior are being talked over.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
9.	I have found that the causes for people's behavior are usually complex rather than simple.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
10.	I am very interested in understanding how my own thinking works when I make judgements about people or attach causes to their behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
11.	I think very little about the different ways that people influence each other.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
12.	To understand a person's personality/behavior I have found it is important to know how that person's attitude, beliefs, and character traits fit together.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
13.	When I try to explain other people's behavior I concentrate on the person and don't worry too much about all the existing external factors that might be affecting them.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
14.	I have often found that the basic cause for a person's behavior is located far back in time.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

		STRONGLY DISAGREE						STRONGLY AGREE
15.	I really enjoy analyzing the reasons or causes for people's behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
16.	I usually find that complicated explanations for people's behavior are confusing rather than helpful.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
17.	I give little thought to how my thinking works in the process of understanding or explaining people's behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
18.	I think very little about the influence that other people have on my behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
19.	I have though a lot about the way that different parts of my personality influence other parts (e.g., beliefs affecting attitudes or attitudes affecting character traits).	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
20.	I think a lot about the influence that society has on other people.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
21.	When I analyze a person's behavior I often find the causes form a chain that goes back in time, sometimes for years.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
22.	I am not really curious about human behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
23.	I prefer simple rather than complex explanations for people's behavior.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
24.	When the reasons I give for my own behavior are different from someone else's, this often makes me about the thinking processes that lead to my explanations.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
25.	I believe that to understand a person you need to understand the people who that person has close contact with.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
26.	I tend to take people's behavior at face value and not worry about the inner causes for their behavior (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, etc).	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
27.	I think a lot about the influence that society has on my behavior and personality.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
28.	I have thought very little about my own family background and personal history in order to understand why I am the sort of person I am.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling the appropriate number.

		Not At All Like Me						Very Much Like Me
1.	I am keenly aware of how others perceive me during my conversations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My mind wanders during conversations and I often miss parts of what is going on	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Often in conversations I'm not sure what to say, I can't seem to find the appropriate lines.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I carefully observe how others respond to me during my conversations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Often I will pretend to be listening to someone when in fact I'm thinking about something else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Often in conversations I'm not sure what my role is; that is, I'm not sure how I'm expected to relate to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I listen carefully to others during a conversation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	Often I am preoccupied in my conversations and do not pay complete attention to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	Often in conversations I'm not sure what the other is "really" saying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Often in conversations I am not sure what other's needs (e.g., reassurance, a compliment, etc.) are until it is too late to respond appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	During conversations I am sensitive to other's subtle or hidden meanings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I am very observant during my conversations with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	In conversations I pay close attention to what others say and do and try to obtain as much information as possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	Often I feel sort of "unplugged" from the social situation of which I am part; that is, I'm uncertain of my role, others' motives, and what's happening.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	In my conversations I really know what's going on; that is, I have a "handle on the situation."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	In my conversations I can accurately perceive others' intentions quite well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		NOT AT ALL LIKE ME						VERY MUCH LIKE ME
17.	Often in conversations I'm not sure how I'm expected to respond.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	In conversations I am responsive to the meanings of others' behavior in relation to myself and the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following are statements about communication behaviors. Answer each item as it relates to your general style of communication (the style of communicator you are most often) in social situations. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by placing the appropriate number (according to the scale below) in the space provided.

1 = never true of me
2 = rarely true of me
3 = sometimes true of me
4 = often true of me
5 = always true of me.

_____ 1. I feel nervous in social situations.

_____ 2. In most social situations I feel tense and constrained.

_____ 3. When talking, my posture seems awkward and tense.

_____ 4. My voice sounds nervous when I talk to others.

_____ 5. I am relaxed when talking with others.

_____ 6. I try to make the other person feel good.

_____ 7. I try to make the other person feel important.

_____ 8. I try to be warm when communicating with another.

_____ 9. While I'm talking I think about how the other person feels.

_____ 10. I am verbally and nonverbally supportive of other people.

_____ 11. I like to be active in different social groups.

_____ 12. I enjoy socializing with various groups of people.

_____ 13. I enjoy meeting new people.

_____ 14. I find it easy to get along with new people.

_____ 15. I do not "mix" well at social functions.

_____ 16. I am aware of how intimate my disclosures are.

_____ 17. I am aware of how intimate the disclosures of others are.

_____ 18. I disclose at the same level that others disclose to me.

_____ 19. I know how appropriate my self-disclosures are.

1 = never true of me
2 = rarely true of me
3 = sometimes true of me
4 = often true of me
5 = always true of me

_____ 20. When I self-disclose I know what I am revealing.

_____ 21. When speaking I have problems with grammar.

_____ 22. At times I don't use appropriate verb tense.

_____ 23. I sometimes use one word when I mean to use another.

_____ 24. I sometimes use words incorrectly.

_____ 25. I have difficulty pronouncing some words.

_____ 26. When I am anxious, I often make jokes.

_____ 27. I often make jokes when in tense situations.

_____ 28. When I embarrass myself I often make a joke about it.

_____ 29. When someone makes a negative comment about me I respond with a witty comeback.

_____ 30. People think I am witty.

PLEASE RATE YOUR SALES PERFORMANCE IN THE AREAS BELOW COMPARED TO WHAT YOU PERCEIVE TO BE THE PERFORMANCE OF AN AVERAGE SALESPERSON IN A SIMILAR SALES SITUATION AS YOURS. REMEMBER, YOUR RESPONSES ARE HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, SO PLEASE RESPOND AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE.

5 = OUTSTANDING
4 = ABOVE AVERAGE
3 = AVERAGE
2 = BELOW AVERAGE
1 = NEED SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT

1.	Producing a high market share for this company in a specific territory.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Making sales of those products with the highest profit.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Generating a high level of dollar sales.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Exceeding all sales targets and objectives for this territory during this year.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Knowing the design and specifications of company products/services.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Knowing the applications and functions of company products/services.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Being able to detect causes of operating failure of products.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Keeping abreast of the company's production and technological developments.	5	4	3	2	1

5 = OUTSTANDING
4 = ABOVE AVERAGE
3 = AVERAGE
2 = BELOW AVERAGE
1 = NEED SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT

9.	Providing accurate and complete paperwork related to orders, expenses, and other routine reports.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Recommending on own initiative how company operations and procedures can be improved.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Submitting required reports on time.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Maintaining company-specified records that are accurate, complete, and up-to-date.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Operating within the budgets set by the company.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Using expense accounts with integrity.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Using business gift and promotional allowances responsibly.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Controlling costs in other areas of the company when taking sales orders (order processing, delivery, etc.).	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Convincing customers that their problems and concerns are understood.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Using established contacts to develop new accounts.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Communicating sales presentations clearly and concisely.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Working out solutions to a customer's questions or objections.	5	4	3	2	1

THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATIONS ARE FOR CATEGORICAL PURPOSES. PLEASE ANSWER ALL STATEMENTS AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE.

GENDER: _____MALE _____FEMALE

AGE: _____

EDUCATION: (indicate the number of years beyond High School) _____Years

YEARS OF SALES EXPERIENCE: _____.

YEARS OF SALES EXPERIENCE WITH THIS COMPANY: _____.

PRIMARY TYPE OF SALES: _____to individual or households
_____to businesses

TYPE OF PRODUCT:_____durable product_____nondurable product_____service

INDUSTRY:_____

AVERAGE DOLLAR AMOUNT OF EACH SALE:$_____

AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK SPENT INTERACTING WITH CUSTOMERS:_____

VITA 2

Stephen Scott Porter

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF SALESPERSON TRAITS, ADAPTIVE SELLING, AND SALES PERFORMANCE.

Major Field: Business Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Rolla, Missouri, On November 18, 1954, the son of Bill and Sara Porter.

Education: Graduated from East High School, Wichita, Kansas in May 1972; received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Friends University, Wichita, Kansas in May 1976; received a Master in Business Administration from The Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas in August of 1982. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1994.

Experience: Territory Manager, Carnation Food Company, November 1976 to October 1978; Sales Representative, John H. Harland Company, November 1978 to August 1979; Assistant Office Manager, John T. Arnold and Associates September 1979 to November 1981; Assistant Professor of Marketing, Friends University, August 1982 to January 1989; Graduate Teaching Assistant, Oklahoma State University, January 1989 to May 1991; Visiting Professor of Marketing, Oklahoma City University, August 1991 to present.

Professional Memberships: American Marketing Association, Southern Marketing Association, Academy of Marketing Science.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Date: 08-06-93 **IRB#:** BU-94-001

Proposal Title: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF SALESPERSON TRAITS ADAPTIVE SELLING, AND SELLING EFFECTIVENESS

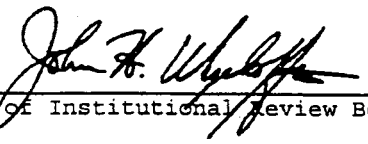
Principal Investigator(s): Joshua L. Wiener
Steve Porter

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:  Date: August 6, 1993

Chair of Institutional Review Board