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**SALES MANAGER PROBLEM RESOLUTION STYLES: MEASURE
DEVELOPMENT AND AN EXAMINATION OF THEIR SALESPERSON-
RELATED CONSEQUENCES**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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JANUARY 2003

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“We have become Antipodean in our scientific expectations. You believe in the God who plays dice, and I in complete law and order in a world which objectively exists, and which I, in a wildly speculative way, am trying to capture” ... “Our respective hobby-horses have run off in different directions – yours, however, enjoys far greater popularity...while mine...smacks of quixotism, and even I myself cannot adhere to it with absolute confidence. But at least mine does not represent a blind-man’s buff with the idea of reality”¹

“I cannot teach the boy, he has no patience”²

¹ Albert Einstein, quoted from two letters to Max Born, first quote dated 7 September 1944, second quote undated: reproduced in *“The World Treasury of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics”*, T. Ferris, ed. Toronto, Canada: Little Brown and Company, p. 809.

² Jedi Master Yoda, quoted from the screenplay of *“The Empire Strikes Back”* by G. Lucas, a novelised version of which is also available in: Glut, D. F. (2002) *“The Empire Strikes Back”*, pages. 193-350 of the *“Star Wars Omnibus”*, London, England: Orbit Books,. Quote from p. 274.

To My Mother

(No Mum, it's not about "everything")

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ASTON UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Personal selling and sales management play a critical role in the short and long term success of the firm, and have thus received substantial academic interest since the 1970s. Sales research has examined the role of the sales manager in some depth, defining a number of key technical and interpersonal roles which sales managers have in influencing sales force effectiveness. However, one aspect of sales management which appears to remain unexplored is that of their resolution of salesperson-related problems. This study represents the first attempt to address this gap by reporting on the conceptual and empirical development of an instrument designed to measure sales managers' problem resolution styles.

A comprehensive literature review and qualitative research study identified three key constructs relating to sales managers' problem resolution styles. The three constructs identified were termed; sales manager willingness to respond, sales manager caring, and sales manager aggressiveness. Building on this, existing literature was used to develop a conceptual model of salesperson-specific consequences of the three problem resolution style constructs. The quantitative phase of the study consisted of a mail survey of UK salespeople, achieving a total sample of 140 fully useable responses. Rigorous statistical assessment of the sales manager problem resolution style measures was undertaken, and construct validity examined.

Following this, the conceptual model was tested using latent variable path analysis. The results for the model were encouraging overall, and also with regard to the individual hypotheses. Sales manager problem resolution styles were found individually to have significant impacts on the salesperson-specific variables of role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviours. The findings, theoretical and managerial implications, limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Marketing Research, Structural Equation Modelling, Leadership, Discipline

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Personal Selling and Sales Management

“Success for almost every industrial firm hinges on its ability to develop a strong personal selling representation...[t]he successful firm must attract, select and train sales reps who have the aptitude and skill to cope with the demands of the job; implement organizational structures and management procedures which support or improve the sales effort; and retain reps who perform effectively” (Behrman and Perreault 1984 p. 9).

This lengthy quote sets out in no uncertain terms the critical role personal selling and sales management plays in organisational success. One of the key considerations here is that in many cases the salesforce is the major – or even the sole – revenue producer for a given organisation (Dubinsky et al. 1992). Therefore the salesforce contributes to the short term bottom line of an organisation directly. Additionally, as well as directly producing revenue as described above, research has suggested that the salesforce also plays a key relationship building role (Jolson 1997). The introduction of this latter role means that the salesforce is now also generally accepted to have a significant impact on the long term success of a firm. In addition, many scholars suggest that the salesforce is further growing in importance with changes in the business environment (e.g. Hoverstad, Moncrief, and Lucas 1990; Ingram, Schwegker, and Hutson 1992; Simintiras, Cadogan, and Lancaster 1996). However, while the personal selling role can be seen to be among the most important, it is also considered to be among the most resource intensive functions of the firm (Basu and Kalynaram 1990; Ingram, Schwegker and Hudson 1992; Jackson and Hisrich 1996). Therefore, with the salesforce holding such a vital position within the organisation, and consuming such a large proportion of resources, it can be seen that sales representatives are likely to have a large and direct impact on the fortunes of most firms, far more perhaps than other comparable functions within the typical organisation.

With the sales force occupying such a crucial role within the firm, it is natural that the *management* of sales people should also be vital. In fact, sales managers play several central roles in ensuring the effective performance of the sales force – thus ensuring sales managers’ importance to the firm. While like most managers, sales managers are tasked with ensuring that their resources are helping to produce competitive advantage for the firm, in a more specific sense their responsibilities include enhancing the commitment, motivation and performance of salespeople (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). On one level, this role requires the sales manager to make numerous objective and technical decisions, such as allocating sales people to territories, and ensuring they have the correct equipment to do their jobs (e.g. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). However, on a different level, sales managers’ more subjective skills and characteristics are likely to come into play – or in other words, how they *implement* their decisions and deal with sales people in their day to day interactions (Russ, McNeille and Comer 1996). As a consequence of this twin role, sales management issues would appear to be an important area for academics to devote their scholarly efforts towards. However, while the key role of personal selling itself has long been recognised within what can be loosely termed the ‘marketing’ discipline,¹ it is only rather more recently, since the mid-late 1970s in fact, that the actual *management* of the personal selling function has become popular as a field of academic inquiry, although it has since proved of enduring interest to researchers.

The increase in popularity of sales management research appears to have been driven mainly by the seminal work of both Gilbert Churchill and his colleagues (e.g. Churchill et al. 1985; Walker, Churchill and Ford 1977) and Richard Bagozzi (e.g. Bagozzi 1980; 1978) in a series of key papers dealing with sales force motivation and performance. In fact, to quote at length from Walker and his co-authors’ ‘state of the art’ picture of sales management research in 1977: “the structure and content of sales management texts have changed little since the field was first explored about 50 years ago. Few theories and even less empirical knowledge are available about most

¹ So much so in fact, that most general marketing texts, in their sections on the history of marketing’s conceptual and practical development, define a historical period – usually between the 1920s and 1950s – where the key philosophy was what has come to be termed the ‘selling concept’, known as the ‘sales era’ (e.g. Dibb et al. 2001).

aspects of sales management...academia has relegated the study of this field to 'second class' status...each sales executive works out his own ideas about how to manage a salesforce from an assortment of "principles" he inherits from his predecessor, the customs of his industry, the expectations and demands of his superiors, and his own assumptions" (Walker, Churchill and Ford 1977 p. 156). One can assume that, prior to the latter study, little academic theory had been developed regarding the sales management function. Since that seminal piece of work however, sales scholars have expended much effort in examining the sales management function. For example one study, conducted by Bush and Grant (1994), counted 358 sales-related articles published between 1980 and 1992, in four mainstream marketing research publications.²

Kohli and Jaworski (1994) contended that sales research could be categorised into three main areas; a) that research relating to the individual skills, behaviours and/or characteristics of the sales rep, b) that research focussing on salespeople's perceptions of their job and its characteristics, and c) that relating to the salespeople's interactions with others in their sales force. In fact, this split was arguably first suggested by Bagozzi's (1978) early work. In particular, Bagozzi's (1978) theory on sales performance proposed that the performance of a sales rep is a direct function of "the person [i.e. the individual sales rep, or section 'a' above], the interactions the person has with significant others in his or her role set [i.e. others in the sales force, or section 'c' above], and the situation or environment in which these interactions take place [i.e. the job and its characteristics, or section 'b' above]" (p. 517). Thus, it seems that, in order to provide a general overview of existing sales research and justification for the present research's focus, one can usefully group existing sales research into that which deals with 1) the individual sales representative (which could be referred to as 'salesperson-based' studies), 2) the internal and external environment of the sales job (which could be referred to as 'job-based' studies), and 3) the interactions between the sales representative and others within the job environment (which could be referred to as 'interaction-based' studies).

² The publications were: Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management (196 articles published), Journal of Marketing Research (32 articles published), Journal of Marketing (34 articles published), and Industrial Marketing Management (96 articles published).

1.1.1. 'Salesperson-Based' Research

'Salesperson-based' studies, those which deal with individual sales representatives' characteristics, can be seen to implicitly consider that the ultimate performance of each individual sales representative is primarily dependent on their own unique levels of a number of key characteristics (e.g. intelligence). Interestingly, it seems that most of the earlier work on sales force performance has taken this approach (e.g. Bagozzi 1978; Lamont and Lundstrom 1977). Ford, Walker and Churchill (1988), in their meta-analysis, find a number of individual sales person characteristics that seem to be related to sales rep success. These characteristics include enduring personal factors such as intelligence, cognitive ability, verbal intelligence, and ability in mathematics. The factors also include personality traits such as responsibility, self-esteem, creativity, and sociability. Another early champion of the importance of individual salesperson characteristics was Richard Bagozzi (1980; 1978) who contended that self-esteem, other-directedness, and verbal intelligence may affect salespersons' performance. Furthermore, in Churchill et al.'s (1985) meta-analysis, a total of 407 correlations between individual sales representative factors and performance were discovered between 1918 and 1982.³ Characteristics identified in the latter study included things such as age, gender, weight, race, marital status, and number of dependents.

It would seem that by focusing on sales person characteristics such as those above, which are essentially unchangeable by the sales manager, sales researchers would be operating with a philosophy which saw the sales manager as mainly responsible for finding or otherwise selecting the 'right' people to be sales representatives. More specifically, 'salesperson-based' studies appear to advocate that, once the manager has found the 'best' people according to the personal factors discussed above (such as mathematical or verbal ability), then it is up to the sales person themselves to 'get on with it' with little input from the manager. However, in general the amount of sales performance which is explained by these personal factors is quite small (Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). In other words, it can be assumed that sales managers who operate purely by the philosophy which is implicitly advocated by

³ Of course, it is important to note that this does not mean 407 *studies* or articles were counted, since few articles are likely to report only a single correlation/relationship.

'salesperson-based' studies are likely to have little control over the performance of their salespeople. This would leave sales scholars with the task of discovering other factors which may influence sales performance.

1.1.2. 'Job-Based' Research

Perhaps because of the limited explanatory power of internal sales person factors as outlined above, sales researchers have also examined other variables in an attempt to discover how sales managers can influence sales performance. In fact, a large section of sales management research can be considered to fall within the confines of the *second* major grouping as defined previously, i.e. that which deals with the external and internal characteristics of the sales representative's job. Interestingly, the rise of these 'job-based' studies appears in the main to be a more recent development than the 'salesperson-based' studies discussed above. For example, Churchill and colleagues (1985) reported only five studies exploring the relationship between job/environmental factors (i.e. external and internal job characteristics) and sales performance up till 1982, however, in a later meta-analysis, Bush and Grant (1994) reported 16 studies on compensation (one job characteristic) alone between 1980 and 1992.⁴ Thus, it appears relatively safe to assume that a major growth in research into job/environmental characteristics has occurred in the last two decades.

In general, 'job-based' studies have proved relatively successful in identifying significant influences on sales performance, with examination of external characteristics in particular proving fruitful. For example, it is generally accepted that external environmental conditions such as a poor economy or highly competitive market can negatively affect sales performance (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). However, this knowledge, although useful, is of limited application to sales managers, who will tend to have little power to change environmental constraints such as economic conditions. Thus in essence, sales managers are again left in the position of being essentially 'observers', similar to the position implied by 'salesperson-based' studies.

⁴ It is difficult to determine the total number of studies concerned with job/environmental characteristics in Bush and Grant's (1994) study, since their terminology differs from Churchill et al.

However, perhaps more usefully to practitioners, a significant amount of 'job-based' research has explored the *internal* factors within the firm, or what could be called job characteristics, and how they can influence performance. 'Job-based' studies have examined a large number of job characteristics and have generally discovered that they can have an important impact on sales people's performance (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). Some examples of the characteristics which sales managers can change to influence sales performance have been discovered to be; compensation, sales organisation type (e.g. inside versus outside sales reps), territory design, job variety, sales targets and sales strategies (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Donaldson 1998). Essentially, 'job-based' research is concerned with the *technical* quality of sales managers' decisions. For example, theoretically speaking, if sales managers can effectively design territories or compensation programmes for their sales reps, then it is more likely that sales reps will perform better (Donaldson 1998).

It can be seen that the role for the sales manager which is implied by 'job-based' studies is significantly different from that implied by those studies which are salesperson-based. In particular, while the sales manager's role within the strategy advocated by 'salesperson-based' studies is simply to select the best people, the manager's role within the 'job-based' strategy is far more active, and can be defined as a 'technical decision-making' role. For example, within the latter strategy managers are tasked with duties such as allocating sales people to territories, designing effective compensation systems, and ensuring they have the correct equipment to do their jobs. Interestingly, these technical decisions are explored in depth in the many sales management texts available today (e.g. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Donaldson 1998; Jackson and Hisrich 1996; Jobber and Lancaster 2000), and thus are likely to inform many of those practitioners who operate within the sales management context.

1.1.3. 'Interaction-Based' Research

Sales management research falling into the final category, 'interaction-based' studies, expands the sales manager's role even further. In particular, the 'interaction-

(1985). Furthermore, Bush and Grant (1994) use a far greater number of categories in their study,

based' studies take the second part of Bagozzi's (1978) formula into account, i.e. the *interrelationships* between the sales person and others within the workplace, or more specifically the manager. In fact, within the broad 'interaction-based' category, the studies can be categorised into two main areas, which will be discussed subsequently.

Firstly a large body of research, what could be called 'technical interaction-based' studies, has focused on how sales managers can *evaluate* and *control* sales representatives. Much of this research has focussed on how managers can improve the general performance of their sales reps, for example by improving the latter's selling skills or time management skills (e.g. Cadogan and Siminitiras 1994). In fact, Bush and Grant (1994) find that the most popular field of sales management enquiry between 1980 and 1992 has been on improving the selling process and techniques of selling (66 articles published). Other popular fields of enquiry found by Bush and Grant (1994) were issues concerning performance evaluation (60 articles) and general sales managerial supervision (26 articles), both of which are fields primarily concerned with issues of sales managers' evaluation and control of their salespeople. A good example of 'technical interaction-based' research is that exploring 'organisational control systems', which investigates the general strategies that sales managers can use to control their sales representatives. Much research has been undertaken in the latter area since 1987 when the concept was first articulated (e.g. Anderson and Oliver 1994; Oliver and Anderson 1987; Piercy, Cravens and Lane 2001).

'Technical interaction-based' studies implicitly expand the manager's role to include a component of interaction with the sales force, rather than simply selecting good people ('salesperson-based' studies) and designing appropriate jobs for them ('job-based' studies). Specifically, the managerial role implied by 'technical interaction-based' studies involves the manager taking an active role in the sales person's performance *as it evolves over time* (by evaluating performance, and acting on these evaluations). Thus, taking into account findings from research falling into the 'salesperson-based', 'job-based', and 'technical interaction-based' classifications, the

reflecting the increased diversity of sales research between the two time periods.

sales manager's job seems to be to a) recruit and select sales reps with the correct characteristics ('salesperson-based'), b) design the correct job for them to perform in ('job-based') and c) evaluate and control their performance ('technical interaction-based'). These roles can be considered to be primarily objective and technical, with sales managers tasked with making decisions regarding recruitment, organisation, and evaluation of their sales forces. This model of sales management is dominant in contemporary sales management textbooks (e.g. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997).

Importantly, from the latter half of the 1990s, sales research has begun to focus on a different issue within the bound of sales peoples' interactions with their sales managers, and this research is termed here 'interpersonal interaction-based'.

Specifically, 'interpersonal interaction-based' studies explore the role in which the more subjective skills and characteristics of the sales manager (e.g. personality types and leadership styles) have on the performance of the salesforce (e.g. Bass, Barnett and Brown 1998; Dubinsky et al. 1995; LaFleur and Forrest 1991; Russ, McNeille and Comer 1996; Shoemaker 1999; Yammarino 1997). The increase in studies falling into the 'interpersonal interaction-based' group appears to be driven primarily by a corresponding increase in consideration of 'leadership' theories (and the like) within organisational behaviour, which subsequently have been applied to sales management (e.g. Dubinsky et al. 1995; Yammarino 1997). More specifically, researchers have discovered that sales reps can be influenced by their sales managers in a positive manner through the managers' 'leadership style' (Dubinsky et al. 1995), or the manager-subordinate exchange relationship (Swift and Campbell 1995), among other things. While there is substantial variation among the latter theories, what the 'interpersonal interaction-based' studies have in common is that they are all concerned in some way with how the sales manager interacts with sales representatives on an interpersonal level rather than a purely technical one.

The managerial role implicitly underlying 'interpersonal interaction-based' studies can be argued to be the most complete of all of those which underpin the groups of research described here. Specifically, within the studies comprising 'salesperson-based', 'job-based', and 'technical interaction-based' groups, the sales manager finds differing levels of responsibility for technical decisions, i.e. selection, job design, and evaluation/control. However, 'interpersonal interaction-based' studies imply that the

sales manager is also responsible for the correct, or most beneficial, type of *interpersonal interactions* with their sales representatives. Thus, according to the model suggested by ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ studies, in order to perform most effectively, as well as having a high level of technical excellence in the specific tasks involved in selection, planning, evaluation and control, a sales manager must also have a high level of more ‘interpersonal’ skills. In fact, it has been stated that: “[h]ow sales managers make decisions and influence their subordinates appears as likely to affect their success as does the technical quality of their decisions about plans, policies and procedures” (Russ, McNeilley and Comer 1996, p. 1).

1.1.4. Synthesis and Conclusions

Conceptually speaking, it can be seen that from ‘salesperson-based’ studies through to ‘technical interaction-based’ studies, sales managers’ responsibilities increase along a fairly constant path, mainly with increasing technical demands. However, something of a paradigm shift occurs with ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ studies, where the interpersonal demands of the sales manager’s role become the primary focus of study. Interestingly, it also seems that sales research has evolved *chronologically* along a similar path. Specifically, ‘salesperson-based’ studies appear to make up the bulk of sales research prior to 1982 (Churchill et al. 1985), while ‘job-based’ and ‘technical interaction-based’ studies take primacy from around 1985 to 1994 (cf. Bush and Grant 1994), and ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ studies have begun to increase in number from the latter half of the 1990s. This evolution of research has increased the sales manager’s role in influencing performance significantly, from merely *setting the correct conditions* for sales performance (‘salesperson-based’ and ‘job-based’ research) to finally playing a crucial role in the *day to day* performance of a sales representative, on both a technical and interpersonal level.

Overall however, when examining the large body of research discussed above, it appears that academics have tended to treat sales managers as rather less important than understanding the performance and behaviour of sales people (Armstrong, Pecotich and Mills 1993). While this is perhaps understandable due to the relatively short time span between Walker and co-authors’ (1977) call for more research into

the area and the present day, it does leave us with something of a problem. Specifically, even though the latter authors explicitly stated that “effective management of the salesforce is obviously crucial to the success of many organizations” (p. 156), the resulting direction taken by academics in the development of the field has left researchers and practitioners in the position of having a large body of literature on what constitutes effective salespeople, or the characteristics of sales jobs which enable sales reps to perform effectively, but relatively little on what distinguishes an effective sales manager from an ineffective one (Russ, McNeilley and Comer 1996). It is only recently that researchers have begun to examine the qualities of the manager themselves (such as leadership style), as opposed to their ‘skill levels’ in making technical decisions on issues such as salesforce selection, compensation, territory design and control.

1.2. The Research Gap – Sales Manager Problem

Resolution Styles

It can be seen that, according to much modern sales literature (i.e. that contained in the interaction-based group above), the sales manager has an implicit and explicit role in managing the day to day performance of their sales people, either on a technical level (evaluation and control decisions) or a more interpersonal level (leadership etc.). Within this day to day sales management role, a substantial proportion of the manager’s time appears likely to be taken up with dealing with specific ‘problem situations’ involving their sales force. These situations are likely to be concerned with either *preventing poor performance*, *raising performance to new heights*, or dealing with the *exhibition of inappropriate behaviour* (e.g. unethical selling behaviour, or inappropriate social behaviour). While few studies explicitly recognise this issue, much existing research strongly implies that these kinds of sales force related problems will occur.

However, it is important to recognise that salespeople themselves are not always the ‘cause’ of the above kinds of problems (even though these problems may ultimately require managerial action directed at salespeople). For example, it is well accepted

that both the staff recruitment process is very difficult and potentially unreliable (cf. Donaldson 1998), and that the competitive environment is changing massively (Wotruba 1996). So on one level it appears highly likely that problems can occur, because salespeople may be unsuited to the job originally and this was not picked up during the recruitment process (i.e. the salesperson *is* the cause of the problem), or they *become* unsuited due to environment changes (i.e. the salesperson themselves is not the cause of the problem, rather, the environmental change is the cause with the salesperson being part of the ‘symptoms’ of the problem). However, in the latter case, managerial action directed at the salesperson would still be required, since the environment can not be changed by the manager. Adding some context to this discussion, Churchill and colleagues (1997) reported that “on average, about 16 percent of a firm’s sales force will quit or be terminated in a given year. And (sic) the odds that a given salesperson will either quit or be fired during his or her first five years of employment with a firm approach 50-50” (p. 369). Furthermore, the latter figures presumably miss all those salespeople who may cause or be involved in problems, yet do not leave the firm (e.g. marginal performers, or less serious transgressors).

Furthermore, there is a growing body of knowledge regarding the *causes* of salesperson-related problems and the potential *effects* of these problems. Specifically, Johnston, Hair and Boles (1989) delineated several factors that seemed to contribute to salesperson failure, discovering that these issues appeared to be both personal factors ‘within’ the sales representative themselves, as well as factors which could be controlled by sales managers (e.g. selling skills). This finding was echoed by Ingram, Schwegker and Hutson (1992). By contrast, Dubinsky (1999) laid the blame for salesperson-related problems squarely at the foot of the sales manager, who Dubinsky argued is responsible for all problems situations which concern salespeople, by exhibiting (for example) either poor selection skills or poor management skills. Morris, LaForge and Allen (1994) also found that management had an important role to play in reducing failure, but that managers tended to attribute failure mainly to uncontrollable salesperson factors such as lack of ambition (i.e. that problems were always the fault of the salesperson).

Thus it appears that resolving problem situations is an important part of the sales manager's job. For example it was seen above that managers could take action to *prevent* problems from occurring. Furthermore, certain salespeople may be set to cause problems themselves from the beginning, or may develop uncontrollable (by sales management) factors linked to problem-causing later in their career – perhaps caused by environmental changes or other factors not directly the fault of the salesperson. These latter situations require managerial action to resolve them. Thus, even though much scholarly sales research (i.e. salesperson and job-based studies) implicitly focuses on the factors that managers can manipulate to reduce/prevent the risk of salesperson failure (for example, selecting good candidates, or designing 'better' job structures), it appears that there will *always* be salesperson-related problem situations which sales managers need to resolve (whether or not salespeople themselves are the root causes of these problem situations). This then, would seem to be an important area for research.

Interaction-based sales research appears to offer some guidance in how sales managers may respond to these problem situations. In fact, much of the latter literature could conceivably be applied here. For example, organisational control literature (e.g. Anderson and Oliver 1994) is fundamentally concerned with controlling sales people's behaviour. Implicit within the latter concept is that sales people will perform at different levels, some below par and some above par. Correspondingly, the role of the organisational control system is, at least in part, to proscribe to the sales manager how to respond to these differing levels of performance. Similarly, vertical-exchange theory (e.g. Swift and Campbell 1995) has in part described how managers actually do behave in response to issues such as poor performance, according to the quality of relationships they have with their staff. Transactional leadership theory has also described how leaders can use feedback in order to control sales people's behaviour, and implicit in this idea is that 'transactional' leaders are effective since they identify and respond to problem situations within the sales force, while 'laissez-faire' managers do not (cf. Dubinsky 1995). Nevertheless, most interaction-based studies deal with the issue of problem resolution only by implication. In other words, theories of organisational control, leadership, and vertical exchange can be applied to salesforce problem resolution situations *as well as* other managerial situations.

Furthermore, one stream of research has explicitly dealt with how managers respond to problems *caused* by their sales representatives. This literature examines sales people's unethical selling behaviour, and the factors that influence sales managers' different responses to unethical sales people (e.g. Bellizi 1995; Bellizi and Hite 1989; DeConinck 1992). The main thrust of the latter research is that sales managers will behave differently (i.e. either respond severely, less severely, or not at all) when dealing with unethical sales reps according to a number of factors, such as gender, obesity, or characteristics of the unethical act itself.

However, it can be seen from the above discussion that research which can be applied to sales managerial response to problem resolution has primarily focused on *behavioural* options which are open to the sales manager. These various behaviours, whether they be described in terms of control systems, leadership style, vertical-exchange relationships and the like, can be performed in response to problem situations (e.g. unethical behaviour, raising performance, preventing poor performance) both in order to minimise their chances of occurrence/reoccurrence, and also to 'resolve' the problem in some way (e.g. by punishing a problem behaviour).

However, although the efficacy of, and factors which influence, different behaviours by the sales manager (e.g. severe response versus no response, or written warning versus verbal warning) in problem situations has received some scholarly attention, it seems that certain important aspects of sales managerial response to problem situations remain unclear. In particular, the impact of sales managers' *implementation* of various problem resolution behaviours which may be suggested by control systems, leadership, and other branches of research, has not been systematically examined. What is missing from the sales literature so far is an appreciation of how sales managers actually go about delivering these recommended behaviours, or in other words, what could be called sales manager *problem resolution styles*.

In theoretical terms, problem resolution styles can be broadly conceptualised as concerning the ways in which sales managers handle their interactions with salespeople when dealing with problem situations (e.g. general performance

improvement, or responding to lack of goal attainment etc.). For example, once a sales manager becomes aware of a problem situation (perhaps through observation, analysis, or even being told by his/her *own* line manager), the sales manager must decide on a course of action to resolve it. However, once the course of action is decided, it stands to reason that different sales managers will *implement* or deliver the course of action in different ways. It is these different delivery styles which are conceptually represented presently as problem resolution styles.

A number of issues must be addressed in order to provide information on the importance of sales manager problem resolution styles. First and foremost, it is necessary to examine how sales managers' problem resolution styles may differ. Therefore, a critical examination of relevant literature from many fields is warranted. Specifically, it appears that, even though it has been suggested that existing sales research may not be able to provide substantial insight, fields such as organisational psychology may be able to throw light on the subject. However, if existing research can not provide sufficient evidence, then a field-based approach may prove necessary, which could involve interviews with sales managers and/or sales representatives.

Secondly, assuming that relevant and substantive problem resolution style constructs can be delineated from literature or field-based studies, in order to determine any potential influences of such variables, valid and reliable measures should be developed. In this context, a number of important issues raise their heads. Firstly, if the constructs are already available in the literature, then their measures may need to be adapted to the sales context, as has been done with many other constructs from fields outside sales. Secondly, if it is necessary to develop entirely new constructs, then brand new measures will need to be developed, according to procedures outlined by previous scholars (e.g. Anderson and Gerbing 1982; Bollen and Lennox 1991; Churchill 1979; Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

The final issue concerns the potential consequences of the different problem resolution styles. Specifically, a large amount of sales research has investigated sales-force variables which may influence performance, such as motivation and role ambiguity (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). In order to testify to the relevance

and theoretical/practical importance of any new constructs (such as problem resolution styles), one should attempt to evaluate their influence on such variables. Essentially, constructs that exist but do not have a substantive influence on the sales force are of curiosity value only, and of little use to sales researchers or practitioners.⁵ Thus there is also a need to identify the important consequences (if any) of different styles of sales manager problem resolution on the sales force.

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of the present study are threefold, and follow on from the previous discussion. Essentially, the objectives are focused on eliciting theoretical and empirical evidence regarding sales managers' problem resolution styles, and their substantive consequences. More specifically, the three objectives of this study are:

1. *To conceptualise and delineate the dimensionality of sales manager problem resolution styles that are used when sales managers are faced with day to day sales force-related problem situations (e.g. performance improvement, failure prevention, dealing with specific inappropriate behaviour).*
2. *To develop valid and reliable measures of sales manager problem resolution styles (i.e. to develop measures of the various sales manager problem resolution style constructs, which are able to indicate the degree to which sales managers display each of the constructs delineated by the achievement of objective 1 above).*
3. *To investigate the influence of sales manager problem resolution styles on sales force effectiveness (i.e. to determine the degree to which the sales manager problem resolution style constructs, delineated and measured by the achievement of objectives 1 and 2 above, are associated with variables which have previously been discovered as important to sales force success).*

⁵ As an example, one could develop a construct called sales manager 'interest in music'. While it would be interesting in its own right, this construct is unlikely to have any influence on variables of interest (such as role ambiguity) and thus be rather irrelevant to sales research and practice.

The attainment of these three objectives is important for a number of reasons, which together form the anticipated theoretical contribution of the thesis. Specifically, attainment of objective one will contribute to marketing and sales research by conceptualising a number of novel constructs (i.e. sales manager problem resolution styles) which may be of importance to sales force effectiveness. Objective one's achievement is crucial since, without a robust delineation of the relevant constructs pertaining to sales manager problem resolution styles (whether literature or field-based), it is difficult for researchers to even speculate as to their importance in enhancing sales force effectiveness.

The second major contribution of the present study is the generation of valid and reliable measures of sales manager problem resolution styles. Without an adequate measure of each relevant construct, few valid, generalisable, and defensible conclusions can be made regarding the latter's antecedents and consequences. Thus, the generation of valid and reliable measures is also a prerequisite to the development of a theory of sales manager problem resolution styles (objective three). In particular, generation of problem resolution style measures will help future researchers add their own contribution to the latter field in a comparable manner, thus allowing a cumulative building up of knowledge (cf. Antil and Bennett 1979).

The final contribution of the present study relates directly to the potential theoretical and practical importance of sales manager problem resolution styles. Achieving objective three should provide knowledge as to the importance and relevance of sales manager problem resolution styles in enhancing sales organisation effectiveness. In other words, achieving objective three will contribute to marketing knowledge, and sales management in particular, by indicating whether sales manager problem resolution styles can influence sales force effectiveness, the determination of which has been at the heart of sales research from its very early beginnings in the early 20th century (e.g. Oschrein 1918).

There are also a number of practical benefits to be gained by the successful undertaking of the present study. Perhaps first and foremost is the potential for guidance and advice to be given to sales managers who wish to know how to act when resolving problems concerning their sales forces. As alluded to earlier, research

has found that sales managers are likely to have to face problem situations on a fairly regular basis. However, until the present study, academic research on the most effective styles with which sales managers can resolve these problems has been conspicuous by its absence.⁶ Secondly, assuming that different sales manager problem resolution styles are discovered to have substantive impact on sales force effectiveness, then there is the possibility to enhance the evaluation of potential and existing sales managers. Specifically, since it has been found consistently that we have little knowledge of what makes an effective sales manager (e.g. Armstrong, Pecotich and Mills 1993), those who appoint and evaluate sales managers have little formal ability to determine whether a candidate is likely to make an effective sales manager. Furthermore, other than the performance of the sales unit, high-level managers seem to have little ability to *evaluate* those sales managers already in the firm. Therefore, the discovery of specific problem resolution styles that are more or less effective will enhance the ability of the organisation to select, train, and evaluate sales managers. In this manner, the conceptualisation and measurement of different sales manager problem resolution styles will likely be useful in its own right.

The next section of the present chapter explains how this dissertation is organised in order to achieve the three objectives discussed above.

1.4. An Outline of the Thesis' Structure

The thesis is structured into 9 chapters, including the present one. Chapter 2 focuses on assessing the relevant conceptual and empirical literature regarding sales manager problem resolution methods. Here, research in sales management, marketing, organisational behaviour, psychology, and other relevant disciplines is examined for insight into sales managers' problem resolution styles, and the key variables of importance. Within each particular stream of research, comment is made on the insights which it can offer to the task in hand, and any particular areas where it may lack explanatory power. In conclusion, it is argued that in order to gain more specific

⁶ However, as shall be seen in Chapter 2, practitioner-focused work *has* appeared pertaining to issues of problem resolution styles.

insight into sales managers' problem resolution styles, these literature-based propositions need to be examined in light of field data.

Chapter 3 provides the fruits of the effort to provide field-based evidence regarding sales managers' problem resolution styles. Essentially, a qualitative study of sales organisations is described, in order to draw out insights into the different styles with which sales managers resolve problem situations. Next, synthesising both the field research and relevant literature, a number of key constructs regarding sales manager problem resolution styles are developed.

Chapter 4 then uses relevant academic literature to develop a conceptual model of the consequences of the different sales manager problem resolution styles. At this stage, formal hypotheses regarding the sales force-specific consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles are presented for future testing.

Chapter 5 describes in detail the methodology used to quantitatively investigate the conceptual model of sales manager problem resolution styles. Operationalisations for all variables under investigation are provided, and the development of a measuring instrument for the constructs (in this case a questionnaire) is described. Following this, the administration of a pilot study is described, along with the results and the modifications to the measuring instrument. Finally, the main survey administration is outlined and discussed, including the sampling procedure, data collection, response pattern, and non-response analysis.

In Chapter 6, the analysis of the quantitative data is begun in earnest. Chapter 6 presents the results of a descriptive analysis of the response to the survey. For these purposes, statistics relating to the central tendency and dispersion of the responses are provided, along with relevant graphical displays, in order to detail the characteristics of both the organisations and individuals who responded to the survey. In addition, where necessary, the measuring scales/indices of the consequences are developed through the use of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. These measures are also assessed for their reliability and validity, to enable their inclusion in the model testing process later described.

Chapter 7 discusses in depth the development of measures for the sales manager problem resolution style constructs. More specifically, each of the constructs is measured using a multi-item scale, which is analysed for its psychometric properties. The earlier part of the chapter is concerned with describing the measure development procedures undertaken, and the justification for each procedure. Following this, the actual process of measure construction and purification is described. Each measure is also assessed for its reliability and validity, and finally a multi-item scale of each measure is developed and described in statistical terms.

Chapter 8 presents the results of the model testing procedure. Firstly, the overall analysis strategy (latent variable path analysis) is described in detail. Following this, the specifics of the model testing procedure are discussed. Subsequently, the hypothesis test results are reported. Discussions of the implications of the analysis results are also provided throughout the chapter.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation by synthesising the relevant findings outlined in the previous sections. In particular, the significance of the findings to existing theory and methods is examined in depth. Following this, the implications to sales management practitioners are discussed in detail, and several practical recommendations regarding the styles sales managers should adopt when resolving staff-related problems are advanced. Finally, the limitations of the study are outlined, and following on from this, a number of recommendations for future research are presented.

2. DEALING WITH STAFF RELATED PROBLEMS: A LITERATURE BASED ASSESSMENT

As briefly mentioned in the introductory chapter, scholarly research explicitly addressing the styles of response that sales managers use to resolve problem situations is scarce. However, within practitioner-based outlets, the situation seems reversed. In fact, in the past 15 years, sales practitioner-oriented articles (as evidenced by a search of the leading professional periodical ‘Sales and Marketing Management’) have offered a large amount of such ‘homespun’ wisdom and advice as “it’s A-OK to be an SOB...be a hard-ass. You’re supposed to employ people, not adopt them” (Brewer 1994 p.53), “[o]nly the scared survive” (Alonzo 1998 p.28), “demonstrate ‘I care’ power” (Oechsli 1993 p. 25), and “criticize as soon as possible after the [problem] behavior” (Quick 1989 p. 42). These articles all share a common concern for describing the styles of response which sales managers use to resolve problem situations (for example some seem to favour a ‘hard-line’ style, while others favour a ‘softer’ style). While these articles each have importance to the sales practitioner, they all exhibit the common problem with ‘anecdotal’ literature, namely that each article seems to advocate a *different* style of resolving problem situations (as can be gathered from the quotations above).

Nevertheless, one important inference can be drawn from the practitioner literature, in conjunction with the related academic research. That is, in a general sense, managers appear primarily to use various types of *discipline, punishment* (here the terminology is used interchangeably), or other ‘negative’ behaviours in their attempts to resolve problem situations – particularly those which are directly caused by salespeople. In a purely behavioural sense, this appears logical, in that there are really only three ways in which a manager can respond to their employees’ behaviour in any given situation: “by ignoring the behaviour, by disciplining the employee, or by rewarding the employee” (DeConinck 1992 p. 791). That said, it would appear that, within the bounds of rationality at least, the possibility of reward as a way of

resolving a *problem* situation would not seriously be considered. Thus the decision is reduced to a dichotomy of ‘punish/don’t punish’. However, while the actual problem resolution *behaviour* may be consistently similar, the practitioner oriented literature appears to suggest a large variety of different styles in which sales managers can *implement* objectively identical behaviours, for example “be a hard-ass” (Brewer 1994 p.53), or “demonstrate ‘I care’ power” (Oechsli 1993 p. 25). As defined in Chapter 1, the conceptual idea of these different styles is presently termed ‘problem resolution styles’ (although the actual definition of specific problem resolution styles remains in question at this point).

Therefore, in subsequent sections, the literature review focuses both on relevant sales management literature, and also on wider organisational behaviour and psychology literature, which may offer insight into the concept of problem resolution styles. From the definition and context of problem resolution styles, one can expect that this literature will fall into two main camps. The first main area of literature surveyed is sales management research which focuses on the interaction between sales managers and sales people (whether it be explicitly in ‘problem resolution’ situations or not). In Chapter 1, this literature was defined as ‘interaction-based’ research and, since problem resolution styles are fundamentally concerned with the interaction between the manager (problem resolver) and the salesperson (either the cause of, or part of the symptoms of, the problem) ‘interaction-based’ research seems a potential area from which to gain insight. The second area of literature surveyed is drawn from wider organisational and psychological research, and concerns the broad area of ‘punishment’. Since problem resolution styles were conceptually described as being in part concerned with patterns of sales managers’ different styles of implementing problem-resolving action (which would presumably often be punishment), an explanation of issues concerned with punishment is also likely to offer assistance in the identification of the dimensionality of problem resolution styles.

The chapter begins in earnest with a discussion of the various salesforce-based theories which are of relevance to how sales managers deal with problem situations. Specifically, Section 2.1. examines more closely the ‘technical interaction-based’ studies which were introduced in Chapter 1, while Section 2.2. reviews the corresponding body of ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ sales research. Following

this, Section 2.3 draws on organisational behaviour literature and clinical psychology research to explore the notion of punishment within organisations. Subsequently, Section 2.4 pulls together the implications of the literature review for research on sales manager problem resolution styles, while Section 2.5. provides a summary as well as an indication of the next step for the study.

Various strands of research have appeared within the broadly defined field of ‘sales management’ within the last 25 years, many of which were alluded to in Chapter 1. A number of these theories, while not explicitly dealing with problem resolution, look to have some relevance to its study. In what follows, an attempt is made to delineate the areas of consequence from each of those bodies of knowledge, and explain their significance to the present research.

2.1. Technical Interaction-Based Studies

In Section 1.1., sales management research was classified into a number of different groups relating to the basic topic of the research contained within each grouping. One of these groups was termed ‘interaction-based’ research, and dealt with issues concerning the interaction between sales managers and salespeople. ‘Interaction-based’ research was further delineated into two groups, termed ‘technical interaction-based’ and ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ research. The present section deals with ‘technical interaction-based’ studies, which essentially focus on how sales managers can evaluate and control salespeople, and is generally concerned with feedback mechanisms and other related interactions. However, the focus of ‘technical interaction-based’ research is on the technical and objective components of managerial interactions, or in other words the quality of the decisions managers make regarding their evaluation and control of salespeople. A number of different approaches towards the latter issues have been developed within the sales management context, and the following sub-sections deal with each in turn, and point out the specific relevance of each research stream to sales managers’ problem resolution styles.

2.1.1. Organisational Control Systems

Theories of organisational control systems within the sales force are concerned with the firm's "procedures for monitoring, directing, evaluation and compensating" its sales reps (Anderson and Oliver 1987 p. 76). Prior to Anderson and Oliver's (1987) seminal study, control of salespeople had received little attention (Jaworski 1988). However, since then a significant body of research has emerged which explores the issue of sales organisational control systems, their consequences, and their antecedents (e.g. Challagalla and Shervani 1996; Cravens et al. 1993; Krafft 1999; Oliver and Anderson 1994; Piercy, Cravens and Lane 2001).

Researchers appear to be in general agreement that any given organisational control system can be represented as a discrete point along a continuum anchored by two diametrically opposed extremes, termed outcome-based and behaviour-based control (cf. Oliver and Anderson 1994; Piercy, Cravens and Lane 2001).¹ According to Cravens et al. (1993), behaviour-based control "emphasizes the use of field sales managers...[and]...fixed salary compensation to direct and control the behaviors of salespeople", while outcome-based control emphasizes "controlling salesforce outcomes through the use of incentive compensation" (p. 47).

Purely outcome-based control systems leave sales representatives to achieve results in whatever manner they wish, and leaves market pressure to do the job of directing the salespeople's activities. In the outcome-based philosophy then, risk is shifted to salespeople by use of commission and incentive-based compensation systems, and sales managers are essentially laissez-faire. In other words, sales managers operating within an outcome-based control system will likely have little involvement with sales reps other than presumably to inform them of their performance and deliver the relevant rewards or punishments. Conversely, if organisations wish to implement a behaviour-based control system, they will be required to invest more significantly in management staff, in order to monitor a larger range of variables, and direct the

¹ This is with the notable exception of Cravens et al. (1993) who contended that organisational control systems can co-vary along two axis, representing low outcome-based to high outcome-based control, and low behaviour-based to high behaviour-based control. Thus Cravens et al.'s (1993) position implies a fourfold typology of organisational control systems.

salespeople on a more frequent basis. Managerial intervention is based on salespeople's exhibition of required behaviours (e.g. call planning) which management considers likely to lead to improved sales results in the long term. Performance within a behaviour-based organisational control system is typically evaluated in a more subjective and complex manner than within an outcome-based system, and risk is shifted towards the organisation through use of fixed salary-based compensation (cf. Anderson and Oliver 1987; Oliver and Anderson 1994). Thus, *managerial* pressure is the primary method of salesforce control within a behaviour-based control system, rather than market pressure, as in an outcome-based system.

Theoretically speaking, it seems that behaviour-based organisational control systems allow the manager to exercise fuller control over the salesforce, and to perhaps instil a longer-term outlook within sales representatives. Furthermore, the increased flexibility in performance evaluation afforded by behaviour-based systems enables the sales manager to allow for the typical inequities in output which are beyond the control of salespeople, such as territory potential (Anderson and Oliver 1987). However, it also seems likely that behaviour-based organisational control systems will necessarily be more complex and subjective, increasing potential for managerial bias and incompetence to influence performance evaluation. Furthermore, high performers in terms of sales figures may feel under-valued since their rewards within a behaviour-based system are not directly related to their excellent performance, which may lead to a higher propensity to leave among those high performers – employees that the organisation would presumably wish to keep as a matter of priority (cf. Anderson and Oliver 1987).

Nevertheless, researchers have tended to focus on examining the positive effects of behaviour-based organisational control systems in preference to outcome-based systems (Piercy, Cravens and Lane 2001). The results from such research have generally suggested the idea that sales representatives working under a behaviour-based control system are typically 'happier' than those working within an outcome-based system (cf. Oliver and Anderson 1994). More specifically, behaviour-based organisational control systems have been found to be associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation, higher organisational commitment, higher job satisfaction, and a higher motivation to serve the firm, on the part of salespeople (Cravens et al. 1993;

Oliver and Anderson 1994). Furthermore, salespeople working within a behaviour-based control system have also been found to have higher levels of performance when it is measured in terms of appropriate behaviours (Babakus et al. 1996; Cravens et al. 1993; Oliver and Anderson 1994). It has also been suggested that behaviour-based control systems will reduce the prevalence of job burnout and stress (Piercy, Cravens and Lane 2001). Interestingly, increased behavioural performance has also been discovered to be associated with increased outcome performance (Grant and Cravens 1996). Thus, it would seem likely that behaviour-based organisational control systems would be the most effective, in that they are associated with both higher performance, and higher levels of general 'happiness' among sales representatives.

By contrast, outcome-based organisational control systems would seem to have the primary advantage of allowing salespeople to operate on their own terms. This is likely to be especially useful since selling is by nature an independent occupation (cf. Wotruba 1990), in which many different sales strategies may result in comparable sales success. Also, theoretically speaking at least, it seems that an increased emphasis on outcome-based performance should lead to increased performance on these outcome measures, such as sales volume or profit. Furthermore, since non-performers receive less by way of financial rewards, outcome-based organisational control systems should provide compelling motivation to perform. The focus on outcomes would also seem to simplify the sales manager's job, allowing the firm to significantly reduce managerial overheads (cf. Anderson and Oliver 1987; Oliver and Anderson 1994). However, the potential disadvantages of outcome-based control systems are well documented in relevant research. In particular, it is probable that sales representatives working within an outcome-based organisational control system will feel more able to commit organisationally-undesirable behaviours (e.g. unethical sales tactics), and concentrate on short-term performance (e.g. selling well-established products) at the expense of activities which will benefit the firm in the long term, such as building up new markets (Anderson and Oliver 1987). It also seems likely that outcome-based control systems will encourage more individualistic and competitive sales cultures at the expense of teamwork and organisational goal attainment.

Unfortunately, for advocates of outcome-based organisational control systems, the findings of relevant studies have been largely inconsequential. In fact, very little outcome performance benefit (a primary goal) has been found to result from outcome-based control systems (Challagalla and Shervani 1996; Cravens et al. 1993; Oliver and Anderson 1994). Thus, the primary theoretical advantage of outcome-based control systems appears not to hold under empirical observation. However, Oliver and Anderson (1994) argued that outcome-based control systems will sometimes be superior to their behaviour-based counterparts due to the former's lower overhead, suggesting that outcome-based control systems may be better suited to poor economic climates, as well as being more profitable in general.

When considering the objectives of the present research, it seems that organisational control system theory is too 'coarse-grained' to have major explanatory power regarding sales managers' problem resolution styles. Nevertheless, in applying the theory of organisational control systems to sales manager problem resolution, the implications are clearly important. More specifically, the degree of outcome versus behaviour-based control defines essentially *what* the sales manager is required to view as a problem needing a response. For example, sales managers operating within a behaviour-based control system are likely to need to respond to issues such as poor selling skills, or lack of call planning among their sales representatives. By contrast, sales managers implementing an outcome-based control system can ignore the latter situations, and need only respond to issues involving outcome measures such as sales volume (problems which may or may not be the specific fault of the salesperson), or to situations where salespeople have obviously contravened social or ethical norms.

On a related note, it seems plausible that sales managers are likely to be more involved in resolving problems when they work within in a behaviour-based control system (where managers are tasked with a closer relationship with their staff) than an outcome based system (where financial incentives are presumed to be sufficient reward and punishment for reps' performance). In other words, managers operating under an outcome-based system may not even feel it necessary to respond to any problems, even if they recognise them, since sales managers may consider the lack of income resulting from, say, poor performance to be enough to punish the salespeople, and the increased income resulting from success to be sufficient reward.

However, while organisational control system theory has some relevance to sales management problem resolution, as detailed above, it should also be clear that it can not provide significant information regarding sales managers' problem resolution styles. Specifically, problem resolution styles are concerned with the style sales managers' adopt when resolving problems, rather than the technical aspects of sales managers' response behaviours or decisions. To put it another way, the organisational control system will give sales managers the opportunity to *display* their problem resolution styles, by virtue of defining; a) what is a problem, and b) whether the sales manager is required to respond. However, the organisational control system does *not* define the style the sales manager exhibits when resolving that problem.

2.1.2. Supervisory Orientations

Building on the literature related to organisational control systems discussed above (e.g. Anderson and Oliver 1987; Cravens et al. 1993), researchers have also recently developed theories relating to 'supervisory orientations' (e.g. Challagalla, Shervani and Huber 2000; Kohli, Shervani and Challagalla 1998). Supervisory orientations refer to the specific focus of sales managers' goal setting, monitoring, and feedback activities. For example, sales managers can focus primarily on the final results achieved by the salespeople, or on the activities which are assumed to lead to those end results (Kohli, Shervani and Challagalla 1998).

Research has delineated three dimensions of supervisory orientations, which sales managers can co-vary upon; end-results orientation, activity orientation, and capability orientation (Challagalla, Shervani and Huber 2000). Sales managers who employ a purely end-results orientation give primacy to the objective results of the salespeople such as sales volume, and thus direct their monitoring and feedback activities towards these end results. Salespeople are left to achieve these results in any way they consider appropriate. On the other hand, sales managers with an activity orientation focus on the technical activities which their salespeople perform, such as filling out reports, making the required number of calls, and filling in expense claims correctly. Therefore, sales managers with activity orientations monitor their salespeople's performance on these technical activities, and direct feedback towards improving the latter, which are implicitly assumed to lead to

performance. However, the concept of activity orientation does not relate to the *quality* of the activity, only to its completion. Finally, sales managers with capability orientations tend to focus on the quality of salespeople's activities. Capability-oriented sales managers direct their activities towards enhancing their salespeople's ability to perform behaviours, such as sales presentation, and improving their skills and capabilities. Thus, monitoring and feedback activities are directed towards the latter goals (cf. Challagalla, Shervani, and Huber 2000; Kohli, Challagalla and Shervani 1998). While this threefold typology appears to be purely a theoretical construct developed from existing work on organisational control systems, empirical work has in fact suggested that sales managers do tend to evaluate salespeople on these three main dimensions (Jackson, Schlacter and Wolfe 1995), and that the three orientations are in fact distinct from one another (Challagalla, Shervani, and Huber 2000; Kohli, Challagalla and Shervani 1998).

Empirical research has found that sales manager end-results and capability orientation can increase the learning orientation of salespeople, although the latter was not actually found to influence their ultimate performance (Kohli, Challagalla and Shervani 1998). Furthermore, sales manager activity and end-results orientations were found to increase salespeople's performance orientation, a construct which was shown to positively influence salesforce performance. However, more experienced salespeople did not appear to find sales manager activity orientation to be of much benefit, with the latter actually lowering the learning orientation of more experienced salespeople (Kohli, Challagalla and Shervani 1998).

Furthermore, research has found significant differences in the effect of sales manager supervisory orientations depending on whether sales managers are geographically located close to their salespeople (co-located), or are geographically remote. Specifically, sales manager activity orientation appears to have a negative influence on the satisfaction of co-located salespeople, but a positive influence on the satisfaction of remote salespeople. Capability orientation was found to have a positive effect on the satisfaction of both types of salesperson. Furthermore, sales manager capability orientation was found to positively influence the performance of co-located salespeople. End-results orientation however was found to have no effect

on salespeople's performance, but a positive effect on the satisfaction of co-located salespeople (Challagalla, Shervani, and Huber 2000).

Research on sales managers' supervisory orientation appears to have similar implications to organisational control systems theory, on sales managers' resolution of problem situations. In particular, the three different orientations which are available to sales managers, end-results, activity, and capability orientation, are likely to influence what sales managers view as problems needing resolution. For instance, a sales manager without a high activity orientation is unlikely to see a lack of call reports filed by a sales representative as a problem worthy of action.

A further implication is that sales managers can positively influence salespeople's performance and satisfaction by taking an active interest in their results, activities and capabilities. Thus, sales managers in fact *should* resolve problem situations when they occur (whatever particular orientation the manager takes), rather than ignore them.

Like organisational control systems research, the findings of literature exploring supervisory orientations can potentially explain how likely a sales manager is to display their problem resolution styles, by virtue of defining what is and what is not viewed as a problem by sales managers of various supervisory orientations. However supervisory orientation research does, in a broad sense at least, explicitly address the issue of the composition and consequences of sales managers' problem resolution styles. Specifically, it appears to suggest that 'showing interest' in salespeople (such as responding to their problems) leads to enhanced job outcomes in most situations.

2.1.3. Salesforce Evaluation

Research on salesforce evaluation is primarily focused on explicating issues concerned with how sales managers can best appraise or evaluate the performance of sales representatives. It can be considered that salesforce evaluation theory is implicitly *normative* in that it seeks to ultimately advise the manager on the most effective way in which to conduct performance evaluations of salespeople.

Practically speaking, an effective salesforce evaluation or performance appraisal (here the terms are used interchangeably) process is an essential tool with which the

manager can achieve their goals and influence their salespeople (Morris et al. 1991). Furthermore, in academic terms, salesforce evaluation systems have been found to influence important salesforce consequences such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and salesforce turnover (Churchill et al. 1985). However, it would seem that the salesforce evaluation process itself is in general poorly understood (Dubinsky, Anderson and Mehta 1999; Jobber, Hooley and Shipley 1993; Marshall, Mowen and Fabes 1992).

There are a number of general ‘themes’ which salesforce evaluation theories have tended to focus on in the search for effective evaluation practices, and these seem likely to have some relevance to the present study. The first of these themes is the issue of *what* is to be evaluated in a general sense; in other words, the sales manager’s selection of criteria to evaluate salespeople on. Specifically, research has looked at whether sales managers should focus on quantitative measures of performance (e.g. sales volume, number of calls made), or qualitative measures such as attitude, selling skills, or product knowledge (Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991; Morris et al. 1991). It is generally considered that quantitative output measures such as sales volume receive the most attention from sales managers (cf. Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991; Morris et al. 1991) for a number of reasons. Firstly, outcome and other quantitative measures are concrete, and allow ‘transparency’ in the evaluation process if the sales manager is challenged. Also, objective quantitative measures do not require the sales manager to physically observe the salespeople doing their jobs, a task which may prove difficult due to the often infrequent personal contact between sales managers and salespeople (Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991). However, while objective quantitative measures are popular in practice, academics have long advocated the use of additional measures of performance (Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991). The reasoning behind this is that using quantitative measures only to evaluate salespeople may lead to a situation where a salesperson is penalised for circumstances beyond their control (such as poor economic conditions, which can lead to poor sales results). In turn, the latter may cause increased perceptions of unfairness among sales personnel (Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991; Marshall and Mowen 1993; Morris et al. 1991). Thus, it is generally considered by researchers that additional, qualitative, measures should be used by sales managers, at least as a supplement to quantitative assessments (Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Morris et

al. 1991). In fact, Churchill, Ford and Walker (1997) argued that effective salesforce evaluation practices must consist of sales analysis (quantitative), cost analysis (quantitative), and behavioural analysis (generally qualitative).

Qualitative and behavioural variables which researchers have argued should be taken into account by sales managers include the salesperson's ability to build customer relationships, service standards, product knowledge, teamwork, selling skills, and organisational citizenship behaviours (Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter 1993; Morris et al. 1991). However, the use of subjective, qualitative measures has been suggested to have significant disadvantages as well. For instance, subjective evaluations are likely to allow biases and preconceptions by the sales manager to creep in, as well as creating ambiguity and confusion between the views of 'high performance' of the sales manager and salespeople (Morris et al. 1991). Nevertheless, it seems that in general, scholars would recommend the use of both objective and subjective measures in salesforce evaluation (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997).

Perhaps in response to this, a number of studies have focused on the biases which may occur when sales managers are evaluating the performance of salespeople (e.g. Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991; Marshall and Mowen 1993; Marshall, Mowen and Fabes 1992; Mowen, Fabes and LaForge 1986). In particular, Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki (1991) discussed a number of judgment biases which sales managers may fall prey to when evaluating performance. Mainly, these biases seem to derive from sales managers' use of decision heuristics, resulting from an inability of sales managers to process all of the relevant information. In essence, bias can result if sales managers; a) give emphasis to extreme, single, easily repeatable observations at the expense of a more balanced set of results, b) develop post-hoc rationalisations of events, and c) evaluate salespeople's performance in relation to judgemental 'anchor points' (Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991). As a result of these potential biases, researchers have recommended a number of techniques that sales managers can use to reduce the bias seemingly inherent in salesforce evaluations. For example, academics have advocated the use of regression analysis, ratio calculation, and other mathematical methods in order to take many variables into account at once, which should theoretically increase sales managers' ability to more objectively compare

salespeople (cf. Boles, Donthu and Lothia 1995; Huffman and Cain 2000; Marshall, Mowen and Fabes 1992). Other studies have considered the positive impact of improving the construction and administration of performance measures in line with advances in psychometric theory (cf. Ilgen and Feldman 1983). Additionally, Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki (1991) argue that a key way of reducing bias among sales managers' evaluations is to utilise training to inform sales managers of the potential types and results of biased performance evaluations.

One particular type of bias which has inspired a significant amount of research within the sales management field is attribution bias, which is essentially concerned with how “a person makes judgements as to the causes of...another person's behavior” (Marshall, Mowen and Fabes 1992, p. 36). For example, salespeople's behaviour, such as poor performance, can be attributed either to the salesperson themselves (e.g. as being due to a lack of effort from the sales person), or to external factors such as an economic downturn (Dubinsky, Skinner and Whittler 1989). Attribution error occurs when the sales manager incorrectly attributes behaviour to the sales person (i.e. an internal attribution) when the cause of said behaviour was an external reason, and vice versa (cf. Marshall, Mowen and Fabes 1992).

A number of factors appear to influence how sales managers attribute issues such as poor performance, which can ultimately lead to attribution errors. Specifically, Dubinsky, Skinner, and Whittler (1989) discovered that salespeople with good work histories were more likely to have poor performance attributed to external factors than those salespeople who had poor work histories, regardless of the *actual* cause of the poor performance. Furthermore, Dubinsky, Skinner and Whittler (1989) also discovered that sales managers in general tended to under-utilise the available information about external factors (such as the economic environment), and favour internal factors such as salespeople's work history. Ultimately, this was found to lead to frequent attribution errors. Other studies have also found that sales managers tend to ignore external information, and in particular information about the difficulty of salespeople's territories, when making attributional decisions (Mowen, Fabes and LaForge 1986). However, more recent research has suggested that the latter kind of attribution error may be reduced if sales managers are given more time and superior

methods/techniques with which to evaluate information, such as spreadsheets (cf. Marshall, Mowen and Fabes 1992; Mowen, Fabes and LaForge 1986).

Research on attributions has also found significant differences in the *response* to salespeople's behaviour (e.g. poor performance), dependent upon internal or external attribution of the behaviour. Specifically, it has been found that sales managers are more likely to direct a response towards the salesperson if their poor performance is attributed internally, rather than externally (Dubinsky, Skinner and Whittler 1989). The latter relationship is also supported by findings from more general organisational behaviour literature (e.g. Mitchell, Green and Wood 1981).

In relation to the present research then, it can be argued that salesforce evaluation theory has significant relevance to sales management problem resolution situations on a number of levels. In particular, it is likely that the variables which sales managers choose to employ as performance measures (e.g. qualitative versus quantitative), will determine whether or not the sales manager will consider any given issue as a problem which needs a response. A similar implication arises from research on the various biases (and responses to which), that can influence sales managers' performance evaluation processes. For instance, the bias, or lack of, with which a sales manager evaluates their salespeople's performance is again likely to influence what situations are defined as problems by the sales manager, and therefore in need of response.

Research focusing on sales manager attribution bias is also somewhat relevant to the present study. Specifically, the degree to which the sales manager attributes a given problem situation to internal (i.e. salesperson-related), or external factors appears to have a direct effect on whether or not the sales manager chooses a response aimed at the relevant salesperson. So therefore, problems internally attributed will be resolved by sales managers' employing resolution activities directed at salespeople (e.g. punishment), while those problems receiving external attributions will result in sales managers' resolution activities being directed externally (perhaps such as reorganisation of territories to even-out their potential).

Nonetheless, while salesforce evaluation theory can prove beneficial in determining whether or not a sales manager will respond to a possible problem situation, and also

whether the response will be directed at the salesperson or not, salesforce evaluation research appears largely unable to illuminate the issue of sales manager problem resolution styles. Essentially, salesforce evaluation theory does not explain the style with which the sales manager delivers problem resolution behaviours, although the likelihood of those behaviours being delivered is in part explained by salesforce evaluation research.

2.1.4. Supervisory Feedback

Supervisory feedback is a key managerial issue which has received significant attention within sales management literature as a mechanism for controlling and improving the performance of salespeople (e.g. DeCarlo and Leigh 1996; Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Kohli 1985; Rich 1998). Feedback can be defined as sales managers' "praise or recognition directed toward a subordinate performing at or above expectations" (Rich 1998 p. 57). However, while it is a point which is seemingly ignored in the latter definition, the idea of feedback also seems to implicitly include the potential for the manager to give negative feedback in to salespeople who are performing below expectations (cf. Jaworski and Kohli 1991).

It seems clear that theories of sales managers' feedback follow directly from an operant conditioning theoretical base (Rich 1998). More specifically, operant conditioning theory (see Skinner's (1938) pioneering work, among others) suggests that sales representatives will learn to continue to exhibit desirable behaviours if those behaviours are praised and/or rewarded by sales managers (cf. Cadogan and Siminitiras 1994). Furthermore, operant conditioning theory also suggests that sales representatives will learn *not* to perform undesirable behaviours if they are punished (through negative feedback) by sales managers. Thus, a more complete definition of supervisory feedback would be to add "and/or a superior's punishment or other recognition directed towards a subordinate who is performing below expectations" to Rich's (1998) aforementioned definition.

Drawing from existing research on sales management supervisory feedback, two key themes can be identified. First of all, and strongly related to the previously discussed bodies of literature relating to organisational control systems, supervisory orientations, and salesforce evaluation theory, it seems that sales managers can vary

the *locus* of their feedback (Rich 1998). That is, sales managers can provide feedback on the salespeople's outputs (such as sales volume, profit and the like), or feedback on salespeople's behaviours, such as strategies, skills and procedures (Jaworski and Kohli 1991). While output feedback seems likely to be popular in formal settings such as regular performance appraisal meetings, behavioural feedback may be more likely to take place in the field, such as when a sales manager accompanies a sales representative on a sales call (Rich 1998).

Theoretically speaking, it seems that behavioural feedback is likely to improve salespeople's performance on crucial selling behaviours, which may also have a knock-on effect on performance by improving salespeople's actual output performance (Jaworski and Kohli 1991). Furthermore, due to the power of behavioural feedback to enable salespeople to understand the reasons for their success or failure, behavioural feedback is also likely to increase salespeople's satisfaction (Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986). In fact, under empirical observation, behavioural feedback has been found to be associated with increased role clarity, behavioural performance and salespeople's satisfaction, as well as indirectly related to increased output performance (Jaworski and Kohli 1991).

When the locus of sales managers' feedback is on the outputs of the salespeople, theory suggests that salespeople will have a clearer idea of the results expected of them. In turn, this should reduce role ambiguity and improve output performance, as well as increasing salespeople's satisfaction (Jaworski and Kohli 1991). Indeed, empirical evidence has been uncovered which does link higher levels of output feedback to increased role clarity (Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Teas 1983), increased output performance (Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Larson 1984), and increased salesforce satisfaction (Jaworski and Kohli 1991).

The other key theme within sales management feedback research is termed *valence* (DeCarlo and Leigh 1996; Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Rich 1998). The valence of supervisory feedback refers to whether the feedback is positive or negative, or in other words, whether praise or punishment is meted out in response to performance (cf. Jaworski and Kohli 1991). However, it is generally implied (if not explicitly stated) within supervisory feedback literature, that the 'correct' type of feedback will

be given in response to performance, i.e. positive for good performance, and negative for bad performance (cf. DeCarlo and Leigh 1996; Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Rich 1998). Positive feedback has been hypothesised to be related to increased performance, role clarity and job satisfaction, while negative feedback has also been argued to positively influence salesperson performance, role clarity and job satisfaction (Jaworski and Kohli 1991). The conceptual reasoning behind this is that negative feedback can provide an informational service to sales people, delineating what results and behaviours are not acceptable, as well as providing information on how salespeople might improve their performance (cf. Jaworski and Kohli 1991). However, empirical results suggest that negative feedback primarily serves informational purposes related to what is not acceptable, rather than how to improve in the future, and thus only increases role clarity. By contrast, positive feedback has been empirically related to increased role clarity as well as increased performance and satisfaction of salespeople (Jaworski and Kohli 1991).

Researchers have also considered the impact of sales managers' attributions on feedback (DeCarlo and Leigh 1996). Building on studies previously described in Section 2.1.3. (e.g. Dubinsky, Skinner and Whittler 1989; Gentry, Mowen and Tasaki 1991), DeCarlo and Leigh (1996) hypothesised that problems which are attributed to internal salesperson-controllable factors such as low effort will receive *coercive* negative feedback such as punishment. However, problems attributed to external factors will be more likely to result in either non-punitive feedback or no action at all. In fact, observed results suggested that external attributions for poor performance were more likely to result in no action than non-punitive feedback, while internally attributed poor performance were more likely to result in coercive (i.e. punitive) feedback (DeCarlo and Leigh 1996).

Drawing from the previous discussion, a number of implications for sales managers' resolution of problem situations arise. First it is clear that in a general sense, actually responding to problem situations (by the use of feedback) results in positive benefits to the organisation. In the present case, feedback is by definition a response, and the research presented above undoubtedly suggests that managerial feedback can result in increased salesforce performance, increased role clarity, and increased salesforce satisfaction in the main (cf. Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Larson 1984; Teas 1983).

Thus, there is further evidence to support the contention that sales managers' response to problems is an important area for research.

Furthermore, conflicting results have been found for different types of feedback (i.e. positive versus negative), in that positive feedback seems to result in more organisationally desirable outcomes than negative feedback (Jaworski and Kohli 1991). This suggests that the type of response itself may be less important than the *manner* in which salespeople perceive that it is 'framed', or delivered. For example, perhaps sales managers can deliver negative feedback in a 'positive' manner, which could attenuate the effects of the negative feedback. However, exactly what this 'positive' manner of delivery consists of remains unclear from research on supervisory feedback.

Finally, feedback research has also suggested that managers will differ in their application of feedback according to certain situational factors, such as attribution, for example with internally-attributed problems seemingly more likely to result in punishment than externally-attributed problems (DeCarlo and Leigh 1996). In relation to the present study, the latter research implies that managers will behave differently in response to different problem situations. However, the idea of problem resolution styles is not related to whether the response is punitive or not. Problem resolution styles are instead concerned with the manner in which sales managers deliver or implement their response, rather than the nature (punitive or non-punitive) of that response.

2.1.5. Sales Manager Ethics, and Response to Unethical Salesforce Behaviour

The issue of ethics within the sales profession has been the subject of a significant amount of research (e.g. Barnett et al. 1998; Bellizzi and Norvell 1991; DeConinck 1992; Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993; LaFleur and Forrest 1991). Literature dealing with sales force ethical issues can be clustered into two overall camps. Firstly, researchers have devoted considerable effort to the study of how sales managers and salespeople make decisions regarding ethical dilemmas, such as the giving of gifts to increase sales (e.g. Chonko, Tanner and Weeks 1996; Forsyth 1992; Singhapakdi and Vitell 1992; Wotruba 1990). This body of research aims to determine the causes of

unethical behaviour, and what influences sales professionals to consider a behaviour as ‘unethical’. Nevertheless, since the latter research is not concerned with how sales managers interact with their salespeople, it is not particularly relevant to the present research study, and thus will not be considered here. However, of more relevance is the second stream of salesforce ethical research. Specifically, the latter is concerned with how sales managers act in response to unethical behaviours by their salespeople (e.g. Bellizzi 1995; Bellizzi and Hite 1989; Bellizzi and Norvell 1991; DeConinck 1992; Sayre, Joyce and Lambert 1991)

The especial relevance of the latter body of research lies in the fact that unethical behaviour by salespeople is a key factor in describing some of the different types of problem situations which sales managers must resolve (see Section 1.2.). Thus, literature on sales managers’ response to unethical behaviour by salespeople is arguably the only contemporary research theme to explicitly address sales managers’ action in response to problem situations, rather than implicitly address the issue like the other research streams presented in Sections 2.1. and 2.2.

The prime focus of sales managers’ response literature as discussed presently is on *antecedents* to sales managers’ punishment decisions. In other words, the studies seek answers to the question of what causes sales managers to utilise (or fail to utilise) punishment in response to unethical salesperson behaviour. There are two main approaches which appear to have evolved in order to provide answers to the latter question. Firstly, researchers have argued that sales managers’ perceptions of the unethical behaviour itself will inform the managers’ responses, and secondly that the characteristics of the salesperson performing the behaviour will influence managers’ responses (e.g. Bellizzi 1995; Bellizzi and Norvell 1991; DeConinck 1992; Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993; Menguc 1998).

In terms of sales managers’ perceptions of salespeople’s unethical acts, researchers have been active in examining a number of factors, which can be categorised in general as either *deontological* or *teleological* factors. Deontological factors are concerned with the “inherent rightness or wrongness of a behavior, irrespective of a behavior’s consequences” (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993 p. 79), while teleological factors concern the relative ethicality of a behaviour (such as the severity of its

consequences). Theoretically speaking, sales managers who perceive deontologically unethical salesperson behaviour are more likely to proscribe disciplinary action, regardless of the teleological ethicality of the salesperson's behaviour. In fact, research has provided support for such a relationship, across both Turkish and US salesforce cultures (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993; Menguc 1998). Similar results have been found for the more simplistic concept of the 'severity' of unethical judgments, in that managers who judge ethical problems as more severe will be more likely to advocate punitive action (Singhapakdi and Vitell 1991).

Related to the above concepts is the idea of 'personal moral philosophies' (cf. Bass, Barnett and Brown 1998; Forsyth 1980). Personal moral philosophies are essentially based on the idea that different people have different perceptions of ethics in general. According to the theory of personal moral philosophies, some people are higher in 'relativism', which is the degree to which they reject universal moral rules, and some people are higher in 'idealism', which refers to the idea that moral actions always result in positive outcomes for all concerned. Combining the two concepts results in a two-by-two taxonomy of personal moral philosophies (cf. Bass, Barnett and Brown 1998). Clearly, referring back to the ideas of deontology and teleology (although personal moral philosophies are based on many other ethical philosophies as well), those lower in relativism may be more likely to view actions in terms of their deontological ethicality, while those higher in relativism may be more likely to be influenced by teleological considerations. Researchers have provided arguments that the personal moral philosophies of sales managers significantly influence their judgements of ethical dilemmas. More specifically, those sales managers with highly idealistic, non-relativistic personal moral philosophies will judge unethical actions more harshly, and will be more likely to proscribe punitive action for salespeople who perform these unethical actions. Indeed, this perspective has found empirical support (Barnett et al. 1998).

Moving to work which has examined teleological considerations, research has also explored the impact of the characteristics of the unethical behaviour itself as predictors of sales managers' punitive responses. Sales academics have argued that salespeople whose unethical actions have less serious consequences, or whose actions are attributed to external factors, will receive less punitive responses (cf.

Bellizzi 1995; Bellizzi and Hite 1989). Furthermore, Bellizzi (1995) also contended that unethical actions which victimise female co-workers, and/or people of higher status, will receive harsher punishments. Nevertheless, empirical support for the above hypotheses is at best mixed. Specifically, no evidence has yet been found to support the idea that external attributions of unethical behaviours lead to less severe punishment, or that unethical acts injurious to females were disciplined more harshly (Bellizzi 1995). However, limited support for the hypotheses that unethical behaviours with more severe consequences, and those which victimise higher status persons, receive harsher discipline has been found (Bellizzi 1995; Bellizzi and Hite 1989). This lends support to the idea that teleological considerations are important in sales managers' choice of actions when responding to unethical behaviour by salespeople.

Finally, much research has examined the idea that factors *inherent to the salesperson who commits* the unethical behaviour can influence the severity of punitive responses. The latter idea, however, is quite apart from deontological and teleological considerations, in that it does not deal with the characteristics of the actions, but rather the actor (i.e. the unethical salesperson). Researchers have proposed that a number of salesperson factors may cause unethical salespeople to be disciplined more harshly for unethical behaviour. In particular, academics have argued that male salespeople, salespeople with higher weight (i.e. a higher level of obesity), and also salespeople with poorer performance histories, will all be disciplined more harshly for their unethical behaviours (Bellizzi and Hasty 2001; Bellizzi and Norvell 1991; DeConinck 1992). Empirical results have generally been supportive of the above hypotheses. Specifically, research has found that overweight salespeople are disciplined more harshly (Bellizzi and Hasty 2001); those with poorer prior performance are disciplined more harshly (DeConinck 1992); and that male sales people are disciplined more harshly than females for the same unethical behaviour (Bellizzi and Hasty 2001; Bellizzi and Norvell 1991). However, it should also be noted that Sayre, Joyce and Lambert (1991) found no gender effect on punishment severity in their study.

The implications of the research discussed in the present sub-section to sales manager problem resolution styles are relatively clear. Primarily, the studies

exploring how sales managers decide to act in response to unethical salesperson behaviour provide a compelling case that there are important problem situations which sales managers need to respond to – in this case ones explicitly caused by salespeople themselves. Secondly, the preponderance of influences on sales managers' decisions to on resolution actions (in this case punishment) suggests clearly that different sales managers will go about the problem resolution (including punishment) process in different ways. Some will be influenced more by personal factors (such as moral philosophies and deontological judgements), some by situational factors (such as the severity of the act's consequences, and other teleological factors), some by salesperson-related factors (e.g. gender), and some by a combination of these. However, it is the areas which the research on sales managers' responses to unethical acts does *not* cover which encapsulate the primary implications for research on sales manager problem resolution styles. Firstly, all of the research covered in the present sub-section focuses on *antecedents* to sales managers' disciplinary action rather than the consequences, whereas the study of problem resolution styles focuses on the salesperson-related consequences of sales managers' resolution styles. Secondly, and most crucially, the problem resolution process itself is characterised in sales manager ethics research as merely consisting of *whether or not the sales manager decides to punish an unethical salesperson*. What is missing is both a deeper consideration of how sales managers deliver a given response action (i.e. problem resolution styles), and whether different response styles can have different impacts on the effectiveness of the resolution action. For instance, can sales managers' *interpersonal* styles when delivering problem resolution action actually increase/decrease the effectiveness of that action on the salesperson and their colleagues?

In sales manager ethics research, the actual process of delivering responses (such as punishment) is in no way considered as an important potential influence on the effectiveness of the response. Implicit here is the notion that if say a sales manager 'correctly' decides to punish an unethical salesperson, then positive outcomes will result, regardless of how that punishment is implemented. What is missing is a deeper consideration of the punishment and implementation processes used by sales managers, and also the salesforce consequences of such processes. In fact, this is

exactly what the concept of sales manager problem resolution styles is concerned with.

2.1.6. 'Technical Interaction-Based' Studies: Synthesis and General Implications for Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

It can be seen from the review of 'technical interaction-based' studies presented in Section 2.1., that research in this area has much to offer to sales management academics and practitioners. However, the implications for research into sales manager problem resolution styles are less numerous, although nevertheless rather fundamental. First of all, the research discussed in Section 2.1. provides both implicit and explicit recognition that there are a set of problems which sales managers need to resolve.

Additionally, a number of strands of research discussed in Section 2.1. strongly imply that sales managers in fact *should* provide some kind of response to these problem situations, rather than ignore them (e.g. supervisory orientations and feedback research). In other words, the 'technical interaction-based' research provides a strong suggestion that sales managers need to focus on task-related aspects of problem resolution (i.e. providing a response to the problem itself).

Furthermore, a significant proportion of 'technical interaction-based' research as reviewed above implies that managers will a) differ in their recognition of problem situations (e.g. organisational control and salesforce evaluation research), and b) differ in their decisions as to whether or not to respond punitively (sales manager ethics research).

However, the research streams discussed so far have not explicitly addressed the issue of sales manager problem resolution styles. Although the feedback literature provides some indication that the 'style' of a given response is likely to influence the response's effectiveness, the literature does not provide a clear indication of the content of sales managers' problem resolution styles or of the latter's impact on sales managers' problem resolution success. Thus, attention now turns to the other major grouping of interaction-based research defined in Chapter 1, '*interpersonal*

interaction-based’ studies, in the hope of uncovering additional implications for the present study.

2.2. ‘Interpersonal Interaction-Based’ Studies

While the ‘technical interaction-based’ research discussed in Section 2.1. focuses on technical issues concerning how managers can most effectively make decisions regarding the evaluation and control of their salespeople, a growing body of research has started to examine more subjective concepts relating to interactions between sales managers and salespeople. This literature was termed in Chapter 1 ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ research, and is focused on explicating the more subjective characteristics of sales managers’ relationships with their salespeople. In a general sense, the latter research appears to provide a contribution over and above that of more ‘technical interaction-based’ research since “[i]t is not enough, for example, to make ‘proper’ assignments of sales reps to territories, or to establish ‘appropriate’ compensation plans. Also important is the way managers make these decisions and, given the compensation plan, motivate their sales reps to perform in their assigned territories” (Russ, McNeilley and Comer 1996 p. 2). In another, more basic sense, ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ literature can be thought of as concerning the ‘leadership’ of salespeople, while ‘technical interaction-based’ literature can be thought of as focusing on the ‘management’ of salespeople (cf. Shoemaker 1999). It seems likely that ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ research will have considerable implications for the study of sales manager problem resolution styles. This is because ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ research recognises the more subjective interpersonal aspects of sales managers’ roles which are of importance (see the Russ, McNeilley and Comer (1996) quote above), rather than just concentrating on the characteristics of sales managers’ decisions or actions themselves (see Section 1.2.).

Over the latter half of the 20th Century, many different theories of leadership have been developed within the general organisational behaviour discourse. These include Situational Leadership (e.g. Hersey and Blanchard 1988), transactional and transformational leadership (e.g. Bass 1990), leader-member exchange (e.g.

Castleberry and Tanner 1986), and autocratic/democratic leadership (e.g. Heller and Yukl 1969). Each of these theories offers its own perspective on how leaders behave, in which there appears little common ground. Thus it is extremely difficult to summarise the contribution of ‘leadership theory’ succinctly. Consequently, the following sub-sections deal solely with those theories that have had specific application to sales management.

2.2.1. Transformational Leadership

Section 2.1. showed that a large body of knowledge has developed which focuses on the way in which sales managers can control, influence and manager their salesforce. For example, sales managers can use appropriate feedback or performance appraisal methods. However, more recent research within the sales management context has argued that the aforementioned literature generally assumes that sales managers use what could be called a ‘transactional’ leadership approach (Dubinsky et al. 1995). In brief, transactional approaches to sales management utilise goal-setting, evaluation and feedback on goal achievement process by the sales manager. In other words, transactional sales managers should inform their salespeople what is expected, evaluate how well these goals are achieved, and then deliver appropriate contingent feedback (e.g. rewards and/or punishments) to the salesperson (cf. Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001). Thus, as could be expected, in order to be effective in the transactional approach sales managers should focus on the technical quality of their decisions first and foremost, which can be seen to be the focus of the ‘technical interaction-based’ literature reviewed in Section 2.1.

Perhaps in response to this transactional focus, a number of sales management scholars have examined the concept of *transformational* leadership within the sales context (e.g. Comer et al. 1995; Dubinsky et al. 1995; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001; Yammarino et al. 1997; Yammarino and Dubinsky 1994).

Transformational leadership is a complement to transactional leadership which, theoretically at least, should produce positive effects on subordinates which are over and above those which are provided by transactional leadership (cf. Dubinsky et al. 1995). Scholars have suggested that in a general sense, transformational sales managers are able to influence salespeople to “transcend their own self-interest” (Dubinsky et al. 1995 p. 19), in favour of the organisation, increasing motivation and

self-confidence of employees (cf. Dubinsky et al. 1995; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001; Yammarino et al. 1997).

In order to achieve such impressive results, researchers generally consider that transformational leaders utilise four key techniques or characteristics (e.g. Dubinsky et al. 1995; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001). The first of these is termed *charismatic leadership*, and involves articulating a vision to staff and instilling pride, trust and loyalty within subordinates, in turn developing significant emotional appeal. Secondly, *inspirational leadership* entails communicating high expectations to subordinates and showing that achieving these objectives is important: eventually, salespeople will be convinced that they can achieve more than they initially thought possible. The third dimension, *intellectual stimulation* concerns managerial encouragement for salespeople to use innovative methods to solve problems and achieve goals, as well as an advocacy of ‘scientific’ and rational approaches to solve problems, rather than intuition and/or opinions. The final dimension, *individualised consideration*, is related to the way in which transformational sales managers treat each employee as an individual, giving them personal attention and considering their unique needs (Dubinsky et al. 1995; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001).

Research has argued that the managerial behaviours implied by transformational leadership are fundamentally different from those necessitated by transactional management approaches (i.e. evaluation, control and feedback etc.). In the first instance, whereas the primary control mechanisms in transactional management are rewards and punishments, in transformational leadership the mechanisms and methods are likely to be more varied in approach. Secondly, transformational sales managers are able to influence subordinates by a process of changing salespeople’s own goals to be congruent with the organisation’s goals, while transactional managers utilise rewards to influence subordinates to perform. Thirdly, researchers have also argued that transformational leadership is a more *proactive* set of behaviours than transactional management, which is generally considered to be a reactive management technique (Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001).

Within the sales management context specifically, researchers have anticipated a number of positive effects of transformational leadership on salespeople. In fact,

authors have argued that transformational leadership may be especially effective within the sales context, due to the unique factors inherent in the sales job such as high role stress, high emotional demands, little supervision, divergent role expectations, and the prevalence of career burnout (Jolson et al. 1993; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001). Firstly, it has been contended that higher levels of transformational leadership will reduce salespeople's job stress, role conflict, role stress, and burnout (Dubinsky et al. 1995; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001;). Furthermore, research has also hypothesised that transformational leadership will also increase salespeople's job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and both in-role and extra-role performance (Dubinsky et al. 1995; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001).

However, empirical results in this respect have been at somewhat mixed. For instance, while Dubinsky et al. (1995) uncovered positive influences of transformational leadership on salespeople's job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and negative influences of transformational leadership on role conflict, role ambiguity, job stress and burnout, in no cases were these correlations significantly larger than the corresponding effect of transactional leadership behaviour, a finding which was also supported by Yammarino and colleagues (1997). Rather, using hierarchical regression analysis, it was suggested that transformational leadership had an *additional* positive effect on organisational commitment and role ambiguity, over and above transactional leadership behaviour (Dubinsky et al. 1995).

By contrast, Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich (2001) do find that transformational leadership has an augmentative effect on important salesforce outcomes. Specifically, Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich (2001) found that transformational leadership behaviours negatively influenced salesperson role ambiguity, but increased salespeople's trust in their sales manager, as well as increasing salespeople's in-role performance, and organisational citizenship behaviours. Thus, while Dubinsky et al. (1995) suggested that transactional leadership strategies may be more effective than transformational leadership within sales management, Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich (2001) stated that “[a]t a minimum...sales managers may be able to improve their effectiveness substantially by paying more attention to their transformational leadership behavior” (p. 129).

The results discussed above suggest that perhaps there are moderating variables which can influence the efficacy of transformational sales management behaviours. Researchers seem to have recognised that one of these moderating influences may be salespeople's gender, and thus research on the impact of gender on transformational leadership's possible positive effects has appeared (e.g. Comer et al. 1995; Yammarino et al. 1997). In particular, research has discovered that male salespeople performed better under transactional sales managers, while female salespeople performed worse. Furthermore, female salespeople tended to perform better when their sales managers utilised high levels of the transformational leadership dimension of intellectual stimulation, a factor which did not have a corresponding effect on male salespeople (Comer et al. 1995).

It seems that transformational leadership theories can provide some interesting implications in regard to sales manager problem resolution. In particular, it is implicit within the fundamental concept of transformational leadership that sales management's activities *beyond* technical decision-making can have either positive or negative effects on salespeople. For example, salesforce evaluation, organisational control systems, and feedback theories suggest that if managers make the *correct* decisions, then salespeople's performance will ultimately improve (see Section 2.1.).

However, transformational leadership theory argues that managers can reap *additional* benefits by behaving in a charismatic, intellectually stimulating, inspiring, and individually considerate manner towards salespeople. So in the context of sales managers' resolution of problem situations, it may be the case that the correct 'technical' response (such as a written warning) which does not deliver transformational benefits may be less effective than say, an informal verbal warning which also contains inspirational and charismatic components. Thus, research into how sales managers can most effectively resolve problems – beyond the correct technical action itself – seems warranted.

2.2.2. Leader-Member Exchange Relationships

While many theories of leadership have been usefully examined in the sales management context, sales academics seem to have been especially willing to explore the theory of 'leader-member' exchange, or LMX for short (e.g. Lagace

1990; Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993; Swift and Campell 1995; Tanner and Castleberry 1990). LMX has also been referred to in academic literature as the ‘vertical-exchange’ model (cf. Tanner and Castleberry 1990), however there appears to be no substantive difference between the two theories (at least within sales management research), although the term ‘leader-member’ provides a more robust suggestion of the relevant exchange relationship (i.e. sales manager-salesperson) than the perhaps more general term of ‘vertical exchange’. Thus, throughout the balance of the present section, LMX will be used to refer to both ‘leader-member’ and ‘vertical’ exchange theories (cf. Lagace 1990 etc.).²

The LMX model within sales management research is concerned with how sales managers form various types of relationships with their salespeople, as the name suggests (Flaherty and Pappas 2000). Essentially, “LMX implies that managers interact differently with different subordinates, and these differing relationships result in different outcomes” (Lagace 1990, p. 11). Conceptually speaking, LMX defines a continuum of sales manager-salesperson relationship quality, ranging from low to high-quality (Lagace 1990). Salespeople whose relationships with their sales managers are towards the lower end of the quality spectrum are classified as belonging to a group termed the ‘hired-hands’, whereas salespeople who enjoy higher-quality relationships with their sales managers are considered to be part of the ‘cadre’ groups (cf. Lagace 1990; Tanner and Castleberry 1990).

In theory, when comparing salespeople who are members of the cadre group to those salespeople in the hired-hand group, one should be able to determine exactly *why* cadres have a higher-quality relationship, or what causes a given sales manager-salesperson relationship to be defined as higher-quality than the other. To this end, researchers have argued that members of the cadre group in general receive more support, more latitude, and participate in more social activities with their sales manager than hired-hands. In terms of preferential work conditions, cadres may receive better sales territories, more easily-attainable quotas, better product lines, more training, or even biased evaluations, when compared to hired-hands.

² This terminology is particularly relevant to sales research since all vertical-exchange based studies appear to relate to the sales manager-salesperson dyad.

Communication between sales managers and cadre salespeople will likely be more frequent, more positive, more motivational, and of a general higher quality than those between sales managers and hired hands. Furthermore, cadre members may be taken into confidence by their sales managers, receiving preferential information about the firm. Perhaps as a result of this, cadre salespeople will be better socialised, and more visible within the firm, leading to enhanced promotion prospects. From the salesperson's perspective, cadre members will perform additional duties beyond official assignments, as well as enjoy additional responsibility from the sales manager. Often, this can include activities such as working with problem accounts, and performing administrative tasks which the manager may not have time to do, along with other collaborative activities involving both the sales manager and the cadre salesperson (Lagace 1990; Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993).

By contrast, salespeople who are members of the hired-hand group do not receive the benefits which cadre salespeople receive. Often, hired-hands receive more troublesome territories, with quotas which may be more difficult to achieve. Hired-hand salespeople generally receive far less 'mentoring' activities from their sales managers, such as less training, less support and less sympathetic performance evaluations. In terms of communications, hired-hands are likely to receive less in general from their sales managers, and minimal informal communication in particular. That communication which hired-hands do receive is likely to be more directive, less positive, and generally less motivational, which can lead to a feeling of isolation by the hired-hand. The hired-hand salesperson does not collaborate on tasks with the sales manager, and engages merely in the stated demands of their job, without performing additional duties (cf. Lagace 1990; Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993).

Research in general on LMX within sales management has in the main focused firstly on the consequences of cadre versus hired-hand group membership (e.g. Klein and Kim 1998; Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993; Lagace 1990; Swift and Campbell 1995; Tanner and Castleberry 1990), and secondly on variables which may influence salespeople's membership of either group (e.g. DelVecchio 1998; Lagace 1990).

In terms of what may influence membership of the cadre salesperson group, research has discovered that salespeople who have been working for the managers longer are more likely to be cadre members. Furthermore, female sales managers appeared more likely to have high levels of cadre membership among their sales representatives. In terms of salespeople's personalities, cadre members have been found to be more trusting and less suspicious, although it could be argued that the latter were *results* of cadre membership rather than causes. However, although suggested by research as being potential influences on cadre membership, salesperson age, gender, and experience have not been empirically related to cadre membership (DeVecchio 1998; Lagace 1990).

Considering the impact of cadre versus hired-hand group membership on salespeople, researchers have argued that cadres will receive more favourable performance evaluations, be more satisfied with their jobs, be more satisfied with their managers, have higher incomes, higher levels of motivation, and lower levels of role stress (Lagace 1990; Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993; Swift and Cambell 1995). In terms of attributions (see Section 2.1.3.), it has been hypothesised that cadre salespeople will be more likely to receive from their sales managers internal attributions for good performance, and external attributions for poor performance. By contrast, hired-hands have been argued as likely to receive external attributions for good performance, and internal attributions for poor performance (Swift and Campbell 1995). In brief, this pattern of attributions is more likely to see cadre salespeople rewarded, and hired-hands punished (see Section 2.1.3. for more discussion of attributions).

When the hypotheses discussed above are examined in light of empirical evidence, general support can be seen. Specifically, cadres have been found to have generally higher extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, lower role ambiguity, lower role conflict, and receive more favourable performance evaluations (Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993; Swift and Campbell 1995; Tanner and Castleberry 1990). In terms of attributions, cadres do tend to receive internal attributions for good performance, while hired-hands receive external attributions for the same situations. Furthermore, cadres receive external attributions for ineffective performance, although hired-hands were not found to receive more internal attributions for poor performance. These

attribution patterns were also found to be likely to lead to increased rewards for cadres and increased punishment for hired-hands (Swift and Campbell 1995). However, cadre salespeople were not found to have higher income or objective performance than hired-hand salespeople (Lagace 1990; Tanner and Castleberry 1990).

The implications of LMX theory as discussed previously appear to have a certain resonance when considering sales manager problem resolution behaviour. In particular, it seems that LMX theories are able to offer some indication of whether or not sales managers are likely to act punitively to resolve any given problem situation. Specifically, salespeople who are members of the cadre group seem less likely to receive punishment due to poor performance, since the sales manager is more likely to attribute the poor performance to external causes (although other problem resolution actions from the manager may be deemed necessary). Furthermore, since cadre group members receive more favourable evaluations than hired-hand salespeople, it seems less likely that sales managers will perceive problem situations concerning a cadre salesperson. However, the points mentioned above do not provide any indication of the *style* in which sales managers may resolve salesperson-created problem (i.e. problem resolution styles), merely an indication of the likelihood of these problems receiving some kind of resolution action from the sales manager.

Nevertheless, LMX theories do, at least in a conceptual sense, imply that sales managers may differ in style when resolving problem situations. Specifically, LMX theory suggests that sales managers may be more ‘sympathetic’ towards cadre salespeople than hired-hand salespeople (cf. Lagace 1990; Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993). However, it is unclear exactly what a more ‘sympathetic’ response may be. So LMX theory suggests that sales managers may differ in their styles of resolving problem situations (i.e. more or less sympathetic), but does not provide any indication of what these styles may be other than the general idea of ‘sympathy’. Thus, it would seem that LMX provides some evidence suggesting that sales manager problem resolution styles are useful avenues for further research, although it stops short of explicitly recognising the idea of problem resolution styles.

2.2.3. Leader Behaviour: Consideration

Leader consideration is an aspect of leadership behaviour which has received extensive study within sales management research (e.g. DeCarlo, Rody and DeCarlo 1999; Hampton, Dubinsky and Skinner 1986; Kohli 1989). Consideration seems to be particularly concerned with the idea of interpersonal interaction between sales managers and salespeople. Leader consideration “refers to the degree to which supervisors *develop a work climate of psychological support, mutual trust and respect, helpfulness and friendliness*” (emphasis added, Kohli 1989, p. 41). While there appears little specific information on exactly how sales managers may foster such a climate, it seems highly likely that the interpersonal quality of interactions between the sales manager and salespeople will be vital in fostering perceptions of leader consideration, in addition to the technical quality of feedback and evaluation interactions (i.e. how sales managers interact with their salespeople in addition to the quality of their decisions). Unfortunately, while a significant amount of sales research has explicated and utilised the concept of leader consideration, little progress appears to have been made on delineating the specific managerial actions necessary to promote a highly considerate climate. Instead, scholars have directed most of their efforts towards discovering the impact of leader consideration on important salesforce variables (e.g. Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999; DeCarlo, Rody and DeCarlo 1999; Johnston et al. 1990; Kohli 1989; Teas 1983, 1981).

Regarding consideration, researchers have hypothesised a number of advantageous effects of high sales manager consideration. In particular, it has been argued that sales managers high in consideration will engender decreased levels of role ambiguity and role conflict, as well as increased levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment among salespeople (Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999; Johnston et al. 1990; Kohli 1989; Teas 1983, 1981). Furthermore, the aforementioned hypotheses are generally supported by empirical results. Specifically, high levels of sales managerial consideration appear to lead to high levels of salesperson organisational commitment and job satisfaction, as well as leading to lower levels of role conflict and ambiguity. Additionally, it seems that the latter relationships also hold across different cultures, in particular Australian, Indian and United States sales cultures (Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999; DeCarlo, Rody and DeCarlo 1999).

However, empirical results also suggest that the aforementioned relationships are moderated by certain salesperson characteristics. Specifically, research has found that salespeople who are more experienced, have higher self-esteem, and also rate themselves highly on their own performance, respond in general better to higher managerial consideration, in that there is a stronger positive relationship between managerial consideration, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment in the latter cases (Kohli 1989). Furthermore, Johnston and colleagues (1990) discovered that inexperienced salespeople did not have increased organisational commitment when their sales managers were more considerate, lending further support to the evidence that different salespeople respond differently to sales managers' consideration behaviours. In addition, researchers have discovered that salespeople need to perceive congruence between their desired levels of consideration, and the levels of consideration that they perceive from sales managers (DeCarlo, Rody and DeCarlo 1999). In empirical terms, levels of managerial consideration which are congruent with salespeople's expectations lead to higher levels of job satisfaction (DeCarlo, Rody and DeCarlo 1999).

There are a number of interesting implications for sales manager problem resolution styles which arise from research on sales managerial consideration. First and foremost, literature on sales managerial consideration strongly suggests that interpersonal interactions (such as those which are likely to foster higher levels of managerial consideration), are important influences on salespeople's well-being, as measured by variables such as job satisfaction, role ambiguity and organisational commitment. Since job satisfaction, role ambiguity and organisational commitment have previously been discovered to influence salespeople's performance and effectiveness (see Section 4.1.), interpersonal interaction variables such as sales managerial consideration seem likely to be important variables to investigate within the salesforce context. In relation to the present research, problem resolution styles can be broadly conceptualised as concerning implementation or delivery of behavioural responses (in that these styles are theoretically independent of the technical aspects of the problem resolution decision or action), and thus seem to be primarily concerned with interpersonal-type issues. Sales manager consideration research suggests that these interpersonal issues are likely to be important to salesforce well-being and performance. Furthermore, sales managerial consideration

research suggests that these interpersonal variables are important across different cultures, even more so than more technical and objective interaction variables (Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999; DeCarlo, Rody and DeCarlo 1999).

Although sales manager consideration theories do not provide a general picture of the full range of the (potentially multiple) concepts composing sales manager problem resolution styles, consideration theories do provide a strong indication that the idea of ‘consideration’ from the sales manager may well be important when resolving problem situations. More specifically, sales manager consideration theories imply that sales manager problem resolution styles which somehow relate to, or enhance, salespeople’s perceptions of consideration, will have positive effects on salespeople’s well-being and ultimately performance.

2.2.4. The Leadership Practices Model

The leadership practices model (Kouzes and Posner 1987) is an attempt to delineate in some way the practices which outstanding leaders use to engender extraordinary performances from their subordinates. Interestingly, though the leadership practices model predates the widespread acceptance of transformational leadership theories among researchers, the practices explicated by Kouzes and Posner (1987; Posner and Kouzes 1990) seem to relate strongly to the general concept of transformational leadership (Fields and Herold 1997). However, despite the intuitive appeal of the leadership practices model, it appears to have been the subject of little interest within the sales management context (Shoemaker 1999).

In brief, the leadership practices model identifies five practices which are used by outstanding leaders (Kouzes and Posner 1987; Posner and Kouzes 1990; Shoemaker 1999). Furthermore, empirical results suggested that 80% of behaviours which were described by subordinates as ‘leadership’ were explained by the five dimensions (Posner and Kouzes 1990). The first dimension of outstanding leadership within the leadership practices model is termed *challenging the process*, which involves seeking new solutions and opportunities, as well as encouraging innovation and taking risks. Secondly, *inspiring a shared vision* involves creating and communicating a vision, and encouraging subordinates to share it. The third dimension of the leadership practices model, *enabling others to act*, is concerned with fostering collaboration,

and increasing others' capabilities. Fourth, *modelling the way* involves setting an example and behaving in accordance with one's stated principles, as well as enabling subordinates to experience success. The final practice, *encouraging the heart*, is about recognising and celebrating accomplishments, communicating high expectations, and linking performance to rewards.

Theoretically speaking, sales research has conceptually linked the five leadership practices to a number of salesforce outcomes such as role clarity, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy. Specifically, increased levels of all five dimensions have been hypothesised to increase the job satisfaction of salespeople, while increased levels of three of the dimensions (enabling others, modelling the way, and encouraging the heart) have been argued to link with increased salesperson self-efficacy. However, while increased salesperson role clarity has been hypothesised to be related to increased levels of four of the leadership practices (enabling others, modelling the way, encouraging the heart, and inspiring a shared vision), challenging the process has been argued as likely to decrease role clarity among salespeople (Shoemaker 1999).

When examined in light of empirical data, results for the leadership practices model have been mixed within sales research. Specifically, none of the hypothesised leadership practices were discovered to have any impact on salespeople's self-efficacy. However, while challenging the process was not found to be negatively associated with salespeople's role clarity, increased levels of the other four dimensions were found to positively influence role clarity among sales representatives. Furthermore, increased levels of all five of the practices described by the leadership practices model were found to have positive influences on salespeople's job satisfaction, explaining a very large proportion (59%) of the variance in the salesperson job satisfaction measure (Shoemaker 1999).

There appear to be some likely implications of the leadership practices model on sales managers' resolution of problem situations, although these implications are similar to those which may be drawn from the other strands of research reviewed in Section 2.2. Specifically, the leadership practices model recognises the fact that the manner in which sales managers deliver their decisions and actions is perhaps even

more important than the technical quality of these decisions. Furthermore, the leadership practices model explicitly recognises that individual sales managers are likely to be different in terms of these interpersonal aspects, even though they may be equally skilled and competent in their technical decision-making roles.

However, while the leadership practices model is somewhat more specific than the transformational leadership theory in terms of what is required from the manager, there still appears a lack of concrete knowledge of exactly what behaviours from the manager are required to enhance salespeople's perceptions of each of the five dimensions. So while the leadership practices model provides evidence that sales managers can increase the effectiveness of their activities (including, one would presume, their problem resolution activities), by recognising these five leadership practices, there is little knowledge regarding what sales managers need to do in a concrete sense. The concept of sales manager problem resolution styles, on the other hand, is an explicit attempt to delineate exactly what the key styles available to sales managers resolving problems are, and how the styles ascribed to sales managers by their salespeople can influence important salesforce outcomes.

2.2.5. The Situational Leadership Model

While many of the previously discussed 'interpersonal interaction-based' theories have found ready acceptance within academic circles, spawning large amounts of research (whether or not sales force-specific), the situational leadership model (Hersey and Blanchard 1988) has found a rather less enthusiastic reception (Butler and Reese 1991). However, it is interesting to note that the situational leadership model is arguably the most widely accepted model within the practitioner context (cf. University Associates 1986). As the name suggests, the situational leadership model proscribes different leadership behaviours in different situations. In the situational leadership model, the key situational variable is the 'readiness' (termed 'maturity' in early versions of the model) of subordinates. The term readiness relates to the willingness or ability of subordinates to focus on tasks and objectives set by the manager (cf. Hersey and Blanchard 1988). The situational leadership model proscribes that managers should adapt their styles to the level of readiness of their subordinates.

In the situational leadership model, managers are considered as able to vary their leadership style across two main dimensions, called ‘task behaviour’ and ‘relationship behaviour’ (Butler and Reese 1991). Combining these dimensions into a two-by-two matrix results in a typology of four separate leadership styles. These styles are labelled S1 (high task, high relationship), S2 (high task, low relationship), S3 (low task, high relationship), and S4 (low task, low relationship). Each of the four styles is prescribed by the situational leadership model as most appropriate for a given level of subordinate readiness. Specifically, from low to high readiness levels, managers should use S1 for the lowest, to S2, then S3, moving to S4 for the highest readiness subordinates (Hersey and Blanchard 1988). The degree to which managers are able to vary their style according to the readiness of subordinates is called ‘adaptability’ (Butler and Reese 1991).

As previously mentioned, the situational leadership model is not popular with academicians, and has received little empirical support within a general management context (Robbins 1989). Within sales management research, this situation is exacerbated, with seemingly only a single study available which explores the situational leadership model within the sales management context (Butler and Reese 1991). Theoretically speaking, it has been hypothesised that as sales manager adaptability increases, salespeople’s performance should also increase. Furthermore, in an exploratory style, sales management-focused research has also hypothesised that one of the four styles (i.e. S1, S2, S3, or S4) will be superior to the others, in that it will be associated with higher sales performance among subordinate salespeople (Butler and Reese 1991).

However, supporting previous academic criticism of the situational leadership model, empirical results of testing the situational leadership hypotheses in a sales context have not been encouraging. In particular, a significant *negative* relationship between sales manager adaptability and salespeople’s performance was discovered, rather than the positive relationship hypothesised. However, Butler and Reese (1991) did suggest that measurement issues may have impacted on the latter result. Furthermore, while empirical results have suggested that there is one best style which sales managers can utilise, this best style was found to be S1 (high task, low relationship), contrary to much organisational research which suggests that S2 (high task, high

relationship) should be the superior style. In fact, research within sales management found that S2 had an *adverse* effect on the performance of salespeople (Butler and Reese 1991).

It seems that there are a number of implications from research on the situational leadership model within the sales context, which are relevant to any research on sales manager problem resolution styles. First of all, Butler and Reese (1991) suggested that examining sales managers' own reports of their management styles may not be as useful as examining salespeople's *perceptions* of their managers' behaviour. As Butler and Reese (1991) argued; "[e]ven if a sales manager were to report the proscribed style on the [situational leadership measuring instrument], it might be perceived differently by followers. This perception could influence followers' behaviours more strongly than the style attempted...and reported by the manager" (p. 43). This argument would appear to be an important factor choice of methodologies for studies looking at various sales managerial constructs, such as problem resolution styles (see Chapter 5 for a full discussion on this issue).

Furthermore, it appears that the discovery of S1 (high task, low relationship) as the most effective style in the sales management context raises an important implication. Specifically, sales managers responding to problem situations still need to focus on task-related aspects of the situation itself. This is in contrast to other 'interpersonal interaction-based' research, which tends to imply that the more subjective, interpersonal aspects of management are important, perhaps to the exclusion of task-related issues (e.g. leader-member exchange, transformational leadership). Thus, one of the key factors within sales manager problem resolution styles could be some kind of 'task-focused' ability to resolve the actual problem, as well as to utilise an effective interpersonal manner.

2.2.6. Interpersonal Interaction-Based Studies: Synthesis and General Implications for Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

As can be seen from the individual sub-sections comprising Section 2.2., 'interpersonal interaction-based' research has clearly contributed much towards our understanding of sales managerial behaviour in general, and also provides some important implications regarding any proposed theory of sales manager's problem

resolution styles. In particular, it seems that interpersonal interactions between sales managers and salespeople, when sales managers must deliver some behavioural action, are an important area for research, and the specific characteristics of such interactions may have an effect on salespeople's well-being and performance independently of the technical quality of managers' decisions (which were examined in Section 2.1.). In terms of problem resolution styles, 'interpersonal interaction-based' research implies firstly that they are an important area for research. Secondly, 'interpersonal interaction-based' research also suggests that problem resolution styles may be able to add to or detract from the success of sales managers' decisions and actions concerning problem resolution. Also, the literature discussed in Section 2.2. strongly suggests that individual managers differ in their interpersonal interactional characteristics, or in other words they each behave differently towards salespeople. Thus delineating relevant characteristics (such as problem resolution styles) seems an important avenue for research.

Finally, in general, literature on interpersonal interactions also seems to give some indications of important avenues for research into problem resolution styles. More specifically, a number of research streams (e.g. LMX, or leader consideration) have suggested that some idea of 'sympathy' or 'consideration' may be especially important as a style of sales managerial problem resolution, although concrete definitions of such styles are not forthcoming within the literature. Furthermore, and in agreement with much of the 'technical interaction-based' research discussed in Section 2.1., some of the 'interpersonal interaction-based' theories suggest that 'task-focused' styles will also be beneficial to salespeople when managers must resolve problem situations (e.g. situational leadership).

However, 'interpersonal interaction-based' research does not provide any more detailed information on sales manager problem resolution styles. For example, we lack knowledge as to whether the characteristics alluded to above are all that is important in problem resolution situations, or even whether the specific characteristics of problem resolution render them *unimportant*. Furthermore, it is unclear whether managers high in say, consideration, remain high in consideration when having to deal with the stressful situation of problem resolution (cf. Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996). Therefore, it is relatively clear that, while 'interpersonal

interaction-based' research has some implications for sales managers' problem resolution styles, it is insufficient to adequately delineate either the problem resolution style concept itself, or the likely consequences of the latter. Thus, the discussion now moves to a final stream of literature, that which has specifically addressed *punishment*, in the hope of obtaining additional insights.

2.3. Punishment in Organisations

While punishment has long been accepted as a “relatively common phenomenon in organizational settings” (Arvey and Ivancevich 1980 p. 123), it is only since the early 1980s that it has become a topic of popular interest for organisational scholars. In the intervening two decades, interest in punishment and discipline (here used interchangeably) within organisations has flourished. Although Arvey and Ivancevich (1980) imply that psychologists have had their differences over a definition of punishment, it does not seem to have been a major problem within organisational studies, with broadly similar definitions used throughout the evolution of relevant research (Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996). Essentially, punishment within organisational settings is defined as a superior's application of a negative consequence, or removal of a positive consequence, contingent on subordinates' undesirable behaviour (cf. Arvey and Ivancevich 1980; Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996).

Research on punishment within the organisational behaviour context can, in the main, be categorised into three broad areas; a) research on antecedents to the managerial application of punishment, b) consequences of managerial application of punishment on various members of the organisation, and c) the characteristics of the punishment act itself. Given that the focus of the present study is clearly on the consequences and characteristics of sales managers' behaviours (i.e. their style of delivering specific actions which can include punishment), in section 2.3.1 below, the research relating to the *consequences* of managerial punishment will be discussed, while in section 2.3.2, that research which looks at the specific characteristics of the punishment act itself is detailed.

2.3.1. The Consequences of Punishment Behaviour

There are two main types of organisational member that research in managerial punishment has generally considered. Firstly, the majority of punishment literature explores the consequences on, and reactions of, the punished subordinate directly. A second, more recent stream of research broadens this focus to explore reactions of “observers” of the punishment incident. This latter stream of research is perhaps influenced by Arvey and Jones’ (1985) call for more research in this area.

In terms of research focusing on consequences of managers’ application of punishment on the subordinate towards which the punishment is directed (as opposed to the consequences on those observing the punishment event), it is clear that in the majority of cases, the managerial goal of punishment is to “modify the subordinate’s undesirable behaviour” (Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996 p. 1479). Thus, we should be interested in whether punishment does in fact result in positive consequences such as the modification/reduction of undesirable behaviour in the short term. But it also seems that we should go beyond this to look at whether any short-term benefit is carried over to the long-term performance of the subordinate. In these respects, existing research on punishment finds conflicting results.

Before considering these conflicting results, it is illuminating to consider the context within which recent research on subordinate consequences of managerial punishment has been conducted. Specifically, beginning with Skinner’s (1948; 1938) pioneering psychological philosophies, punishment has been characterised as ineffective in modifying behaviour. However, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, “state-of-the-art” psychological research explored the effectiveness of human behaviour modification by using punishment – finding positive results (e.g. Blakemore et al. 1963; Feldman and McCulloch 1971; McConaghy 1971; Lovass, Schaeffer and Simmons 1965). Methods of punishment used in this research include stimuli such as electric shocks (Feldman and McCulloch 1971), drug-induced nausea (McConaghy 1971) and even drug-induced paralysis (Sanderson, Campbell and Laverty 1963). While it is outside the scope of the present study to provide a detailed assessment of the clinical research referred to here, it is sufficient to note that punishment stimuli were found to reduce the exhibition of a number of behaviours which clinicians had defined as pathological, including alcoholism, violent behaviour, drug addiction, transvestism,

and homosexuality. Thus, in the increasingly liberal social environment of the latter four decades of the 20th century, punishment as a behaviour modification tool is likely to have gathered rather undesirable and unethical connotations within the minds of many people, including – one would suspect – many organisational behaviourists. As Lovass, Schaeffer and Simmons state; “objections to the use of [punishment] have a moral rather than scientific basis” (1965 p. 99). In fact, punishment has such negative connotations that some scientists have seen the need for books dedicated solely to detailing *alternatives* to the use of punishment in behaviour modification (e.g. LaVigna and Donnellan 1986).

This very negative perception of punishment is likely to explain Arvey and Ivancevich’s (1980) finding that most discussions of organisational punishment are “laced with moral overtones and opinions...and lack scientifically based research results” (p.124). Thus, it seems possible that much organisationally-focused punishment research has been conducted with the implicit hope that punishment will have a negative impact on subordinates, due to the feelings of inherent unethicity and inhumanity which researchers felt about punishment. This feeling in turn would account for the apparent surprise with which any positive effects of punishment are related (cf. Arvey and Ivancevich 1980; e.g. Sims 1980).

Returning to the earlier assertion that much of the subordinate-centred research has found conflicting results, a clear distinction can be drawn. Specifically, when one is concerned *only* with short-term behaviour modification (e.g. if a manager wishes to stop a salesperson’s unethical behaviour), then research has found that using punishment is an effective tactic. For example, in terms of controlling or reducing absenteeism, studies have shown that using punishment contingent on the negative behaviour is an effective behaviour modification strategy (Kempen and Hall 1977; Kopelman and Schneller 1981). Also relevant to the sales management context is the finding of Hegarty and Sims (1979) that punishment can control unethical behaviour successfully. So in terms of pure short-term behaviour modification, the effectiveness of using punishment tends to find support within the findings of relevant research, as discussed above.

However, the picture is less clear when the effects of punishment on employee performance (i.e. achievement of relevant performance standards, according to the particular function of the employees themselves) are considered. Here, both positive and negative effects have been found by researchers. For instance, positive effects of punishment on subordinate performance have been found in studies conducted by, among others, Cherrington, Reitz and Scott (1971); O'Reilly and Weitz (1980), and Franke and Karl (1978), while negative or no performance effects have been related by authors such as Sims and Szilagyi (1975), Oldham (1976), and Podsakoff, Todor and Skov (1982).

The effects of punishment on employee psychological variables (such as job satisfaction) are also rather contradictory. Specifically, Szilagyi (1980) found that punishment caused dissatisfaction. On the other hand, Sims and Szilagyi (1975) found a positive relationship between punishment and job satisfaction. Moreover, Keller and Szilagyi (1978; 1976) found that punishment was negatively related to role ambiguity. However, Sims and Szilagyi (1975) contradicted the latter finding, indicating that there may be a positive relationship between punishment and role ambiguity, a point further emphasized by Arvey and Jones (1985). Interestingly, the above discussion shows that there is disagreement even among studies conducted by the *same researchers*, and thus one cannot blithely conclude that the researchers' own personal beliefs or paradigms may have led to biased methodologies for example.

An important issue to note however, is that all of the aforementioned research is focussed on the consequences of *contingent punishment*. That is, punishment applied as a result of a previous undesirable act by the subject being punished. By contrast, there is no conflict when *non-contingent* (i.e. essentially random) punishment is studied. In the case of non-contingent punishment, the consequences have been found to be uniformly negative (e.g. Cherrington, Reitz and Scott 1971; Podsakoff, Todor and Skov 1982). In fact, Arvey and Jones (1985) state that "contingency seems to be a key factor in determining the effects of punishment" (p. 389), perhaps related to the helplessness subjects may feel when punished seemingly at random and thus unable to avoid further punishment. In other words, non-contingent punishment is administered *without* a cause or reason, and this type of punishment tends to be

associated with high levels of learned helplessness, depression, and other negative psychological states among victims of non-contingent punishment. In the present case, it is clear to see that sales manager problem resolution styles are related to *contingent* behaviour (whether or not they be punishment specifically), since the sales manager is reacting to an undesirable behaviour by the salesperson. By contrast, *non-contingent* sales manager punishment would be if say, the sales manager randomly sacked sales reps at the annual sales meeting.

Moving now to research which has considered subordinates *other* than the one punished (here termed ‘observers’), it would seem that – philosophically speaking at least – we should be interested in different goals of punishment. Specifically, observers of the punishment act are presumably not performing any undesirable behaviour requiring punishment at that time. Thus the sales manager is not attempting to directly modify their behaviour. Instead, managers should be interested in maximising the *positive* consequences of such punishment acts on observers, or at the very least to minimise any possible negative influences (such as fear) which may result from observation of punishment behaviour. In fact, it has been stated that managers should consider observers’ reactions as perhaps *more* important than those of the subordinate being disciplined (Trevino 1992). The reasoning behind such a contention may be to do with the idea that those subordinates actually being punished may be more likely to be ineffective performers, or otherwise more likely to leave the organisation (voluntarily or not). However, those members of the workgroup who observe the punishment are more likely to stay and contribute to the organisation’s goals, and thus in a purely rational sense, managers should consider the impact of their punishment behaviours on these employees. Interestingly, in the case of observers’ reactions to managerial punishment, findings are rather more positive as a rule, than those regarding actual recipients of punishment. For example, Trevino (1992) suggested that observers of punishment activities can feel positive about seeing ‘justice served’. Similarly, Butterfield, Trevino and Ball (1996) found that observers can feel that justice has been served when they see offenders punished, and also that observers can *vicariously learn* more positive behaviour, by seeing what behaviour is not tolerated. However, at present, research on observers to punishment behaviour is rather thin on the ground, although it seems a highly promising area for research.

So, in summary, it can be seen that within organisational research, punishment research appears to find conflicting results in terms of its efficacy in promoting general employee performance and psychological ‘well-being’ (such as job satisfaction) within the workplace. There could be a number of reasons for this, including methodological considerations.³ However, one reason that comes immediately to mind is that of model misspecification – specifically that there may be specific factors, or moderators, which can influence the effectiveness of punishment behaviour by the manager. Indeed this appears to have been the focus of a number of studies conducted since Arvey and Jones’ (1985) review. However, prior to Arvey and Jones (1985) call, little research had addressed this topic apart from the aforementioned contingent/non-contingent dichotomy. In the following section then, a discussion is provided of the research which has explored the potential factors which can affect the effectiveness of contingent punishment.

2.3.2. What Influences the Effectiveness of Managerial Punishment Activity?

While research into factors which can influence the effectiveness of punishment has indeed grown in the last 15 years, there still appears to be no coherent theory or agreement as to what these factors are. Indeed, scholarly research within this area is relatively fragmented and hard to categorise. A possible reason for this could be the corresponding rise in research into layoffs (i.e. redundancies), probably caused by the late 20th century managerial focus on “organisational downsizing”. Thus, researchers who may have investigated punishment instead studied layoffs, and factors which can influence the effectiveness of downsizing and redundancy activity (e.g. Brockner et al. 1994, 1987; Eby and Buch 1998; Folger and Skarlicki 1998).

One area where there does appear to be something of a body of knowledge developing is the area of organisational justice, and its role in influencing the effectiveness of organisational punishment. There are three main types of organisational justice which are relevant here. Firstly, *retributive justice* concerns

³ For example, it may be that conflicting results on punishment’s effectiveness have resulted due to measurement problems. More specifically, it may be the case that measures of punishment activity may capture a high proportion of random error, leading to conflicting results over time (due to unreliability).

employees' desire for punishment to be delivered to someone else because the latter has violated some organisational rule or norm; thus they 'deserve it'. Secondly, *distributive justice* refers to the manner in which employees evaluate the punishment of their co-workers in light of the severity of the latter's misconduct, and also in relation to what punishment others have received. Finally, *procedural justice* refers to employees' evaluations of the punishment decision-making process itself (Trevino 1992). As mentioned previously, Trevino (1992) proposed a conceptual model in which enhanced perceptions of the various types of justice by subordinates who observe punishment behaviour, may lead to more favourable perceptions of the punishment activity. Furthermore, Ball, Trevino and Sims (1994) found some support for the relationship between justice and punishment effectiveness. Additional research on justice perceptions has also found similar relationships with punishment effectiveness (e.g. Gavin, Green and Fairhurst 1995; Niehoff, Paul and Bunch 1998). However, by no means could one say that the empirical evidence linking justice perceptions to punishment effectiveness is unassailable. In particular, the majority of the relevant research focuses primarily on observers of punishment rather than subjects, and thus little conclusions can be reliably drawn regarding those subordinates who are actually punished. However, in sum, it can be argued that there is a strong *conceptual* case for justice perceptions having a positive effect on punishment effectiveness, although much of the logic inherent here is straight from the previously mentioned research on contingent/non-contingent punishment. For example, one would expect non-contingent punishment to be rather low on any conceivable scale of 'organisational justice' perceptions.

Other variables of interest crop up in punishment research on a very irregular basis, although as far back as 1980, Arvey and Ivancevich utilised clinical and other psychological research to propose several possible factors which could influence punishment effectiveness. The variables listed by Arvey and Ivancevich (1980) are timing, intensity, schedule, provision of a rationale, and availability of alternative responses. However, this does not appear to have caused too many ripples in academia, although numerous practitioner-focused articles reiterating the above points have appeared subsequently (e.g. Brewer 1994; Carey 1994; Drazan 1988; Flanagan and Finger 1997; Quick 1989).

Of particular note however, is the study by Arvey, Davis and McGowan (1982), which suggested that there may be differences in the ways supervisors apply the general concept of discipline to their subordinates. Essentially, Arvey, Davis and McGowan (1982) found that employees considered their immediate supervisors to display varying levels of ‘appropriateness’, and ‘consistency’ in their behavioural sanctions when applying discipline. ‘Consistency’ seemed to be concerned with whether or not the sanction was arbitrary or not, essentially analogous to the contingent/non-contingent dichotomy discussed earlier. The concept of ‘appropriateness’ however, was not robustly delineated although it seemed to relate to whether the manager was ‘petty’, or hurtful in the disciplinary sanctions they used. However, a satisfactory definition of the relevant construct(s) was not provided, leaving researchers with little information to base further research upon. Furthermore, Arvey, Davis and McGowan (1982) did not appear to draw any explicit conclusions as to whether ‘appropriateness’ or ‘consistency’ influenced punishment effectiveness, although the implication is clear that low levels of ‘appropriateness’ and low levels of ‘consistency’ were considered to be negative in a conceptual sense. While Arvey, Davis and McGowan (1982) at least provided recognition of the idea that managers may differ in their disciplinary activity (albeit seemingly in the type of sanctions they deliver), they stop short of presenting clear and exhaustive conceptual definitions of the key constructs on which managers can differ. Thus at best, Arvey, Davis and MacGowans (1982) study can only be used as support for the direction of the present study of sales manager problem resolution styles, rather than as a source of answers as to what these styles might be. Unfortunately, the answers to this question are never provided since, even though Arvey, Davis and McGowan’s (1982) study makes a seemingly unique and intriguing contribution to models of managerial punishment effectiveness, the research stream seems to start and finish with the latter paper.

There appears to be very little additional information on the factors which can influence punishment effectiveness, both where the actual subject of the punishment is concerned, and regarding observers of the punishment. While it is clear that we know a great deal more about punishment within organisations than we did 20 years ago, a great proportion of this knowledge is focused on how managers go about deciding to punish (e.g. Fairhurst, Green and Snavely 1984; Klass, Brown and

Heneman 1998; Martocchio and Judge 1995; Mitchell, Green and Wood 1981; Podsakoff 1982). Despite the calls of Arvey and Ivancevich (1980) and Arvey and Jones (1985), scholars seem no closer to discovering either the key factors which can influence either a) the effectiveness of punishment on the actual subordinate who is punished (in particular), and apart from concepts of justice, b) the effectiveness of punishment on the observers of the punishment behaviour (i.e. the rest of the work group/salesforce). Furthermore, research has comprehensively failed to discover evidence regarding the different ways in which managers can go about delivering punishment activities (as opposed to a simple ‘punish/don’t punish dichotomy).

2.3.3. Punishment: Implications for Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

The implications for sales researchers of the above review are clear: a) there is little clear, empirically-based evidence to suggest that punishment itself has either positive or negative short-term or (especially) long-term behavioural and psychological consequences on either the subordinate who is punished, or other members of the subordinates’ workgroup; from which follows b) there are likely to be key undiscovered mediating variables which can affect the consequences of the simple act of punishment for the punishment subject and the observers of the punishment action; and c) scholars have yet to discover these mediating variables. Therefore, it appears the long history of punishment and discipline research cannot offer the insights required for the present study – i.e. how can sales managers perform their problem resolution activities so as to maximise their short-term and long-term effectiveness on the salesforce?

In fact, as was also seen in the previous discussion on sales managers’ response to unethical behaviour, research in more general organisational punishment also takes a rather simplistic approach to the punishment act itself. Essentially, punishment appears to be considered as a simple action-based concept (e.g. Fairhurst, Green and Snaveley 1984), as opposed to one in which the manager can take various behavioural and interpersonal approaches. Research into managerial reactions to punishment delivery situations is beginning to appear (e.g. Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996), but we still lack an appreciation of the specific tactics that managers utilise when they need to administer problem resolution actions, including punishment. Some

indication of these tactics or styles was however provided by Arvey, Davis and McGowan (1982) with their concepts of ‘appropriateness’ and ‘consistency’, the latter of which is also related to the issue of punishment contingency. Nevertheless, the actual content of ‘appropriateness’ and ‘consistency’ was not clearly defined, thus providing little substantive information of use in delineating the constructs of problem resolution styles.

2.4. Implications for the Present Study

The review of relevant literature presented above has illuminated a number of issues concerning sales managers’ resolution of problem situations. First of all, it is abundantly clear from the literature that sales managers commonly utilise problem resolution actions (such as punishment and other negative feedback sanctions) in the day-to-day process of running a salesforce. The latter activities are implicit and/or explicit in all the theories discussed in the present chapter, in the ‘technical interaction-based’, ‘interpersonal interaction-based’, and also in the organisational punishment literature. Furthermore, it seems that sales research strongly suggests that managers *should* utilise some kind of response to problem situations, rather than simply ignore them. As a consequence, it makes sense to investigate whether there are factors which can make problem resolution actions by sales managers more or less effective.

A second issue raised by the literature review is that the act of responding to problem situations is approached in a fairly simplistic manner by existing research. Simply put, it seems that researchers implicitly consider sales managers’ responses to problems to purely consist of *behavioural* action, for example a process of either punishing or not punishing a problem salesperson. Few relevant studies go beyond the latter conceptual foundation, and those that do merely add the concept of ‘severity’ of punishment to the theoretical framework (e.g. DeConinck 1992). However, it seems logical that sales managers, in implementing problem resolution behaviours such as punishment, are likely to adopt a variety of different ‘styles’. Thus, different managers will both utilise different objective behaviours, and also different behavioural *styles* when responding to salesperson-created problems.

Relating to the latter issue, the research reviewed in the present chapter has provided significant evidence to suggest that different sales managers will respond differently to problem situations as suggested above. For instance, ‘technical interaction-based’ research suggests that managers will differ in their recognition of problems or their definitions of which situations require managerial action, while ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ research suggests that different managers may differ in their interpersonal interaction approaches, which may impact on the style with which such actions are delivered. As a consequence, it seems necessary to examine exactly *how* managers differ in their application of problem resolution activities in response to salespeople’s behaviour. Furthermore, Section 2.2. uncovered evidence to suggest that the way in which a given sales managerial behaviour is delivered to salespeople (and salespeople’s perceptions of that delivery process) may have as much, or more, of an effect on that behaviour’s success as the technical quality of the behaviour/decision itself. As such, the research reviewed in the present chapter suggests that a poor decision by sales management, which is delivered in an effective manner, may be as (or more) effective than a ‘good’ (i.e. technically correct) decision which is delivered in a negative manner. Additionally, certain streams of ‘interpersonal interaction-based’ research suggested that the idea of ‘sympathy’ or ‘consideration’ from sales managers might be an important avenue to examine when considering these concepts of behavioural ‘delivery’ styles, and also that ‘task-focused’ (i.e. concerned with actually resolving the problem itself) elements of problem resolution are an important issue to explore. However, such concepts are not delineated within the sales literature in anything other than a very vague manner.

In other words, from the evidence presented above, it seems clear that sales manager problem resolution styles may be an important influence on problem resolution effectiveness, and thus are worthy of empirical research in their own right. However, it is also apparent that existing literature relevant to sales manager problem resolution is unable to clarify the concept of problem resolution styles. As a consequence, it would seem that our understanding of sales managers’ problem resolution effectiveness could benefit from a field-based investigation into how sales managers differ in their specific styles of implementation when resolving the everyday salesperson-related problems they face.

2.5. Summary

This chapter has provided an assessment of theory relevant to sales managers' resolution of staff-created problem situations. An analysis of the various theories, such as leadership, punishment, and organisational control systems has demonstrated that a) response to problem situations is an important duty of the sales manager, b) explicit consideration of such response tends to focus on the actual behavioural issues (e.g. punish/don't punish), c) literature suggests that the manner in which response behaviours are implemented or delivered may have an impact on their effectiveness, and d) as yet, academic knowledge lacks appreciation of the issues involving the way in which they sales managers may deliver these problem resolution behaviours.

Additionally, it was also established that present research is unable to compellingly show whether problem resolution (such as disciplinary activities) was likely to have positive effects in general. Key areas of the latter which scholars and practitioners lack academic knowledge of are the effects on both the salespeople directly involved in the problem (i.e. those who receive the resolution action), and also effects on other salespeople in the work team, as well as problem resolution's effect on complex and longer term outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance.

Given that an objective of the present study is to explore whether sales managers can more effectively resolve problem situations, by utilising different problem resolution styles, it is critical that the variables of interest be delineated robustly. To this end, the following chapter reports on an attempt to provide such a delineation. More specifically, existing literature and qualitative research are utilised in order to define a number of constructs relating to sales managers' problem resolution styles. The results indicate that three different styles can be adopted by sales managers when resolving day-to-day sales force problem situations. Furthermore, there is strong evidence to support the idea that sales managers' problem resolution styles are important determinants of successful sales managerial activity.

3. SALES MANAGER PROBLEM RESOLUTION STYLES: A LITERATURE AND FIELD-BASED EXPLORATION

3.1. Introduction

The primary aim of the present chapter is to provide a robust delineation of the constructs of interest regarding sales managers' problem resolution styles. In a broad sense, a two-pronged strategy was utilised to achieve the present aim. Firstly, a wide range of existing literature sources were tapped in order to develop insights into the key styles which sales managers could adopt when resolving problem situations. In other words, the literature was used to identify the underlying traits or styles which sales managers can exhibit when performing problem resolution behaviours (such as punishment).

The tentative constructs emerging from the literature-based explication approach described above were also examined in light of qualitative data, for three main reasons. First of all, it was necessary to utilise qualitative fieldwork in order to determine whether or not the constructs suggested by the literature were actually relevant within the general sales management milieu, or whether they were merely conceptual artefacts of the literature. Secondly, it was also necessary to examine actual sales force situations to establish the pertinence of the latter constructs, or in other words, regardless of their existence, did sales force members consider the potential problem resolution style constructs to be *important* in sales management situations? Finally, qualitative fieldwork was required in order to more fully explicate the constructs which were suggested by the literature, to add depth and richness to the understanding of sales manager problem resolution styles. In fact, the latter objective was important for two additional reasons, firstly a rich and detailed understanding of sales manager problem resolution styles was vital in order to develop a conceptual model of the latter's likely consequences. Furthermore, comprehensive and exhaustive understanding of the relevant constructs was crucial

to the aim of developing *measures* of the constructs to be used in later quantitative research (see Chapter 5 onwards).

Thus, the present chapter begins with a discussion of the methodology utilised to collect and analyse the qualitative data. Following this are a number of sections explicating the relevant constructs concerning sales managers' problem resolution styles, containing both literature-based and field-based perspectives on sales manager problem resolution styles. Subsequent to this are sections on the appropriate level of analysis for sales manager problem resolution styles, and the interrelationships between the latter styles. Finally, a summary of the Chapter is offered.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. The Iterative Nature of Construct Delineation

The first stage in construct development was literature-based. More specifically, issues suggested by the initial literature review (see Chapter 2) were examined in further detail by the inclusion of literature from a wider variety of contexts which were not specifically related to managerial problem resolution. Drawing from the expanded literature review, a number of tentative constructs regarding sales managers' problem resolution style were defined as potentially important, and these will be discussed fully in subsequent sections. However, in order to ascertain the relevance and substantiveness of the constructs, qualitative fieldwork was also undertaken, helping to gain a picture of sales managers' problem resolution styles in action. These richer constructs were also taken back to the literature in an attempt to gain further insight, and the research proceeded along a similarly cyclical path from then on in. Thus, the constructs relevant to sales managers' problem resolution styles were developed through an iterative process, benefiting from both literature and fieldwork, resulting in a set of rich, detailed constructs grounded in the sales management context.

3.2.2. The Specifics of the Qualitative Study

Moving to the specifics of the qualitative data collection itself, the field study consisted of 19 in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted with members

of salesforces from 13 organizations in the two largest UK cities. Because the purpose of the research was theory discovery (cf. Deshpandé 1983) it was important to tap as wide a range of relevant perspectives as possible. To this end, the sampling plan was essentially purposive (cf. Glaser and Strauss 1967), utilising a number of “key informants” (Seidler 1974) selected from relevant business directories and personal contacts within the UK. Furthermore, the technique of “snowballing” (Miles and Huberman 1994) was also used to generate additional contacts from those already participating. For example, after describing how s/he behaves when dealing with problems, a sales manager might say; “however my friend who works for [company x] does it completely differently, maybe you should talk to them”. This helped in generating alternative perspectives from those who were participating already. It was a particular goal of the sampling plan to utilize both sales managers and salespeople to generate data, and to obtain responses from those in both large and small organizations. The characteristics of the sample used in this study can be seen in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Characteristics of the Qualitative Sample

Respondent Characteristics		Organisational Characteristics*	
Sales managers	11	Sells capital goods	4
Salespeople	8	Sells consumer goods	3
Females	4	Sells business goods	6
Males	15	No. of employees	9-10000
Years in sales	1-30	Salesforce size	4-90
Respondent Age	26-68	Sales team size	1-11
Bachelors degree holders	5	Firm yearly turnover (UK£000)	600-60000

*Note: Some organisations provided more than one respondent.

3.2.3. The Data Collection Instrument

The primary focus of the data collection was built around semi-structured in-depth interviews with the respondents. Separate instruments were used for the sales managers and salespeople, in order to allow the probing of particular experiences more successfully. While the general questions set out the overarching structure of the interview, it was often necessary to clarify issues, and to probe further when respondents mentioned particularly novel or interesting opinions, or to gain examples or illustrations of points they wished to offer. Specifically, the sales manager instrument focused on eliciting first-hand data to help in the identification and

delineation of the key constructs of interest, and sales managers were asked about a number of issues, along the following lines:

- 1) What kinds of salesforce-related problem situations do you experience when managing the salesforce?
- 2) How can these be dealt with, and how do managers differ in the ways they deal with problems?
- 3) How do managers differ in the interpersonal manner they handle problems?

However, when interviewing the salespeople, the format was changed to reflect the different nature of their experiences, and to concentrate on salesperson-specific issues. In particular, salespeople were asked questions related to the findings of the above interviews, as well as questions designed to probe their job experiences, such as:

- 1) How do sales managers differ in the way they handle problem situations concerning the sales team?
- 2) How do you and the rest of the sales team view the sales manager's response?
- 3) Do sales managers have overall styles of dealing with problem situations concerning the sales team?

The sales manager interviews typically lasted approximately 45 minutes, while salesperson interviews generally lasted approximately 30 minutes. For the most part, the interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis, although a number were conducted by telephone where necessary, such as where respondents' time constraints precluded a face-to-face meeting. All interviews were audiotaped, with no objections by any of the respondents. In addition, each respondent completed a small questionnaire about their organisational and personal characteristics.

3.2.4. Data Analysis

Even before the analysis proper, a number of steps were taken to prepare the data for later analysis – a pre-analysis stage. In almost all cases a short 'contact summary' was written immediately after the interview, an example of which can be seen in

Appendix 1.1. This summary noted the main points and themes which came across strongly from the contact. However, in some cases it was impossible to do this immediately, and in such cases the summary was produced at the earliest opportunity. Subsequently, each interview was transcribed using standard word processing software, and then imported into QSR NUD*IST version 4.0 (Qualitative Solutions and Research 1997) for the subsequent coding and much of the analysis.

Before beginning the analysis in earnest, it was important to recognize that, because of the previous literature already reviewed, a tentative appreciation of the constructs of interest had already started to emerge, and it was impossible to deny any developing mental models. Thus rather than taking what would have been a rather misleading phenomenological-style approach, and utilising a purely inductive coding strategy (see Glaser and Strauss 1967), some tentative specification of the coding structure was evident. Essentially, as previously explored in depth, the literature review suggested that the key constructs of interest may be concerned with sales managerial task-focused action, and interpersonal behaviour. Consequently, the tentative coding strategy utilised codes referring to these key themes, which drove the ensuing delineation process. Furthermore, the use of NUD*IST allowed evolving themes to be easily coded as they emerged, and the ease of modifying codes and adding new themes and ideas allowed the coding stage to eventually settle somewhere halfway between a true confirmatory approach (using a fully specified coding system) and a more inductive one.

The raw data from the interviews was used, in conjunction with the codes and themes which surfaced earlier, to design matrix-based data displays. These matrices comprised the primary part of the within-case (analysing each case separately) analysis. In order to generate meaning from the data, these displays were driven by the overarching research questions. Specifically, for each respondent, separate displays were generated for problem resolution action and interpersonal aspects. The use of QSR NUD*IST proved of inestimable help here, allowing the speedy extraction of relevant text in a useful format for presentation as matrix displays, an example of which can be seen in Appendix 1.2.

After within-case displays were created, cross-case comparisons were utilized in an attempt to gather insight into how consistent the issues and themes were across respondents, and to gain a more holistic appreciation of the data. A decision was taken at this point not to focus on comparing *across* most of the variables related to the different types of organisation or respondent that were collected (such as organisation size or respondent experience), due to the wide range of variables, and small number of cases. Specifically, it was felt that little valid insight could be generated by comparing such small groups of respondents together. This was an unfortunate consequence of the exploratory aim of the study, where it was theoretically more important to generate a wide range of perspectives rather than a substantial number of any one type of respondent. However, sales managers versus salespeople was used as a unit of analysis. The creation of the cross-case displays was essentially an extension of the similar within-case displays discussed above, although the key task was reducing them in order to create “meta-matrices” enabling comparison and assimilation of data from the respondents. An example of a meta-matrix can be found in Appendix 1.3.

3.2.5. Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research

The traditional concepts of reliability and validity have often proved problematic when applied to qualitative marketing research, particularly when considering the quantitative or positivist predilection of much of the marketing discipline. However, there is no reason why qualitative researchers should not make some effort to apply the general ideas of reliability and validity to their research methods and findings. Silverman (2000) sums this up with the comment: “unless you can show...that your methods were valid and your conclusions reliable, there is little point in aiming to conclude a research [study]” (p. 175). In conceptual terms, it seems clear that qualitative researchers should not ignore outright the concepts of reliability and validity. Consequently, the following discussion is an attempt to give the reader an idea of the measures taken to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings.

In terms of internal validity, many researchers consider that the characteristics of qualitative research itself enhance internal validity (Merriam 1998). For example, qualitative research is able to access *directly* respondents’ perceptions of their reality, without the use of a quantitative data collection instrument (with all of the

accompanying abstractions) as an ‘intermediary’. Specific ways in which the internal validity of the present research was further enhanced were triangulation – in which multiple sources of data were used (sales managers and sales reps) – and peer examination, where expert colleagues were involved with the interpretation of the constructs which were delineated. Furthermore, later interviewees were used as ‘expert evaluators’ as well, when they were asked to comment on findings from earlier interviews.

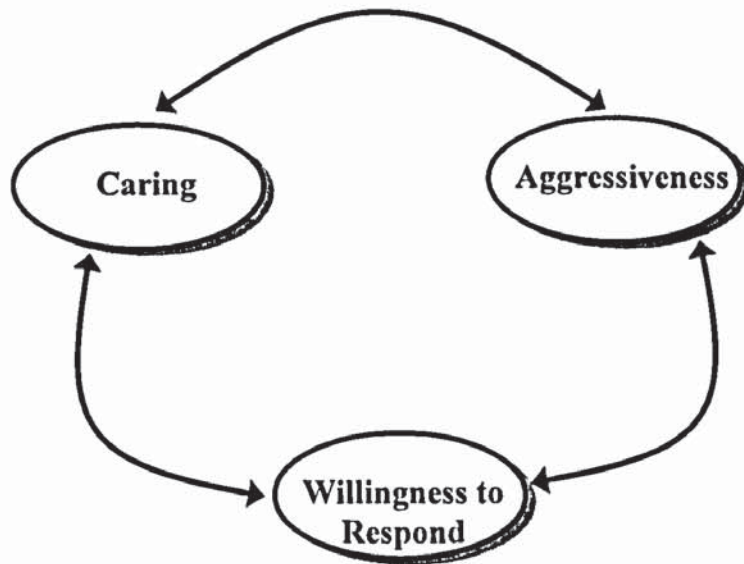
In terms of traditional reliability, some authors have advocated the use of multiple coders, and a comparison of inter-coder agreement (e.g. Kassarijian 1977; Krippendorff 1980). However, this approach is most useful when objective ‘words’ are being looked for – such as in classical content analysis (Krippendorff 1980). Since a more conceptual approach to coding was taken, focusing on subjectively interpreting responses, this approach to analysis was inappropriate, instead, a single coder and constant constructive discussion (among informed experts such as academics and informants) of themes as they arose was emphasized, essentially a peer-evaluation-style process such as that suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994).

In fact, the entire issue of reliability is contentious, and numerous qualitative researchers (most generally those of the post-positivist persuasion) consider reliability to be an irrelevant idea within qualitative research (e.g. Bednarz 1985). Because of this, researchers have raised the possibility of utilizing the concepts of ‘dependability and consistency’ of results (Lincoln and Guba 1985): in other words “whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam 1998 p. 206). This approach was used to reassure the reader of the methods and findings. More specifically, in order to enhance dependability and consistency, lengthy discussion of the assumptions and theory of the present study was previously provided, as well as details of the informants (cf. Preissle, Tesch and LeCompte 1997). Additionally, lengthy discussion of the methods for obtaining the results is also provided above – with particular reference to how the codes and categories were derived (cf. Guba and Lincoln 1981; Merriam 1998). In this it can be seen that something of an audit trail is provided (Merriam 1998), enabling the reader to judge for themselves the worth of the findings.

3.3. Delineating Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

The following discussion centres on the results of the previously described effort to demarcate the relevant constructs of sales managers' problem resolution styles. In summary, evidence was found to suggest the existence and pertinence of three key constructs, which different sales managers appear to vary across when resolving problem situations. Figure 3.1. shows a diagrammatic representation of the three constructs.

Figure 3.1: Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles



The first construct is termed “willingness to respond”, and concerns the *willingness or reluctance of sales managers’ to provide some form of response to problem situations* – or in other words, whether sales managers are prepared to resolve problems, or are more inclined to ignore problem situations. The second construct is a ‘motivational’ aspect of the sales managers’ problem resolution style, specifically the *degree of compassion or caring* which the sales manager exhibits when performing problem resolution behaviours, and dealing with the salespeople involved in the situation. The latter construct is termed “sales manager caring”. The third construct relating to sales managers’ problem resolution styles consists of an aggressiveness component. In essence, this “sales manager aggressiveness” construct

refers to *whether sales managers exhibit aggression* when dealing with salespeople receiving resolution actions. These constructs are now discussed in more depth.

3.3.1. Sales Manager Willingness to Respond

It seems clear from the previous literature review that the majority of existing research on managerial discipline of problem staff members has focused on antecedents to managers' behaviour. In other words, the latter research has concentrated on factors influencing whether or not a manager is willing to administer some resolution behaviour such as punishment, as a result of undesirable employee behaviour. This stream of research has been active in a general management context, and also to a lesser extent in the sales management field, providing some relatively consistent results (see Sections 2.1.5., and 2.3.). Specifically, these antecedents include such things as the characteristics of the problem staff member themselves, and also of the problem they caused (e.g. Bellizi and Norvell 1991; DeConink 1992). Thus, it appears likely that, at least on a situation-by-situation basis, sales managers will differ in their willingness to apply, say, disciplinary measures in problem situations. By this it is meant that at the most basic level, managers will be more or less willing to respond (whether the choice is to not respond, or respond at a varying level of severity) to problems according to the level of certain variables, such as the sales representative's prior performance.

However, existing literature provides evidence to suggest that different sales managers may differ in their willingness to respond to problem situations, even when the characteristics of those problem situations are fundamentally similar. Drawing from literature discussed in Chapter 2, it can be seen that many factors will impact firstly on whether managers perceive problems as existing. For example, outcome-focused sales managers may not consider a lack of regular call reports filled in by salespeople as a problem to resolve, whereas behaviour-focused managers may see the latter as a problem worthy of action (see Section 2.1. for more details on this and other factors which may influence managers' perceptions of problems). Thus, differences in what managers perceive as problems will naturally lead to different levels of willingness to respond to any potential problem situation.

Further evidence for differential levels of willingness to respond to problems amongst sales managers can be drawn from literature on leadership styles within sales management, which finds the existence of the laissez-faire manager (Dubinsky et al. 1995). This type of manager is essentially inactive (Bass 1990), and as stated by Bass is “mostly...absent when needed” (1997, p. 21). By contrast, research finds that other leadership styles, such as transformational, are likely to be much more proactive in their actions (e.g. Dubinsky et al. 1995, see Section 2.2.1.). It seems likely that laissez-faire sales managers will be less willing to respond to problem situations since they may not consider it as part of their remit, since they operate a ‘sink or swim’ strategy, leaving salespeople to their own devices to execute their job tasks. Furthermore, laissez-faire managers generally consider those salespeople who can not make it on their own to be unworthy of managerial attention (cf. Dubinsky et al. 1995). Thus managers who are high in either transformational or transactional leadership are likely to be more willing to respond to problem situations than laissez-faire managers.

In addition to the previous discussion, which points towards the existence of different levels of willingness to respond to problems amongst sales managers, research on managerial experiences of taking disciplinary action in response to problems offers compelling support. For instance Butterfield, Trevino and Ball (1996) found that many managers view the discipline process as particularly unpleasant and difficult to perform. In other words, managers who must respond to problem situations may experience a number of unpleasant emotional consequences in the lead up to and execution of their problem resolution actions. Following from this, it seems likely that some managers may be averse to taking problem resolution actions, in order to minimise these unpleasant emotions. Thus, the potential is there for some managers to avoid actually responding to problems which need resolution action. The latter situation is also exacerbated by the view of the majority of literature on punishment and discipline, which as explored earlier, seems to take the view that managers should avoid using punishment as a response to problem situations, wherever possible (e.g. Sims 1980). This viewpoint, crucially also asserted in many leadership and/or management textbooks (e.g. Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson 2001; Ivancevich, Olekalns and Matteson 1997; Maier and Verser 1984), looks likely to place further doubt in the minds of some sales managers who encounter problem

situations, leading to different levels of willingness to respond to those problems. In other words, even if sales managers steel themselves to the emotional demands of problem resolution activities, they may still be more or less willing to respond to problems, since they may be more or less certain about the positive effects of their resolution actions.

When the tentative idea of differential levels of ‘willingness to respond’ was examined in light of the qualitative data, the results were strongly supportive. Without exception, the respondents were in general agreement that a key aspect of sales managers’ response to a problem was whether or not the sales manager was willing to respond to that problem. Furthermore, all respondents were in agreement that indeed managers could and did differ in this, both on an individual and situational basis. The construct of “willingness to respond” can therefore be defined quite simply as *“the degree to which sales managers are willing to respond to a given problem situation”*.

It can be seen that many things are likely to be influential on a given manager’s willingness to respond, not least situational issues. However, respondents provided compelling evidence that sales managers differed in their willingness to respond in a way which was *independent* of any situational influence, so that the situation – while important – was by no means the sole influencer. Simply put, different sales managers appear to differ in their willingness to respond to problems even when in the same situation, a point specifically and clearly discussed by 15 of the 19 respondents. Importantly, respondents generally alluded to some kind of ‘internal’ factor within sales managers which influenced their willingness to respond. Typical examples of these comments were that sales managers’ willingness to respond: “depends on peoples’ philosophy”, “depends on the individual”, “[depends on] their personality at the end of the day”, or “is a case of their own...way of managing”. Essentially, as succinctly put by three of the respondents in very similar terms: “everybody’s different” when it comes to their willingness to respond to problem situations.

In terms of the actual domain of the willingness to respond construct, two contrasting extremes were evident in the responses. As might be expected, willingness to

respond appears to range from managers who are extremely 'keen' to deal with problems (a high level of willingness), to those who will take any escape route to avoid having to resolve these problems (extremely low willingness). Thus, the 'willingness to respond' construct seems to lend itself to operationalisation as a continuum, ranging from high to low levels of willingness. Comments by respondents which alluded to high levels of willingness to respond were typified by such quotes as: "[some managers] are notorious...as being...hire-and-fire", "quite a lot [of managers] do it on instant, gut reaction", "[problems are] stamped on promptly and abruptly", "nip it in the bud as quickly as possible", "I don't put [dealing with problems] off", "I put my foot on [problems] straight away" or "bite the bullet and sort it out". For example, one sales manager's technique of sacking a sales rep is particularly enlightening: "the best way to sack a salesperson...is not to call them in and discuss it, [but instead] just say what you have to say...all this negotiating's rubbish...call them in and say...get your stuff and go".

Conversely, representative comments from respondents discussing less willing managers were: "we're...laid back here", "I give [my sales reps] fairly free reign", "[some] managers are more tolerant", "a lot of sales managers won't handle problems that need to be handled", "[some] managers have the idea that if they don't deal with it, it will just go away", "there are more managers that would put [dealing with problem sales reps] off", and "one [sales manager] always used to sit on problems and leave [them] for a few weeks". Furthermore, a number of managers discussed very long processes of how they felt problems should be dealt with, in direct contrast to the example given previously of a very quick response. For example, one manager discussed how he, rather than actually discipline and sack poor performers, preferred to slowly influence them to leave by making their life within the firm more difficult, or as he put it "broaden their horizons elsewhere". Another manager related a story he had heard of a manager that had called in three employees to fire, then "promptly found an appointment he'd forgotten about" and left the office! The respondent characterized this as "passing the buck", and implied that it was quite common among sales managers, an assertion given further weight by the fact that similar stories of sales managers were related by four other respondents.

While it seems to be the case that the ‘willingness to respond’ construct has not been directly captured by existing literature (although as mentioned previously, its existence has been implied), previous research on managerial discipline does touch upon related issues. In particular Fairhurst, Green and Snaveley (1984) explicate the managerial discipline process as a ‘chain’ of events, punctuated by two types of ‘breakpoints’ at which the manager decides to take action. ‘Problem solving breakpoints’ occur when the individual manager determines that (within his or her own personal schema of the job) an employee has caused a problem which needs to be solved, and ‘elimination breakpoints’ occur when (often after repeated problem-solving breakpoints) the manager judges the problem to be unsolvable and thus the employee is to be terminated. Importantly, it is the *managers themselves* who determine the breakpoints throughout the whole chain, by a process of their own judgement and interpretation of the situation(s). Thus it is likely that different managers will judge situations differently, in particular as to whether action or elimination is needed. As a result of this, according to these judgements, different managers should be more or less willing to respond to the same problem situation. For example, the point at which a manager judges a problem to be unsolvable and requiring termination (i.e. the elimination breakpoint) is likely to be significantly different amongst different managers for many reasons (such as the emotional issues touched upon earlier).

The evidence presented above points towards a conclusion that both sales managers and sales reps see a wide variety of levels of willingness to respond among sales managers, in their day to day working lives. Furthermore, the qualitative data also suggests that this issue is of key importance in the effective resolution of staff-related problems. For example, respondents were generally in agreement that higher willingness was more effective in resolving problems so they didn’t “drag on” and cause further problems such as “lack of morale”. The essence of this was captured particularly well by the respondent who stated: “if you don’t deal with it now then...down the road it’s just going to snowball”.

3.3.2. Sales Manager Caring

While “willingness to respond” as discussed above is a relatively objective concept, it is also likely that more subjective, or ‘softer’ variables will characterise sales

managers' responses to problems. In fact, research on variables of this type has proven popular within the sales management context (see Section 2.2.). For example, research on transformational leadership styles (e.g. Dubinsky et al 1995), high-quality LMX relationships (e.g. Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993), and managerial consideration (e.g. Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999) has discovered positive relationships with managerial effectiveness. Russ, McNeilley and Comer formalise these findings by stating: “[h]ow sales managers handle problems and uncertainties, and the way they interact with the sales reps they supervise seems likely to affect managers' overall performance” (1996 p. 2). So it can be seen that consideration of interpersonal variables is likely to be crucial when exploring sales managers' effectiveness. However, there appears to be little agreement as to the specific variables of interest within the context of sales managers' behaviour in general, and problem resolution activities in particular, although it seems that researchers are in agreement that sales managers will differ in levels of each of these interpersonal concepts.

Within more general organisational behaviour/psychology literature, research on the differences between managers' levels of interpersonal variables also appears to be growing. For instance Folger and Skarlicki (1998) investigated a concept within the organisational downsizing context, which they termed “managerial distancing”. The latter concept refers to managers' minimising of personal contact time with employees who are about to be laid off, and being curt, abrupt and insensitive when informing the employee of their redundancy. As an example, Folger and Skarlicki (1998) related the anecdote of a man's dismissal without warning in front of his daughter on ‘take your daughter to work day’! Researchers have found that behavioural patterns such as this have negative effects on employees (e.g. Brockner 1992), and thus have suggested that managers should try to increase ‘sensitivity’ toward layoff victims.

The idea of managerial distancing seems to be concerned with the interpersonal manner of managers when *delivering* unpleasant actions (such as discipline or redundancy) to their subordinates. In particular, the construct taps into the idea that managers can exhibit varying levels of ‘compassion’ or ‘sensitivity’, when delivering punitive or unpleasant actions to subordinates. Related to this idea, a more general (not specifically manager-employee focused) concept which has appeared in recent

years is “social support” (Thoits 1986). This concept also appears to be concerned with general ideas of ‘caring’, ‘sympathy’, ‘understanding’ and ‘empathy’ for others within the workplace. Social support again seems to touch upon the general area of ‘compassion’.

Furthermore, literature reviewed in Section 2.2. also alluded to the idea that managers could exhibit some degree of ‘consideration’ for their subordinates (over and above the simple superior-subordinate task relationship). For example, literature on leader-member exchange (see Section 2.2.2.) implied that managers may display different levels of ‘sympathy’ or ‘understanding’ towards members of the salesforce. Thus, it is likely that sales managers will differ in the level of ‘compassion’, or ‘sympathy’ they display towards salespeople involved in problem situations, when the manager must resolve this problem. While a variety of terms were utilised in the above discussion, for conceptual clarity the relevant concepts can be collected under the more general term ‘caring’, since they all refer to similar ideas, merely using different terminologies. However, it would appear necessary to utilise the field data to more fully explicate the conceptual domain of ‘sales manager caring’.

When examined in light of the qualitative data, the theme of the caring that sales managers’ had for their salespeople was a common one; nine of the 11 sales managers, and four of the eight salespeople raised the issue of caring in their discussions. These respondents mentioned in particular that sales managers were very likely to differ according to their levels of this variable, and that it was an important factor in the resolution of staff-related problem behaviour. Using the qualitative data, the caring construct can be defined as sales managers’ *“concern for helping sales reps involved in problem situations deal with the underlying reasons for the problem, and if necessary avoid it in future”*. This contrasts with the idea of simply taking resolution action on a piecemeal basis.

From the qualitative data, the highly caring sales manager emerges as one who is concerned with helping salespeople perform to the best of their ability, rather than simply say, punishing them for poor performance or other undesirable behaviours. Furthermore, the highly caring sales manager is sympathetic to the various external factors which can cause problems for the salespeople (for example family problems, or market problems). As one manager put it: “[if they have] domestic problems at

home, you would treat them with...kid gloves". Typical descriptions of highly caring sales managers were: "try to talk them through the problem...see if they've got any problems", "being courteous and trying to find out why they're not doing the job properly", "sensitive managers", "quite considerate", "let's work it out together", "sympathetic", "a gentle, understanding approach", and "I'm going to do my level best to see if we can make it work".

By contrast, less caring sales managers are not interested in the salesperson at a personal level to the same extent, and focus more on salespeople's place within the organisation's performance. The uncaring approach could perhaps be characterised as "ruthless", as one sales manager described a such a style, where the sales manager is less caring when resolving problem situations. Consequently, with the latter style, salespeople's performance in reaching targets, or maintenance of appropriate organisational behaviours (i.e. rules and norms), are the major factors on which judgments are made. External factors, such as the salesperson's behaviour leading up to the problem, or whether the salesperson actually is responsible for the problem, are less important when it comes to making decisions. This approach is epitomised by the following respondents' comments: "irrespective of what's going on at home, work is work and you've got to do it", "this is company standard, do it, I don't care what [the sales rep might] think of it", "this is my way and you will do it this way", "this is the way it's got to go, and if it's not going to, then maybe you should start looking somewhere else", "go out and do it or else", and finally "if you don't achieve your sales figure targets...then you will be on your bike [fired]...*I'm not interested in why you don't do it*". The domain of the caring construct is almost perfectly summed up by one sales manager who described the two contrasting extremes: "a [less caring] sales manager would have [a rep] into his office and say 'well you're not cutting the mustard...if you're not cutting it by next month then...I'm going to be giving you a P45 [firing you]...[whereas a more caring sales manager] would have [the rep] in and say 'this isn't happening, why not and what can we do to make it happen?' and ...[continue to monitor] him over and over again and give him time...[try to find out] what we can bring out to make him as successful as other people".

Interestingly, Rieple and Vyakarnam (1996) described a construct which they term “managerial ruthlessness”, which appears to capture some of the above issues. While they stopped short of explicitly defining ruthlessness, it appeared to be primarily concerned with how managers deal with poor performers. One can infer from Rieple and Vyakarnam’s (1996) work that ruthless managers are more concerned with profit maximisation than the effects of say, discipline on particular staff members (i.e. performance is the only concern for the ruthless manager). Furthermore, within psychological research, ruthlessness and concepts of caring have been defined as polar opposites (cf. Pizer 1996; Jones 1987; de Montmollin and Rogard 1987). The latter idea seems very similar to ideas which emerged from the present qualitative research. In a similar manner, ethics researchers have defined concepts relating to a general ‘ethic of caring’ present in varying degrees amongst individuals (cf. Gilligan 1982).

It is apparent that the concept of ‘sales manager caring’ is one which has a real relevance to both sales managers and sales people. Interestingly, there was an unmistakable trend among the sales manager respondents towards describing *themselves* in ‘caring’ terms and only describing *other* managers when discussing less caring approaches. Although purely conjecture, one can draw a number of implications from this. Most obviously, sales managers may be uncomfortable viewing themselves as anything other than caring towards their staff (especially when discussing this with an outsider). Furthermore, this unwillingness to describe themselves as uncaring could reflect a general idea that caring was the more effective sales managerial style, a supposition given further weight by a number of comments by sales managers which expressly stated that uncaring approaches were ineffective. For example, managers said that uncaring management was “not motivational” or “should have no part in a modern company”. This opinion was summed up nicely by one manager’s comment that “I feel that being courteous and trying to find out why they’re not doing the job properly is better”.

3.3.3. Sales Manager Aggressiveness

The construct of sales manager caring delineated above seems to have an intuitively positive undertone, in that ‘caring’ itself brings a number of positive images and implications to mind. However, there also appears to be a growing body of research

on interpersonal variables which have more negative connotations. For instance, Neuman and Barron (1998; 1997) explored the broad area of workplace aggression, finding it surprisingly common. Neuman and Barron's (1998) aggression concept is primarily concerned with 'hostile' behaviour, i.e. that behaviour which is explicitly directed at harming others. Thus, the latter definition is focused on the intentions of the actor, rather than the outcomes or perceptions of the action. However, it seems clear that some actions may be seen as aggressive by observers and recipients of behaviours, while not having harmful intentions from the actor, and therefore the 'aggressiveness' may drive potential negative consequences, regardless of the actual intention. Thus, perhaps concern purely for the intentions of a given behaviour does not fully capture the important aspects of aggression. However, the idea of aggressiveness as put forward by Neuman and Barron (1998; 1997) does raise some interesting questions. For instance, do some sales managers act aggressively when resolving problem situations? Furthermore, does aggression help or hinder the effectiveness of problem resolution?

Also related to aggression is the small body of literature exploring the area of 'abusive supervision' (e.g. Bies 2000; Tepper 2000; Bies and Tripp 1998). Unlike aggression as defined by Neuman and Barron (1998), abusive supervision is concerned with employee perceptions of a sustained display of hostile behaviours from a manager towards a subordinate (Tepper 2000). However, it seems likely that sales managers may utilise hostile styles only *occasionally*, rather than systematically and/or over a sustained period as defined by Tepper (2000). For example, problem resolution situations may cause sales managers to exhibit 'hostility' during the resolution delivery process (e.g. shouting, insulting, or even quietly threatening) but not as a general rule. Thus, concepts of workplace aggression (Neuman and Barron 1998) and abusive supervision (Tepper 2000) clearly share a common core: something to do with 'aggressiveness towards others'.

When the idea of 'sales manager aggressiveness' in problem resolution situations was examined using the qualitative data, the theme was even more prevalent than the caring construct discussed earlier, with 10 of the 11 sales managers and six of the eight salespeople discussing sales managers' aggressive tendencies. Respondents who discussed the concept of aggressiveness were all of the opinion that it was a

major factor in the styles that sales managers could adopt when resolving problems. Furthermore, respondents were keen to point out that different managers had different levels of aggressiveness in general, that some were far more likely to be aggressive than others, often putting it down to some idea of “personality”.

Using the data to generate a definition, it can be seen that the highly aggressive sales manager is one who, when delivering some kind of problem resolution action, is *physically or otherwise demonstrative, hostile, and/or intimidating* towards the salesperson they are dealing with. There were a variety of highly evocative ways in which the respondents described aggressive sales managers. These ranged from the generic “aggressive”, “antagonistic”, “brutal”, “fiery” or “harsh”, through to more behavioural examples such as “[like a] bull in a china shop”, “bang their hands on the table”, “shout a lot”, or even “throws cups at walls”. However, it would seem that conceptually, the domain of sales manager aggressiveness could go beyond such ‘demonstrative’ examples and include things such as clearly and quietly threatening a salesperson with job termination.

Additionally, it seems that salesforce members were especially concerned about sales manager aggression which was displayed in front of more than just the specific sales rep involved. A number of respondents commented on this, typified by the following stories from sales reps: “in sales meetings...you’ll get the sales manager and...they will sit down and try to humiliate someone”, “you’ll get [sales] managers that...will actually take it out of you in front of your colleagues” and “some [sales managers will]...pull someone up in front of the rest of the sales staff [to discipline them]”. The latter concept seems to relate strongly to the idea of salespeople’s observation of aggression. Specifically, if salespeople see first-hand sales managers being aggressive to others, their assessment of aggression may be more negative than if a second-hand description of aggression is delivered to them later on (say by the salesperson who was the recipient of aggression in private). Furthermore, aggression delivered in front of others may enhance the negative feelings of subordinates, who feel humiliated and belittled. However, this is not to say that public displays by sales managers are a *pre-requisite* for aggression to occur.

Interestingly, data pertaining to the opposite extreme to aggressive sales managers was considerably less rich in imagery and metaphor. However, the overriding themes which respondents repeatedly referred to when describing the latter type of sales manager were ones of ‘professionalism’, and ‘removing the emotion from the situation’. This type of approach could perhaps be characterised with the term ‘civility’, which appears to sum up the general direction of respondents’ comments on the subject. For example, one sales manager contrasted aggressive sales management behaviour with the statements: “honest and straightforward...level-headed and calm...keep personalities and emotions out of it”, while others used terminology such as: “a professional manner...not take it too personally”, “professional working relationship”, “more relaxed atmosphere” and “I’m more laid back...and...subtle”. More generally, the lack of rich imagery in describing the ‘civil’ manager suggests that the respondents had a lot of experience with sales managers’ aggressiveness, but somewhat less with non-aggressive managers. In fact, a number of respondents even went so far as to state that they felt that sales managers were particularly aggressive when compared to other managers.

The definition of sales manager aggression proposed in the present study appears to concur with the one espoused recently by Geen (1990 p. 3), that aggression “consists of the delivery of noxious stimuli by one organism to another”. A key point to note is that neither the present definition, nor the definition posited by Geen (1990), necessitate a *deliberate* attempt by an aggressive sales manager to harm the salesperson subordinate (i.e. the definitions disregard the *intentions* of the aggressive actor). However, by contrast it is clear that literature dealing with abusive supervision and workplace aggression as discussed earlier *does* utilise the idea of deliberate application of noxious stimuli as a key part of their conceptual development (cf. Tepper 2000; Neuman and Barron 1998). Similarly, a small amount of literature has emerged dealing with the idea of ‘adult bullying’, of which workplace bullying seems to be a large part (e.g. Randall 1997, Adams 1992). The idea of workplace bullying is strongly related to the concept of aggression and abuse as delineated by prior literature, in that it consists of *premeditated* hostile and harmful action taken by an individual in a position of power over the object of the bullying action (cf. Randall 1997).

3.3.4. A Conceptualisation of Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

The results of the research process as described in the present chapter provide compelling evidence to suggest a three-part conceptualisation of sales manager problem resolution styles. That is, there appear to be three specific and relevant styles which sales managers can utilise when dealing with problem situations. Firstly, sales managers can display varying degrees of willingness to respond to problems, secondly sales managers can be more or less caring towards salespeople involved in the situation, and finally sales managers can exhibit varying levels of aggressiveness towards salespeople involved in the situation.

All three of the problem resolution style constructs received some implied support from previous literature, however none of them were fully captured by constructs already in existence. Nevertheless, the qualitative findings were strongly suggestive of the substantiveness of the three constructs of willingness, caring, and aggressiveness, and provided enough data to generate clearly specified definitions. Sales manager willingness to respond was defined as “the degree to which sales managers are willing to respond to a given problem situation”, sales manager caring was defined as sales managers’ “concern for helping sales reps deal with the underlying reasons for problems, and avoid them in future”, while sales manager aggressiveness was defined as the “degree to which sales managers are physically or otherwise demonstrative, hostile, and/or intimidating” towards the salespeople they are dealing with.

Conceptually speaking, there seems little reason to *a priori* expect that these problem resolution styles are mutually exclusive. That is sales managers can conceivably co-vary across the three styles, displaying different levels of all three at a given time. In other words, the styles are not competing with each other, but simply describe different aspects of sales managers’ approaches to problem resolution. Thus, it seems likely that the styles will be correlated to some degree, with some correlated more highly than others.

3.3.5. Concerning the Level of Analysis

Traditionally within organisational research, the issue of the appropriate level of analysis for any theory has caused significant “controversy and confusion” amongst

researchers (Klein, Dansereau and Hall 1994 p. 196). While Klein, Dansereau and Hall (1994) define numerous areas within organisational research which have suffered from this confusion, it would appear that fields which explicitly involve the management and/or leadership of subordinates may be particularly prone to controversy (e.g. Klein and House 1995; Yammarino 1997; Yammarino and Bass 1990; Yammarino and Naughton 1988).

Since organisations naturally consist of a number of levels, from for example individuals to groups, to functional departments to organisations themselves, levels issues are vital within organisational theory development. As Klein, Dansereau and Hall state; “[n]o construct is level free...[t]o examine organisational phenomena is thus to encounter levels issues” (1994 p. 198). Following from this, it is clear that when developing organisational theory, researchers should be clear from an early stage exactly what level the theory is appropriate to.

Within the context of research regarding the management of subordinates, such as the present study of problem resolution styles, there appears to be a key decision regarding levels to be made early on in the conceptualisation process. Specifically, it must be decided at an early stage whether a theory/construct is at the *group* level, or the *individual* level (cf. Klein, Dansereau and Hall 1994; Rousseau 1985; Yammarino and Bass 1990). While various studies have identified a number of other levels of analysis, such as group parts, or dyads (e.g. Yammarino 1997), the group/individual dichotomy appears to be a common factor within management research on levels issues.

Group, or homogenous, level theories of management essentially predict that superiors display a “similar style towards an entire group of subordinates” (Yammarino and Bass 1990 p. 977). By contrast individual, or independent, level theories predict that individual subordinates are free from the influence of the group (Klein, Dansereau and Hall 1994). In the context of leadership or management, individual-level theories imply that superiors display “a different style towards each subordinate” (Yammarino and Bass 1990 p. 977).

It should be clear that many different concepts and theories are implicitly best seen as either independent or homogenous as described above. To clarify the issues with an example, one concept which has received a large amount of attention is charismatic leadership (Klein and House 1995). While the latter has been assumed to be a group-level construct, Klein and House (1995) argue that it is in fact an independent one. Specifically, Klein and House (1995) contend that charismatic leadership itself actually “resides in the *relationship* between a leader who has charismatic qualities and those of his or her followers who are open to charisma” (p. 183 emphasis in original). Consequently, it is essentially individual followers’ *susceptibility* to charisma which determines whether a leader is seen as charismatic or not, rather than the leader’s level of some kind of charismatic style or the like. Thus, according to Klein and House’s (1995) theory, managers do *not* exude charisma, charisma is *created* within the individual manager-follower relationship.

By contrast, the qualitative findings discussed in the present chapter strongly imply that that the concept of sales manager problem resolution styles is best represented at this stage as a *homogenous*, or group-level theory. More specifically, the qualitative research suggested that sales managers tend to exhibit ‘typical’ styles when resolving problems (defined earlier as willingness, caring and aggressiveness). This was evident in the way that both sales managers and salespeople described sales managers when they were resolving problems. In particular, respondents exhibited a tendency to describe how managers typically behaved, with comments like “[it] is a case of their own...way of managing”, “this is my way and you will do it this way”, and “I’m more laid back...and...subtle” clearly implying that in the first instance managers tended to have ‘general’ styles of resolving problems.

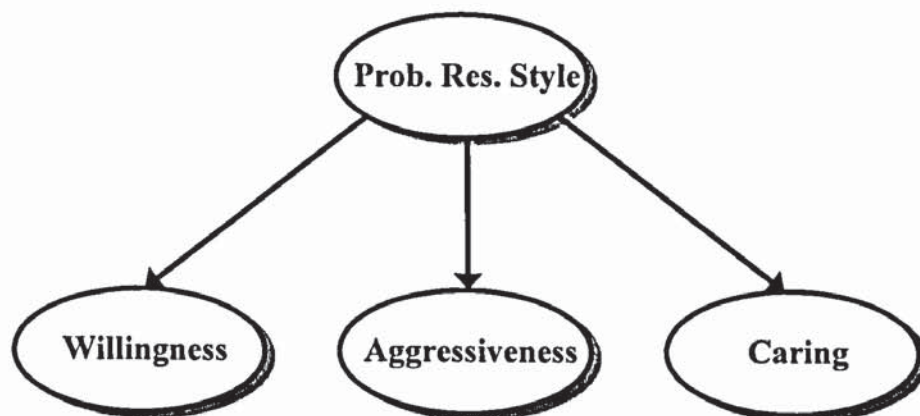
As a result, it seems that the appropriate level of analysis in the case of sales manager problem resolution styles is the homogenous level, where individual managers exhibit typical styles towards their salespeople when resolving problems (cf. Yammarino and Bass 1990). These styles are, first and foremost, *emitted* by the sales manager, then perceived by the salespeople. By way of comparison, this is quite unlike Klein and House’s (1995) conceptualisation of charismatic leadership, which is dependent on individual subordinates’ receptiveness to charisma, and thus is appropriate to the individual level of theory.

3.3.6. Interrelationships Between the Problem Resolution Style Constructs

The bulk of the present chapter has been concerned with defining each one of the sales manager problem resolution style constructs in isolation from each other. However, the matter of the potential interrelationships between the constructs is also pertinent to the present discussion. As a result, the following section outlines the relevant conceptual issues.

On one level, it could be proposed that the three problem resolution style constructs of willingness and caring, aggressiveness may actually reflect the underlying presence of some kind of ‘overall’ problem resolution style construct. For example, this latter construct could be labelled ‘problem resolution effectiveness’. In this way, the ‘effectiveness’ construct could be some kind of continuum ranging from highly effective (consisting of say, highly caring, highly willing, but low aggressiveness) to highly ineffective problem resolution. This hypothetical situation is represented in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Hypothetical Problem Resolution Style Construct

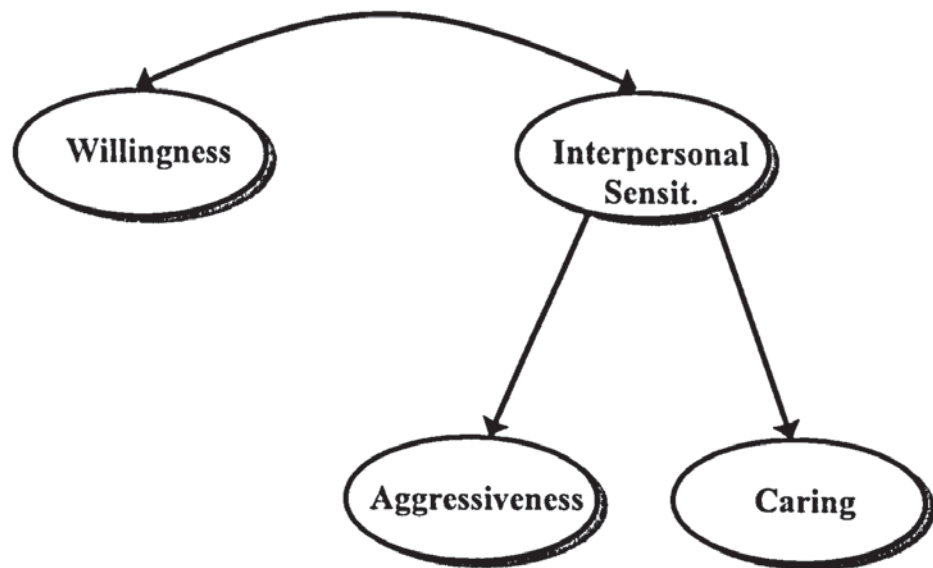


However, the latter situation would imply that caring, aggressiveness, and willingness were necessarily intercorrelated amongst each other. Nonetheless, there appears little conceptual reasoning behind the latter assumption, especially judging from the qualitative findings as discussed earlier in the present chapter. For example, referring to willingness and aggressiveness, it seemed clear that managers who were highly willing to resolve problems *could* be either highly aggressive or not aggressive. Aggressiveness was an independent construct concerned with the way

managers implemented problem resolution decisions, not whether they were willing or not to resolve problems. While there could be a correlation between aggressiveness and willingness, it was not necessarily the case, implying that there was *not* some kind of ‘overall’ problem resolution style construct.

A second option would be to consider the two problem resolution style constructs caring and aggressiveness as reflecting some kind of higher order ‘interpersonal sensitivity’ construct. One could define the extremes of such an interpersonal sensitivity construct as ‘highly sensitive’ and ‘highly insensitive’ styles of resolving problems, with a ‘highly sensitive’ style being indicative of a highly caring and low aggressiveness style. Thus, aggressiveness and caring would be necessarily negatively related. The latter arrangement is shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Hypothetical Interpersonal Sensitivity Construct

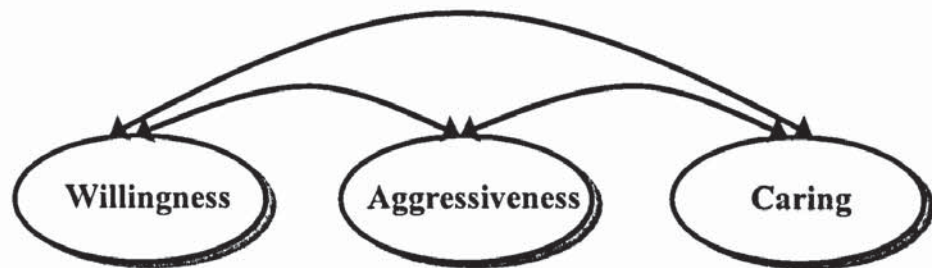


However, in logical terms, there is little reason to expect caring and aggressiveness to be *necessarily* negatively correlated, or otherwise related, even though there is an intuitive appeal about the former. More specifically, it is perfectly possible that a sales manager dealing with a problem can exhibit high levels of both caring and aggressiveness. As an example, the latter sales manager could try to be aggressive in order to ‘get their point across’ more forcefully to a sales person which they feel has great potential but is not performing well. In fact, this was alluded to quite strongly by sales managers in the qualitative research. This approach would echo the old adage of being ‘cruel to be kind’. In fact, another idea which came across from the

qualitative research was that sales managers could ‘care too much’ about their salespeople. Thus, the sales manager could find themselves acting aggressively towards salespeople involved in problems, perhaps because of disappointment or stress. This situation has clear parallels with a ‘parent-child’ type relationship, where it is certainly not unheard of for parents to care about their children yet still exhibit outward signs of sales manager aggressiveness type behaviour.

So, logically and conceptually speaking, the existence of an ‘interpersonal style’ construct as represented in Figure 3.3 seems unlikely. However, a third option is to treat all three problem resolution style constructs as distinct and able to covary with each other. This situation is depicted in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: Three Individual Constructs Model



The three individual constructs model appears to be a strong one, with little conceptual and logical evidence against it. In particular, at no point during the qualitative research did respondents suggest that sales managers could not be say, caring, while also being aggressive (as alluded to above). While there is a reasonable ‘common-sense’ case to expect some correlation between the three constructs (as indicated in Figure 3.4), this is not *necessarily* the case in conceptual terms. Thus, the only feasible model at this stage of theoretical development is of three individual sales manager problem resolution style constructs, aggressiveness, caring and willingness, as depicted in Figure 3.4

3.4. Summary

The present chapter was aimed at defining and delineating the relevant constructs regarding sales manager problem resolution styles. To this end an approach utilising

both existing literature and qualitative fieldwork was used. The results of this approach were the demarcation of three constructs relating to sales manager problem resolution styles, sales manager willingness to respond, sales manager caring, and sales manager aggressiveness. All three of these constructs seemed to have some basis in existing literature, but none were fully tapped, necessitating field research in order to provide robust and substantive definitions of the constructs.

The qualitative data provided evidence to support the contention that willingness, caring and aggressiveness were relevant and substantive aspects of sales managers' problem resolution styles. The next chapter describes the conceptual development of a theoretical framework around the three problem resolution style constructs, and delineates a set of hypotheses regarding sales manager problem resolution styles' influences on important salesperson-related outcomes.

4. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SALES

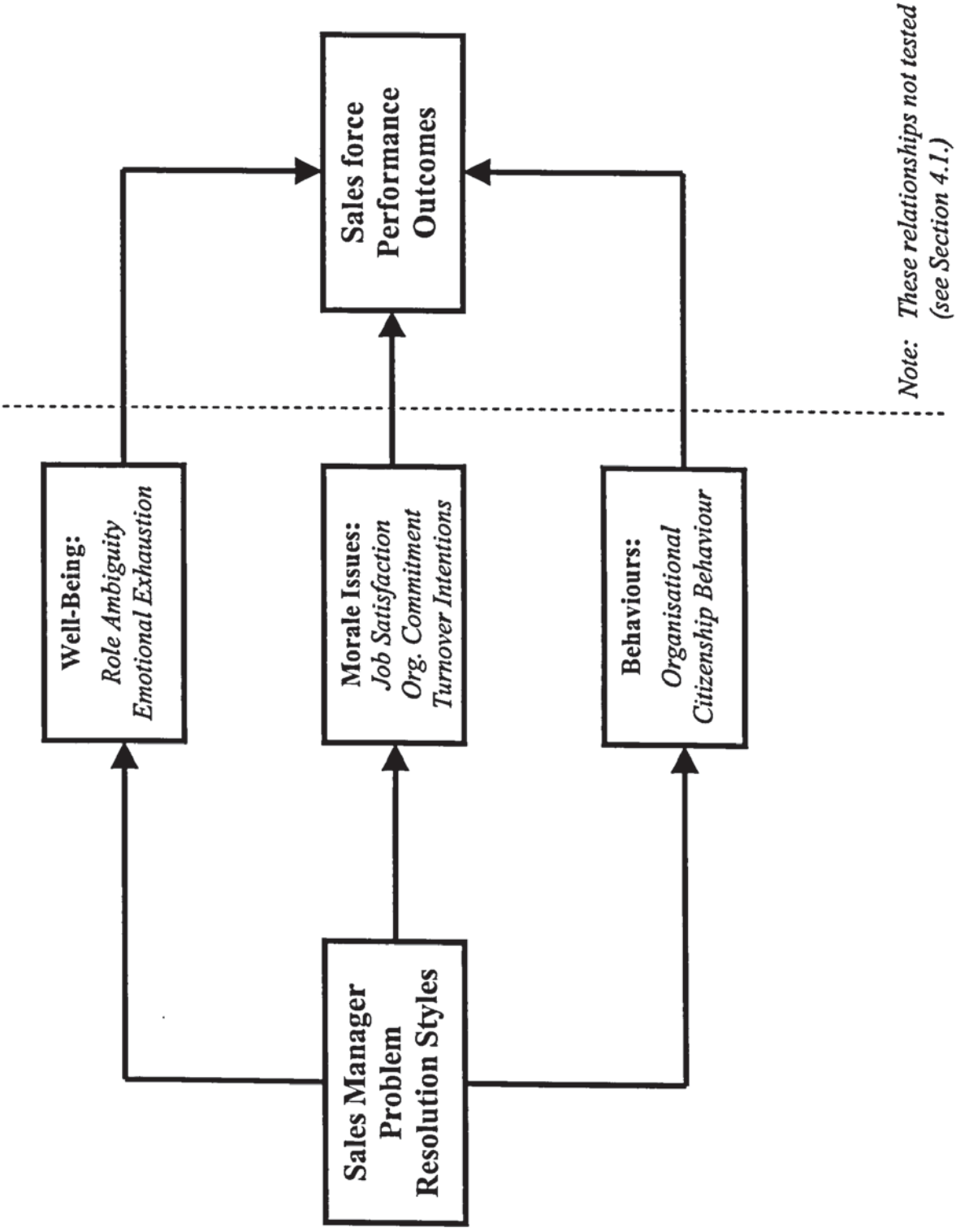
MANAGERS' PROBLEM RESOLUTION STYLES:

A LITERATURE-BASED FRAMEWORK

The following section integrates existing knowledge from sales management, work psychology, social psychology, marketing and organisational behaviour (among other fields), to generate a set of formal hypotheses regarding the consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles (i.e. sales manager willingness to respond, sales manager caring, and sales manager aggressiveness). A basic conceptual framework resulting from the hypotheses is shown in Figure 4.1.

The main focus of the conceptual model is on important salesperson-specific outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment and role ambiguity. While further discussion is presented in Section 4.1., the basic rationale for this approach is clear: the salesperson-specific factors in the conceptual model displayed in Figure 4.1 have previously been identified as key antecedents to the long-term performance and effectiveness of sales organisations, and thus ultimately influence the firm's ability to compete in the marketplace. As a result, much of the focus of research within the sales field has been directed towards identifying the influence of such factors on sales performance (as will be seen subsequently in Section 4.1), and also identifying how organisations can influence these key salesperson-specific consequences.

Figure 4.1: Basic Conceptual Model



4.1. Salesperson-specific Antecedents to Sales Performance

Previous sales research provides substantial conceptual and empirical support for the influence of variables such as role ambiguity and job satisfaction on sales performance, the upshot of which is that any variable which can be demonstrated to effect say, role ambiguity is also likely to have an indirect effect on sales performance. Therefore, in the following discussion, a brief overview of the relationships between sales performance and the variables examined in the current study is given. This overview will primarily focus on the causal mechanisms by which sales performance is influenced, rather than presenting empirical evidence. In order to present the empirical evidence more efficiently, a table is used subsequent to the discussion (see Table 4.1.).

Unsurprisingly, sales performance has proved of enduring popularity among sales researchers. In fact, consideration of what influences sales force performance began as early as 1918 (Oschrin). However, in terms of what one might understand as ‘modern’ sales research, robust theoretical consideration of the antecedents to sales performance arguably began with Churchill and colleagues’ seminal work (e.g. Churchill et al. 1985; Walker, Churchill and Ford 1977).

Since Churchill and colleagues’ influential contributions, various ‘types’ of sales performance have been explored. In particular, various authors have conceptualised performance as consisting purely of objective results such as sales volume or profit (e.g. Bagozzi 1978; Pettijohn, Pettijohn and Taylor 1999), or also including a behavioural concepts such as call planning (e.g. Behrman and Perreault 1982; Cravens et al. 1993). Performance in its various guises has also been referred to under other names, such as ‘in-role performance’ (e.g. Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998).

This potential conceptual confusion notwithstanding, direct relationships between sales manager problem resolution styles and sales performance are *not* hypothesised

in this study. This is because it appears unlikely that there will be any *direct* influence by the various constructs of sales manager problem resolution styles on performance. More specifically, it is highly likely that sales manager problem resolution styles will have *mediated* effects on performance, by virtue of their possible influence on constructs such as role ambiguity, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, as hypothesised later. In the balance of the present section then, evidence linking a number of salesperson-specific constructs (which will be later hypothesised as consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles) to sales performance is presented.

Considering first role ambiguity, a large amount of research has found that high levels of role ambiguity tend to be associated with reduced performance (cf. Behrman and Perrealt 1984). In fact one can see from Table 4.1. that role ambiguity has been perhaps the most studied influence on performance out of all the variables presently considered. Conceptually speaking, it is hard for a sales representative to perform successfully if they are not certain about exactly *what* to do. Highly ambiguous situations are likely to leave salespeople uncertain about how much time and effort to devote to different role components, and thus are likely lead to ineffective performance (cf. Kahn et al. 1964).

In terms of emotional exhaustion, only since the mid-1990s have sales researchers begun to empirically examine the former's possible influence on sales performance. However, empirical and conceptual support for a negative association between emotional exhaustion and sales performance is consistent (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). Theoretically, emotional exhaustion is likely to reduce the energy of the sales rep, which will reduce their effort in work related tasks, and consequently their work performance (cf. Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). Essentially, reps who are emotionally exhausted 'can't be bothered' with their work tasks, and will exhibit reduced performance in the long run.

Moving on to the constructs of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions, most existing sales research seems to focus on how the latter constructs are in fact *consequences* of job performance (cf. Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). Indeed, as far back as 1980, Bagozzi reported the potential for

confusion among the causality of performance and job satisfaction for one. However, it must be remembered that the vast majority of sales-based research is done using cross-sectional data, making any causal implications *purely* theoretical. Indeed, a number of sales studies discuss the confusion in causality between job satisfaction and job performance (e.g. Brown and Peterson 1993; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998).

Conversely, on a conceptual level, it makes some sense to consider job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions as in some way *antecedents* to job performance. Thinking in purely conjectural terms, it seems logical to expect that employees who are more satisfied with their jobs and/or committed to their organisation to be more likely to put extra effort in and as a result perform more effectively. Additionally, those employees who intend to leave the organisation soon (high in turnover intentions) will conceivably be *less likely* to make any extra effort to sell. While it seems likely that those employees who are lower in job satisfaction, organisational commitment and/or turnover intentions may still perform effectively (for instance to gain extrinsic rewards), those sales reps *higher* in satisfaction and commitment and lower in turnover intentions will likely exhibit *greater effort in the same situation*, and will thus perform better than those lower in job satisfaction or organisational commitment, or higher in turnover intentions. This appears analogous to theory on transformational leadership, which finds that those sales managers who exhibit highly *transactional* behaviours may still have well-performing sales forces, but those managers who also exhibit highly transformational behaviours will have sales forces which are better performing in general.

Following from the previous discussion, Table 4.1. below displays a selection of previous sales-based literature which conceptually and empirically supports the relationships between the relevant constructs and sales performance. It should be noted that the table is by no means meant to be exhaustive, but does provide a picture of the weight of empirical and conceptual support for the previously discussed relationships.

Table 4.1: Previously Researched Antecedents to Performance

Construct	Conceptual Support	Empirical Support
Role Ambiguity	<i>Kahn et al. 1964</i> <i>Brown and Peterson 1993</i> <i>Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998</i> <i>Babakus et al. 1999</i> <i>Bagozzi 1978</i> <i>Walker, Churchill and Ford 1977</i> <i>Behrman and Perreault 1984</i> <i>Grant et al. 2001</i> <i>Yammarino and Dubinsky 1990</i> <i>Kelley 1998</i> <i>Flaherty, Dahlstrom and Skinner 1999</i> <i>Jaworski and Kohli 1991</i> <i>Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001</i> <i>Singh 1998</i> <i>Dubinsky and Hartley 1986</i>	<i>Brown and Peterson 1993^b</i> <i>Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998</i> <i>Babakus et al. 1999</i> <i>Behrman and Perreault 1984</i> <i>Grant et al. 2001</i> <i>Yammarino and Dubinsky 1990</i> <i>Kelley 1998</i> <i>Flaherty, Dahlstrom and Skinner 1999</i> <i>Jaworski and Kohli 1991</i> <i>Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Rich 2001</i> <i>Singh 1998</i> <i>Dubinsky et al. 1992</i>
Emotional Exhaustion	<i>Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994</i> <i>Babakus et al. 1999</i> <i>Sand and Myozaki 2000</i> <i>Klein and Verbeke 1999</i> <i>Verbeke 1997</i>	<i>Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994</i> <i>Babakus et al. 1999</i> <i>Verbeke 1997</i>
Job Satisfaction ^a	<i>Churchill, Ford and Walker 1976</i> <i>Dubinsky and Levy 1989</i>	<i>Bagozzi 1978</i> <i>Bagozzi 1980</i> <i>Dubinsky and Levy 1989</i> <i>Wortruba 1990</i> <i>Ivancevich and Donelley 1975</i> <i>Brown and Peterson 1993</i> <i>Dubinsky et al. 1992</i>
Org. Commitment ^a	<i>Chonko 1986</i> <i>Boshoff and Mels 1995</i> <i>Darden, McKee and Hampton 1993</i>	<i>Boshoff and Mels 1995</i>

a: Studies in the 'empirical support' column are included if they report an *association* between job satisfaction or organisational commitment and performance (causal direction notwithstanding – see prior argument). Only those studies that hypothesize job satisfaction or organisational commitment *actually influence* performance are included in the 'conceptual support' column.

^b: Empirically speaking, these studies are meta-analyses, so may in theory actually include empirical relationships which are reported in studies given in the same cell.

Note 1: Studies which hypothesize/report negative relationships between the given construct and performance are italicised, while those studies hypothesizing/reporting positive relationships are in normal print.

Note 2: Literature referenced is expressly concerned with sales, rather than more general organisational behaviour/marketing research.

4.2. Problem Resolution Styles and Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity is, with role conflict, a particular component of the concept known as role stress (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993). Churchill et al., in their 1985 meta-analysis, found that role stress as a whole was implicated as the most important influence on salesperson performance.

Consequently, a substantial number of studies have further examined role stress in the sales force context (e.g. Flaherty, Dahlstrom and Skinner 1999; Singh 1998), and role stress issues assume a prominent position in sales force management texts (e.g. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). However, although role conflict has perhaps been the more commonly studied of the components of role stress, recent research has suggested that role ambiguity is a more consistent predictor of various key job outcomes (Rhoads, Singh and Goodell 1994). Furthermore, it has also been suggested that supervisors are a primary influence on salespeople's role ambiguity, whereas role conflict can be influenced significantly by salesperson factors such as experience (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997). Therefore, the present study focuses solely on role ambiguity rather than other aspects of role stress.

Role ambiguity itself concerns “the extent to which the sales person has a clear set of priorities, expectations and evaluating criteria” (Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993, p. 112). A number of sales force studies have examined the effect of managerial and organisational factors on role ambiguity, including: Leader-member exchange (Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993), Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices model (Shoemaker 1999), organisational culture and values (Flaherty; Dahlstrom and Skinner 1999), performance appraisals (Pettijohn, Pettijohn and Taylor 1999), feedback (Singh 1993; Teas 1983), and managerial consideration (Kohli 1989; Teas 1983). Evidence from this body of knowledge suggests that the problem resolution style variables conceptualised in the present study are likely to impact on role ambiguity. The arguments are now presented.

4.2.1. Willingness to Respond and Role Ambiguity

It is argued here that sales managers who exhibit higher levels of willingness to respond to problems will reduce the levels of role ambiguity being experienced by their sales people. This occurs because of the potential for sales managers'

willingness to respond to enhance ‘learning’ within the sales force. Specifically, willingness by a manager to respond to a problem can be considered in simple terms a managerial feedback activity, e.g. if a problem arises, then the salesforce is not performing in an effective matter – for whatever reason. So if the sales manager is obviously willing to respond to that problem, then salespeople who perceive that willingness to respond from the sales manager will also receive a certain kind of notification regarding what kinds of activities are *not* appropriate to their role, and conversely (by a process of elimination) what activities *are* part of their role. Thus, the sales person receives a kind of feedback on how to perform their role more effectively. To provide a situational example, consider a salesperson who is, say, behaving unethically by overcharging customers. If the sales manager is perceived by that salesperson and the rest of the sales force as being unwilling to respond to such problem behaviour, then those salespeople will likely become confused as to whether that kind of unethical behaviour is in fact ‘allowed’ by their firm, whereas previously the salespeople may have considered such behaviour unacceptable. Thus, willingness to respond by the sales manager will have an important feedback function for salespeople.

While the effect of enhanced managerial feedback on reducing role ambiguity has been consistently reported in both marketing and organisational psychology literature (Singh 1993), sales managers who are highly willing to respond to problems may have an especially strong effect on role ambiguity in the salesforce because of the particularly ambiguous nature of the job (cf. Behrman and Perreault 1984), and also the limited time that managers have in contact with salespeople to make their willingness to resolve problems obvious to salespeople (cf. DelVecchio 1998). This means that the longer salespeople are left without managerial signals as to their willingness to resolve certain problems, the more confused the salesforce will become about what behaviour is and is not appropriate for their role. Thus:

H₁: Salespeople whose managers are more willing to respond to problem situations will have lower levels of role ambiguity.

4.2.2. Sales Manager Caring and Role Ambiguity

In addition, higher levels of sales manager caring are also likely to reduce salesperson role ambiguity. The conceptual reasoning behind this contention relies primarily on the fact that caring can be likened to ‘socioemotional support’ from the sales manager. Specifically, sales managers who are higher in caring will likely be more able to foster the perception of *sympathy* and *understanding* towards their salespeople, two key components of socioemotional support (cf. Thoits 1995; 1986). Socioemotional support is in turn a key part of social support (Thoits 1986), which has been consistently found to reduce the negative effects of stressors (such as role stress, of which role ambiguity is a key theoretical component) on individuals (e.g. Cohen and Wills 1985; Kessler and McLeod 1985; LaRocco, House and French 1980; Thoits 1995; Viswesvaran, Sanchez and Fisher 1999).

Essentially, it appears that when employees perceive “socioemotional support” as being available from their managers, their perception of role ambiguity is reduced (Dunkel-Schetter and Bennett 1990; Wethington and Kessler 1986; cf. Singh 1993). In essence, social support literature contends that the socioemotional support provided by relevant superiors can help employees in ambiguous positions (e.g. salespeople) to *cope with* the ambiguity in various ways, which results in the employee’s perception of role ambiguity being reduced. These ways are many and varied, but particularly relevant ones in the present context are coaching, and helping salespeople reinterpret their situation as less ambiguous than they had thought (cf. Thoits 1986). It can be seen then, that sales managers who display higher levels of caring when dealing with problems, will reduce feelings of ambiguity among their salesforce. Following from this:

H₂: Salespeople whose managers are more caring when dealing with problem situations will have lower levels of role ambiguity.

4.3. Problem Resolution Styles and Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is a construct which has received increasing attention within sales management research of late. In conceptual terms, emotional exhaustion is one of three components of ‘burnout’ as defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981) in their seminal work, with the other components being reduced personal accomplishment, and depersonalisation (Maslach and Jackson 1981). It seems that the burnout construct is defined as a ‘psychological condition’ where, as defined by Singh et al. (1994), individuals high in burnout feel “depleted of energy and drained of sensation due to excessive emotional demands [i.e. emotionally exhausted],...[helpless]...and low self-esteem [i.e. reduced personal accomplishment]...[and tend to] dehumanise others [i.e. depersonalisation]” (p. 559). It seems that sales reps are very likely to experience high levels of burnout, judging from the results of various US studies (as reported by Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994).

However, researchers appear to consider emotional exhaustion to be the key construct within the domain of burnout (Cordes and Dougherty 1993). In fact, Maslach and Jackson define burnout as a “syndrome of emotional exhaustion...that occurs frequently among individuals who do ‘people work’ of some kind” (1981 p. 99). Emotional exhaustion has received attention within sales management as a distinct construct in a number of recent studies (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999; Boles, Johnston and Hair 1997). Drawing from this research it is possible to find evidence that sales managers’ levels of aggressiveness and caring when delivering problem resolution action will have an important effect on sales force emotional exhaustion.

4.3.1. Sales Manager Caring and Emotional Exhaustion

Beginning with a consideration of the possible relationship between sales manager caring and emotional exhaustion, evidence here is quite widespread. While little work has been done directly within the sales management field, scholars from other disciplines have made substantial progress in exploring the effects of concepts similar to caring (such as social support) on burnout and thus (by definition) emotional exhaustion.

For example, a meta-analysis conducted by Viswesvaran and colleagues (1999) reports a substantially negative mean correlation between the higher order constructs of support and strain¹. Pertinent to the current debate is the fact that one of the components of the higher-order support construct was ‘supervisor support’ (which shares some conceptual similarities with sales manager caring), and one of the components of strain was burnout. However, Viswesvaran et al.’s (1999) methods leave one unable to separate out the individual relationships within this meta-theory. Additional evidence is provided by Bodensteiner and co-authors (1989) in their study of supervisor support in highly complex environments. They find that increased levels of supervisor support can have a preventative effect on levels of burnout for project managers (Bodensteiner, Gerloff and Quick 1989). Again, it can be seen that the conceptual reasoning behind such an argument hinges on the earlier discussion (see Section 4.2.2.) that highly caring sales managers will foster the impression of available social support amongst their sales forces.

It has been argued in Section 4.2.2. that sales managers higher in caring will foster higher perceptions of available sympathy and understanding amongst salespeople, which in turn will enhance the amount of social support perceived as available from managers. So, if as above, perceptions of a high level of available supervisor support can reduce salespeople’s burnout (of which emotional exhaustion is the key component), higher levels of sales manager caring as perceived by salespeople should reduce their emotional exhaustion. Thus, stated more formally:

H₃: Salespeople whose sales managers display higher levels of caring when dealing with problems will have lower levels of emotional exhaustion.

4.3.2. Sales Manager Aggressiveness and Emotional Exhaustion

Moving on to the possible effect of sales manager aggressiveness on emotional exhaustion, it is clear that existing research is lacking in explicit consideration of aggressiveness towards subordinates. However, recently researchers seem to have

¹ In an effort to integrate many different research approaches to support and strain, Viswesvaran et al. (1999) create three higher-order constructs comprising a) different measures of stressors, b) different measures of strains (including emotional exhaustion), and c) different measures of support (including support from the supervisor).

become interested in deviant or otherwise antisocial work behaviour (of which aggressiveness is likely to be a part of), in general. Particularly active in exploring aggressive workplace behaviour have been Neuman and Baron (1998; 1997), whose work has done much to further our understanding of workplace aggression.

Nevertheless, the majority of existing academic research in this area focuses on defining/categorising different types of workplace aggression (e.g. Ashforth 1994; Bies 2000; Bies and Tripp 1998; Neuman and Baron 1998; 1997), rather than the consequences of such actions. The implication here is that aggressive incidents within the workplace *by definition* result in deleterious outcomes, and therefore it may be more important to understand the causes of aggressive behaviour, and the different types of such behaviour, so we are better able to prevent/control it.

Additionally, few studies have explicitly looked at *manager-subordinate* aggression, although some authors touch on similar concepts – such as Ashforth's (1994) 'petty tyranny', or Tepper's (2000) 'abusive supervision'.

However, despite the embryonic state of workplace aggression research, when considering the potential relationship between sales manager aggressiveness and emotional exhaustion, evidence is surprisingly convincing. Specifically, many of the published academic studies on the consequences of manager-subordinate aggression, or related constructs, have included some measures of 'psychological distress' as a consequence (e.g. Ashforth 1997; Richman et al. 1992; Sheehan et al. 1990). In general, the latter researchers have found that increased managerial aggression tends to increase the amount of psychological distress felt by subordinates. As defined previously in section 4.2., emotional exhaustion is essentially a psychological condition in which sufferers are likely to feel high levels of psychological distress (e.g. low self-esteem, dehumanisation, drained of sensation). As a result there appears a clear pattern across previous work to suggest a positive relationship between increased sales manager aggression and emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, in one of the few empirical studies to directly assess the consequences of manager-employee aggression using a broad cross-industry sample, Tepper (2000) includes emotional exhaustion as an outcome variable. Specifically, Tepper (2000) examines "abusive supervision", defined in part as "display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors" (p. 178), conceptually similar to sales manager aggression. Here, Tepper

(2000) finds that abusive supervision has a strong, positive direct association with emotional exhaustion.

In conceptual terms, the linkage between sales manager aggression and emotional exhaustion is clear. In particular, salespeople with aggressive managers are likely to have a high number of unpleasant and stressful interactions with those managers, and even those salespeople who do not directly experience the aggressiveness first hand (i.e. those who do not receive problem resolution) will be aware of an uncomfortable psychological environment within the team. This unpleasant environment is highly likely to increase burnout and emotional exhaustion (O’Driscoll and Cooper 1996). In more detail, it would seem likely that the reception (or perception) of aggression from a manager when resolving problems will cause salespeople to perceive a threat. In purely physical terms, certain hormones will be released to assist response behaviour by the salesperson as a reaction to the stressful event, repeated episodes of which have long been considered likely to cause considerable *physiological* harm (cf. Gatchel 1996). However, the perceived threat of such situations has also been found to be a cause of significant *psychological* harm to individuals (cf. Gatchel 1996). Repeated exposure to threatening interactions (such as those occurring with aggressive sales managers) over a period of time is highly likely to increase the psychological and emotional ‘load’ or strain on salespeople, which is likely to be manifested in an increased amount of emotional exhaustion felt by salespeople within their organisations. Furthermore, those salespeople who are not directly recipients of aggression at a particular time will become conditioned to ‘expect’ aggressive problem resolution from their manager, contributing to an unpleasant climate of ‘fear’ within the workplace, increasing emotional exhaustion. So, following on from the present argument:

H₄: Salespeople whose managers are higher in aggressiveness when dealing with problems will have higher levels of emotional exhaustion.

4.4. Problem Resolution Styles and Job Satisfaction

The construct of job satisfaction has received a large amount of attention from organisational and sales scholars (Brown and Peterson 1993). Job satisfaction relates to some kind of pleasurable emotional state which is a result of an individual's evaluation of their job experiences (cf. Brown and Peterson 1993), and thus is a factor internal to an individual, rather than a general group-related perception. While a number of job factors have been hypothesised and/or found to be empirically related to salespeople's job satisfaction, sales manager-related issues have proved to be of particular importance in explaining job satisfaction (e.g. Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Schul, Remington and Berl 1990; Teas 1981). In the context of the present study, it seems likely that a number of the sales manager problem resolution style constructs will have some kind of impact on salespeople's job satisfaction.

4.4.1. Sales Manager Caring and Job Satisfaction

Considering the likelihood of a relationship between sales manager caring and job satisfaction, LaRocco and colleagues (1980) reported the results of an early analysis of the effects of emotional support on job-related outcomes such as job dissatisfaction. They found that emotional support from within the work situation, such as that likely to be provided by a highly caring sales manager, reduced job dissatisfaction. However, the latter study was essentially a re-analysis of data first collected and analysed by Caplan and co-authors (1975) in a major US government study. These data were also analysed by Pinneau (1976), who again found that higher levels of emotional support reduced job dissatisfaction.

Additionally, House and Wells (1978) found that higher levels of support from the supervisor increased levels of job satisfaction within their sample, a finding supported by LaRocco and Jones (1978). Further, and more recent, evidence is provided in Viswesvaran et al.'s (1999) meta-analysis which suggested that supervisor support enhances job satisfaction, a relationship also found by Savery (1988).

Literature on managerial consideration also provides evidence for the latter relationship. For example, Sager (1998) found that higher levels of managerial

consideration led to a more positive job attitude, one component of which is job satisfaction. In general terms, researchers have found evidence of a positive relationship between managerial consideration and job satisfaction in many other studies, both within and without the sales context (e.g. DeConinck and Brock 1993; Johnston, Parasuruman and Futrell 1989; Kohli 1989; O'Reilley and Roberts 1978). Conceptually speaking, since managerial consideration refers to “leader behaviours concerned with promoting the comfort and well-being of subordinates” (Boshoff and Mels 1995 p. 27), sales managers who are higher in caring when dealing with problems are likely to engender enhanced levels of the organisational climate which fosters managerial consideration, and thus it would seem likely that higher levels of caring by sales managers could have an impact on higher levels of job satisfaction amongst those salespeople. Formally hypothesising:

H₅: Salespeople whose managers are highly caring when dealing with problems will have higher levels of job satisfaction.

4.4.2. Sales Manager Aggressiveness and Job Satisfaction

There is strong evidence that sales managers who display higher levels of aggressiveness when they are dealing with problem staff members will engender lower levels of job satisfaction amongst the salesforce. For example, early research on the general concept of manager-subordinate aggression has found that higher levels of aggressive-type behaviour increase *job dissatisfaction* (Keashley et al. 1994). Further evidence of the latter relationship is found in the work of Richman and colleagues (1992), and Sheehan et al. (1990), who find that student doctors who experience abusive supervision from their residents (i.e. supervisors) when working in hospitals, also experience higher levels of job dissatisfaction. Finally, in Tepper's (2000) study, the relationship between supervisory behaviour akin to aggressiveness and job satisfaction is explicitly measured, resulting in a statistically significant correlation of -0.35. Thus, it is very probable that high levels of sales manager aggression exhibited by the sales manager when they are dealing with staff-related problems, will result in lower levels of job satisfaction among the salesforce.

In conceptual terms, salespeople whose managers display aggressive problem resolution styles will be conditioned to expect that behaviour, contributing to an

unpleasant climate akin to fear within the sales team. Salespeople are highly unlikely to be satisfied in such an environment. Furthermore, many salespeople are likely to feel that aggressive sales management styles are inappropriate and hurtful, thus contributing to a general feeling of dissatisfaction with their jobs. Stated more formally:

H₆: Salespeople whose managers are highly aggressive when dealing with problems will have lower levels of job satisfaction

4.5. Problem Resolution Styles and Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment has proven to be a popular variable in conceptual models of sales performance, with theories generally agreeing that those individuals high in commitment should tend to be better performers (Johnston et al. 1990).

Organisational commitment can be considered as a positive attitude towards the organisation, comprising some kind of ‘buy in’ of the employee to the firm, such as loyalty (cf. Johnston et al. 1990; Porter et al. 1974). A number of variables have been hypothesised as influencing employee’s organisational commitment, not least employees’ behaviour itself. However, it also seems likely that sales manager variables will be strongly related to salespeople’s organisational commitment, and in particular the present problem resolution style constructs.

4.5.1. Sales Manager Caring and Organisational Commitment

When considering a possible relationship between sales manager caring and organisational commitment, it is unfortunate that much literature on constructs akin to sales manager caring has focused on their effectiveness in *reducing undesirable outcomes* rather than increasing desirable outcomes such as organisational commitment. For example, virtually all of the literature on social support focuses conceptually and empirically on the effect of social support on reducing *strains* within the workplace, such as job dissatisfaction (cf. Viswesvaran et al. 1999). By contrast, research within the area of ‘managerial consideration’ does offer some insight, with the added advantage that much of the research on managerial

consideration has been done in a sales context. Managerial consideration “refers to the degree to which managers develop a work climate that promotes subordinates’ trust and respect for subordinates...feelings” (Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999 p. 729), or from another perspective “leader behaviours concerned with promoting the comfort and well-being of subordinates” (Boshoff and Mels 1995 p. 27). From these definitions, it seems likely that sales managers who are perceived as higher in caring when dealing with problem situations will go a long way to developing such a climate. In an early study, Katz and Kahn (1978) summed up the potential relationship between managerial consideration and organisational commitment when they stated that considerate managerial behaviours can “encourage the development of positive identification with the organization and create...a degree of personal commitment” (p. 555).

Interestingly, much research has explored the relationship between managerial consideration and organisational commitment. In general, the latter research reports that higher levels of managerial consideration result in increased levels of employees’ organisational commitment (e.g. Bateman and Strasser 1984; Morris and Sherman 1981). Furthermore, in the sales context, the latter relationship is found to hold even across the very different cultures of the US and India (Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999). Thus, it seems conceptually sound to expect that managers who are highly caring when resolving problem situations will engender higher levels of organisational commitment among the sales force. Formally advancing a hypothesis:

H₇: Salespeople whose managers are higher in caring will have higher levels of organisational commitment.

4.5.2. Sales Manager Aggressiveness and Organisational Commitment

There is a body of evidence available which suggests a possible relationship between sales manager aggression and organisational commitment. In particular, Ashforth (1997) found that behaviour akin to sales manager aggression (such as belittling subordinates) was associated with increased levels of *work alienation*. Drawing from earlier work, work alienation has been defined as concerning in part a loss of significance of work activities, and a loss of a sense of community membership within the organisation (Huczynski and Buchanan 1991). This definition places work

alienation firmly as a conceptual *opposite* to organisational commitment, thus suggesting that perceived sales manager aggression will have a negative influence on organisational commitment.

Further evidence was again provided by Tepper (2000), who explored the effect of abusive supervision on organisational commitment. More specifically, Tepper (2000) split organisational commitment into three distinct components; continuance, normative, and affective commitment. Judging from an analysis of Meyer, Allen and Smith's (1993) measuring instrument as used by Tepper (2000), continuance commitment appears to refer to whether the employee feels they are *able* to leave the job, normative commitment is concerned with employees' feelings of obligation towards the firm, while affective commitment seems to tap into whether the employee has strongly identified with, or 'bought into' the organisation. One could argue that continuance commitment is somewhat different to more traditional definitions of organisational commitment as conceptualised in sales research, which tend to focus on the more positively considered normative and affective dimensions (see for example: Johnston et al. 1990; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998).

Conceptually speaking, it would appear that salespeople whose managers exhibit aggressive problem resolution styles will likely be operating under an unpleasant psychological climate in the first instance. This climate is unlikely to lead to a high level of organisational commitment from the salesperson. In fact it would seem likely that salespeople will not either a) wish to commit to a long-term in such a climate, or b) identify with such an organisation's value system. Furthermore, salespeople may actually disagree with the values of a firm which allows sales managers to exhibit aggressive styles, reducing loyalty and commitment to the firm. Commitment to a firm in which salespeople feel they are likely to receive unpleasant, aggressive problem resolution would appear very unlikely.

Interestingly, Tepper (2000) found that abusive supervision had a negative effect on normative and affective commitment, but a positive effect on continuance commitment. While he did not elaborate on this issue, it seems likely that subordinates with highly abusive supervisors are likely to feel less able to leave the organisation due to lack of confidence and/or fear, in much the same way as a victim

of domestic abuse may feel unable to leave an abusive relationship (e.g. Walker 1979). Thus, focusing on the normative and affective dimensions of organisational commitment (which are arguably closer to the ‘core’ theme of organisational commitment as it is referred to in sales literature), it is likely that sales managers who deal with problem situations in a highly aggressive way will reduce the organisational commitment of their sales force. Thus:

H₈: Salespeople whose managers are highly aggressive will have lower levels of organisational commitment.

4.6. Problem Resolution Styles and Turnover

Intentions

Turnover intentions are an oft-measured salesforce consequence of various job and psychological variables (cf. Johnston et al. 1990). However, turnover intentions have also been referred to as ‘propensity to leave’ by authors within the sales context (Johnston et al. 1990). Conceptually speaking, salespeople’s turnover intentions are a job attitude concerning how much a salesperson wishes to leave their current job, for whatever reason (cf. Rhoads, Singh and Goodell 1994). While few studies have explicitly examined direct relationships between supervisory behaviour and salespeople’s turnover intentions, there are strong conceptual arguments that certain aspects of sales managers’ problem resolution styles will influence salespeople’s turnover intentions.

4.6.1. Sales Manager Aggressiveness and Turnover Intentions

Considering a relationship between salespeople’s turnover intentions and sales manager aggressiveness, there are few directly relevant studies available. However, in Tepper’s (2000) longitudinal research design, he was able to measure the *actual* turnover behaviour of employees (rather than turnover intentions). The results of logistic regression analysis strongly suggested that those employees whose supervisors were more abusive were more likely to voluntarily leave the organisation than those employees whose supervisors were less abusive. While it is highly likely that turnover intentions are correlated with actual turnover, one could conceivably expect the rate of actual turnover to be *lower* than the level of turnover intentions,

since many sales reps experiencing aggressive behaviour from their sales managers may be high in turnover intentions, but unable to actually leave the job, perhaps because of lower confidence, fear, or lack of job mobility².

Further evidence can be found in Randall's (1997) work on 'workplace bullying', which appears to be another behaviour which is conceptually similar to sales manager aggression. While the evidence here is admittedly rather anecdotal in nature, Randall (1997) provided three case studies of bullying from supervisors or superiors. In two of these three cases, the subject of the superiors' bullying voluntarily left the job, either by transferring to another location or leaving the firm entirely, while in the other example, the subject of bullying lost the job through a nervous breakdown. Summed up by Randall (1997), one of the major outcomes of bullying is "people giving up their chosen careers in order to avoid bullying" (p. 57). While the bullying-based argument above focuses primarily on the *subjects* of bullying, it is also conceivable that those who *observe* bullying sales managers will also wish to avoid future reception of such unpleasant activity, and thus wish to leave the situation (i.e. job) for a more pleasant work environment. Therefore, one could reasonably expect that levels of turnover intentions within the salesforce will be demonstrably higher when sales managers are perceived as being more aggressive when dealing with problem situations than otherwise. Therefore, formally hypothesising:

H₉: Salespeople whose managers are highly aggressive will have higher levels of turnover intentions.

4.7. Problem Resolution Styles and Organisational Citizenship Behaviours

Organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) have become something of a 'hot topic' within organisational and sales research recently (cf. Podsakoff et al. 2000).

² Job mobility essentially taps into the ability of employees to move jobs, for example when they feel there are many other employment opportunities available (cf. Tepper 2000).

The concept of OCBs was first articulated by Organ and colleagues in their seminal work (Bateman and Organ 1983; Smith, Organ and Near 1983), and since then researchers have explored the field in depth (cf. Podsakoff et al. 2000). Essentially, the general concept of OCBs can be thought of as tapping discretionary behaviour from an employee which promotes the effective functioning of the organisation, but is not part of the formal job description (cf. Podsakoff et al. 2000). However, despite the veritable explosion in research which has dealt with OCBs in the last decade, it appears that there remains some conceptual confusion over the exact domain of OCBs. This situation is further obfuscated by a proliferation of other constructs such as (among others) ‘prosocial behaviour’ (Brief and Motowildo 1986), or even other names for OCBs, such as ‘extra-role performance’ (Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). To compound the confusion, OCBs are in fact made up of various different specific behavioural dimensions, with different researchers defining many different dimensions of OCBs – in fact, Podsakoff et al. (2000) listed over 30 such behavioural dimensions as having been defined as part of OCBs, since the inception of the concept, by various scholars!

In an attempt to avoid such confusion, the conceptual argument is restricted here to a consideration of those OCBs which are directed towards the organisation *directly*, rather than indirectly, such as those which may be perhaps directed towards colleagues. *Organisationally-directed OCBs* can be defined as those which, when performed by salespeople, reflect a direct placement by the employee of the organisation’s benefit above their own. Behaviours such as this (e.g. ‘civic virtue’ and ‘sportsmanship’) have been measured in various ways in prior research (MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter 1993). By contrast, other OCB behaviours are more concerned with helping colleagues and co-workers at one’s expense, such as ‘altruism’ and ‘helping behaviour’ (cf. Podsakoff et al. 2000). While of course the latter OCBs will help the organisation indirectly, it can be argued that organisational assistance is not the primary goal from this OCB-performer’s perspective (rather, helping of colleagues is). Thus, it would seem that organisationally-directed OCBs are closer to the fundamental heart of the OCB concept, and are thus isolated for examination here.

4.7.1. Sales Manager Willingness to Respond and Organisationally-Directed OCBs

Considering the potential relationship between sales managers' willingness to respond to problems, and salespeople's performance of organisationally-directed OCBs (hereafter referred to as 'OD-OCBs'), previous research provides some evidence for examination. To begin with, in Podsakoff et al.'s (2000) meta-analysis, a number of factors akin to sales managers' willingness to respond to problems, were found to be consistently related to increased levels of OD-OCBs (such as civic virtue and sportsmanship). Firstly, as previously argued (see Section 4.1.1.), salespeople who work for sales managers who exhibit a higher willingness to respond to problem situations can gain feedback benefits from that willingness to respond. These feedback benefits were found by Podsakoff et al. (2000) to have a strong positive impact on levels of the OD-OCBs of sportsmanship and civic virtue. Furthermore, other managerial factors found by the latter study to have positive effects on sportsmanship and civic virtue were; a) high performance expectations, b) leader role clarification, and c) leader specification of procedures.

Considering sales manager willingness to respond to problem situations, when a manager is perceived by salespeople to be highly willing to respond to a problem, the manager is clearly making a statement that certain situations are unacceptable, and that the manager expects either better (for example in the case of performance improvement) or different (for example in the case of unethical behaviour etc.) behaviour in the future. Therefore, if salespeople see managers as willing to respond to problem situations, then salespeople will naturally feel that higher standards are expected of them. In turn, this will increase the performance expectations which salespeople feel that their manager has of them. Additionally, the manager's willingness to respond to the problem will spell out the role of the sales rep more effectively by clearly indicating which issues are not acceptable and thus candidates for managerial problem resolution, and also likely make the procedures expected within a sales rep's job far clearer than previously³.

³ However, it seems conceptually likely that this particular effect may be influenced by the aforementioned relationship between responsiveness and role ambiguity. Nevertheless, the possibility

Thus, it seems conceptually sound to expect that sales managers with higher levels of willingness to respond to problems will increase the levels of organisationally-directed OCBs. In more formal terminology:

H₁₀: Salespeople whose managers are highly willing to respond will display higher levels of organisationally-directed OCBs.

4.8. Control Relationships

The previous sections of this present chapter have discussed direct relationships between sales manager problem resolution styles and a number of salesperson-specific consequences. However, the reader will note that all of the endogenous variables discussed so far have also been found (in previous sales research) to be inter-related, both in conceptual and empirical terms. Therefore, in order to assist later empirical analyses of the present problem resolution style hypotheses, the inter-relationships between the salesperson-specific consequences are now explicitly addressed. The paths to be discussed are graphically shown in Figure 4.2.

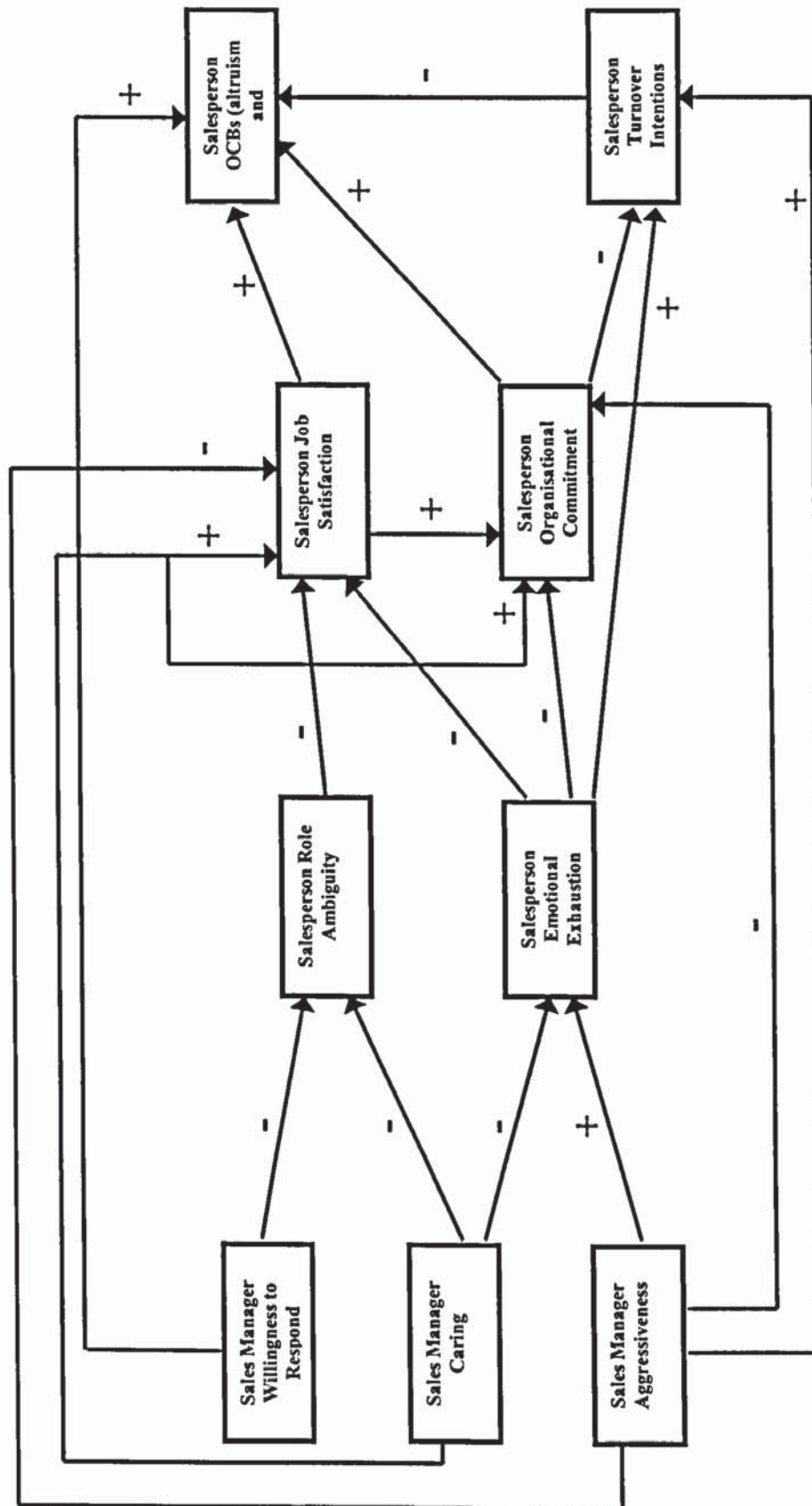
4.8.1. Control Paths Relating to Organisational Citizenship Behaviours

4.8.1.1. Job Satisfaction

Numerous authors have discovered that increased job satisfaction has a positive impact on various different measures of OCBs, including the organisationally-directed forms which are of interest in the present study (e.g. Podsakoff et al. 2000; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Netemeyer et al. 1997). More specifically, Podsakoff et al. (2000) report in their meta-analysis that the average correlation between job satisfaction and sportsmanship was 0.30 and with civic virtue 0.19,

that the role clarification – OCB relationship is affected by role ambiguity remains unexplored in OCB literature.

Figure 4.2: Full Conceptual Framework Including Control Paths



while Organ and Ryan (1995) report that in general job satisfaction is a direct positive influence on both civic virtue and sportsmanship. The causal logic is relatively clear, in that more satisfied employees will engage in organisationally-directed OCBs out of gratitude to the firm, or reciprocation for the satisfaction provided by their jobs (cf. Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Organ 1988). Thus:

C₁: Salespeople higher in job satisfaction will display higher levels of organisationally-directed OCBs.

In addition, the control path C₁ discussed above implies that sales manager aggressiveness will have an indirect influence on OCBs, by virtue of its influence on job satisfaction. Furthermore, sales manager willingness will have an indirect influence on OCBs as well as a direct one, again because of the former's direct influence on job satisfaction

4.8.1.2. Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment has also proved popular among researchers as an antecedent to OCBs, with general agreement that organisational commitment positively influences OCBs (cf. Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). Podsakoff et al.'s (2000) meta-analysis also found a consistently positive relationship between organisational commitment and OCBs, reporting a mean correlation of 0.18 between organisational commitment and sportsmanship, and 0.13 between organisational commitment and civic virtue (both dimensions referring to organisationally-directed forms of OCBs). However, Organ and Ryan's (1995) meta-analysis reported that there were insufficient studies exploring the relationship between organisational commitment and sportsmanship or civic virtue to analyse. That said, Organ and Ryan (1995) do report a generally positive relationship between organisational commitment and single factor measures of OCBs, which presumably include a significant component of organisationally-directed OCB concepts. Conceptually speaking, employees who are more committed to the organisation are willing to contribute to the well-being of their firm by giving of themselves voluntarily, above and beyond the stated demands of their job (cf. Mackenzie,

Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Mowday, Porter and Steers 1982). Stated more formally:

C₂: Salespeople with higher levels of organisational commitment will display increased levels of organisationally-directed OCBs.

Furthermore, the above control path also indicates that both sales manager willingness and sales manager aggressiveness will have indirect influences on OCBs, through their positive and negative (respectively) hypothesised influences on organisational commitment.

4.8.1.3. Turnover Intentions

Considering the likely impact of turnover intentions on OCBs, evidence is rather more sparse. In both Podsakoff et al.'s (2000) and Organ and Ryan's (1995) meta-analyses, no consideration is given to the former relationship, implying that it has not been a popular topic among OCB researchers. Nonetheless, some evidence is available. For example, some researchers have contended that higher levels of OCB reduce *actual* turnover (George and Bettenhausen 1990), since "salespeople who exhibit higher levels of sportsmanship and civic virtue [both concepts relating to organisationally-directed OCBs] are likely to develop closer relationships with their supervisors and be less likely to leave the organisation voluntarily" (Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). But the latter implies that OCBs will influence turnover intentions rather than the other way round. However, on the other hand, there are strong conceptual grounds to argue that turnover intentions will have a negative influence on OCBs. Specifically, employees high in turnover intentions will be less willing to go 'above and beyond the call of duty' to perform unexpected discretionary behaviours for an organisation that they don't see a future for themselves in, and will conceivably focus only on those duties they are explicitly required to do. Thus, lower levels of turnover intentions will likely engender higher levels of OCBs, and vice-versa.

C₃: Salespeople with higher levels of turnover intentions will exhibit lower levels of organisationally-directed OCBs.

In addition, the control path specified presently implies that sales manager aggressiveness will have a negative indirect effect on OCBs because of its previously specified influence on salespeople's turnover intentions.

4.8.2. Control Paths Relating to Emotional Exhaustion

It was previously argued that sales manager caring and aggressiveness had various direct impacts on job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions. Here, it is argued that the former sales manager problem resolution style variables have a further, indirect influence on job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions, mediated through emotional exhaustion. As alluded to earlier, emotional exhaustion (sometimes seen as the key component of burnout), has proved of recent interest to sales scholars (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999). In general, the various components of organisational morale as conceptualised previously have been consistently hypothesised by the latter research as consequences of emotional exhaustion and/or burnout (Babakus et al. 1999; Boles, Johnston and Hair 1997; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994).

4.8.2.1. Job Satisfaction

Considering first job satisfaction, both Babakus et al.'s (1999), and Boles et al.'s (1997) studies explicitly hypothesised that emotional exhaustion will have a negative relationship with job satisfaction, which is also discussed in organisational behaviour research (e.g. Maslach 1982). Essentially, emotional exhaustion is seen as affecting the psychological welfare of employees, which is likely to include feelings of job satisfaction, and furthermore, "since both [emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction] are affective responses, it is hypothesized that burnout feelings [such as emotional exhaustion], should be related to job satisfaction" (Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994 p. 561). However, while both Babakus et al. (1999) and Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads (1994), found strong empirical support for the latter relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction, as did Iverson, Olekalns and Erwin (1998), Boles, Johnston and Hair (1997) did not. Nevertheless, given the received wisdom from both sales and organisational research, the evidence is still more compelling for than against, thus:

C₄: Higher levels of emotional exhaustion experienced by salespeople will be associated with lower levels of job satisfaction for those salespeople.

Furthermore, the latter control relationship also implies that both sales manager caring and aggressiveness will have indirect relationships with salespeople's job satisfaction (positive and negative respectively).

4.8.2.2. Organisational Commitment

Moving on to a consideration of organisational commitment, sales research has again generally found some interest in exploring its relationship with emotional exhaustion and/or burnout. Once more, Babakus et al. (1999), and Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads (1994) explicitly hypothesise that higher levels of emotional exhaustion will reduce the organisational commitment of sales reps. In simple terms, it seems that sales reps experiencing high levels of burnout (and, by definition, emotional exhaustion), tend to see the organisation as an adversary, and thus psychologically withdraw from it (Maslach 1982). In particular, "emotionally exhausted boundary spanners...do not believe their job provides them with a sense of accomplishment [and] are likely to be less committed to the organisation" (Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994 p. 561). Additionally, both Babakus et al. (1999), and Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads (1994) find strong empirical support for a negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment, leading to the formal hypothesis below:

C₅: Higher levels of emotional exhaustion experienced by salespeople will be associated with lower levels of organisational commitment amongst those salespeople.

Also, it can be seen that the control relationship specified above implies that both sales manager caring and aggressiveness will have indirect (positive and negative respectively) relationships with organisational commitment.

4.8.2.3. Turnover Intentions

In terms of turnover intentions, evidence is also quite clear. Specifically, within and without the sales context, many studies have hypothesised that increased emotional exhaustion or burnout can increase turnover intentions, which is also sometimes

known as ‘propensity to leave’ (Boles, Johnston and Hair 1997; Lee and Ashforth 1996; Sager 1994; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). Conceptually speaking, Maslach (1982) contends that burnout (and by definition emotional exhaustion) results in withdrawal from the organisation, which manifests itself as “absenteeism, physical isolation...as the worker avoids contact with organisation members...[e]ventually...the worker will likely seek permanent avoidance by leaving the firm” (Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994 p. 561). Strong empirical support for the idea that emotional exhaustion increases turnover intentions is provided by Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads (1994), and Boles, Johnston and Hair (1997), both salesforce-based studies. Hypothesising thus:

C₆: Higher levels of emotional exhaustion experienced by salespeople will be associated with higher levels of turnover intentions amongst those salespeople.

In addition to this, the latter hypothesis also implies that sales manager caring and aggressiveness will have negative and positive indirect effects respectively on salespeople’s turnover intentions.

4.8.3. Control Paths Relating to Role Ambiguity

4.8.3.1. Job Satisfaction

While sales manager willingness to respond is not considered to have a *direct* influence on the important salesforce outcome of job satisfaction, it will have an indirect influence, fully mediated by the former’s effect on role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is a variable which has proved popular both as a dependent and independent variable within nomological networks of sales and organisational research (cf. Brown and Peterson 1993; Kahn and Byosiére 1992).

In terms of the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction, research is consistent in hypothesizing that increased role ambiguity reduces job satisfaction among sales people (Brown and Peterson 1993; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). Essentially, it seems that higher role ambiguity will reduce the amount of pleasure available from the job, and thus the satisfaction the job can provide, as well as reducing satisfaction by increasing anxiety felt by the employee (Behrman and

Perreault 1984; Churchill, Ford and Walker 1976; Walker, Churchill and Ford 1977). As explicitly stated by Walker, Churchill and Ford (1977); “salesmen [sic] who experience high levels of...ambiguity will suffer more mental anxiety and will be less satisfied with their jobs” (p. 160). Empirical support here has been consistently found in the sales literature over a reasonably long period (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999; Behrman and Perreault 1984). So to provide a formal hypothesis:

C₇: Higher levels of role ambiguity as experienced by salespeople will be associated with lower levels of job satisfaction for those salespeople.

It can be seen that the aforementioned control path also implies that sales manager caring (as well as sales manager willingness) will have an indirect influence on salespeople’s job satisfaction, by virtue of the former’s influence on role ambiguity.

4.8.4. Control Paths Concerning the Interrelationships Between Job Satisfaction, Organisational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

4.8.4.1. Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment

Within organisational research, considerable debate has arisen over the conceptual linkages between job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions (Brown and Peterson 1993). In particular, the causal ordering of job satisfaction and organisational commitment has been the source of intense scrutiny, with some arguing that organisational commitment precedes job satisfaction (e.g. Bateman and Strasser 1984) and others suggesting that the reverse is in fact the case (e.g. Brown and Peterson 1993; Bluedorn 1982; Johnston et al. 1990). Conceptually speaking it would appear that for the former to be the case, a high level of organisational commitment should *cause* salespeople to feel more positive about their jobs (i.e. have a higher level of job satisfaction). However, one can conceivably expect that some salespeople who are highly committed to a job may not actually be particularly satisfied. For example if a highly effective salesperson feels that they do not want to leave their job because they earn so much money and have such potential for career advancement, the salesperson may be highly committed but lack a lot of job satisfaction. On the other hand, if job satisfaction precedes organisational commitment one would then expect salespeople who were more satisfied with their

jobs to be more loyal to the situation which is generating their positive feelings (i.e. their jobs). While the former could be the case, from an intuitive perspective, it would seem more logical to take the latter approach, and expect higher job satisfaction to lead to enhanced commitment to the organisation. This relationship would seem to follow from the conceptually appealing judgment that those who perceived a situation to offer them pleasure (i.e. higher job satisfaction) would naturally wish to a) prolong their experience of pleasure by remaining in the situation, and b) feel more loyal towards the situational context that was giving them pleasure (i.e. have higher levels of organisational commitment). In fact, within sales research it seems that the job satisfaction preceding organisational commitment relationship is the more popular and empirically robust one (Brown and Peterson 1993). Thus, formally hypothesising:

C₈: Higher levels of job satisfaction perceived by salespeople will be associated with higher levels of organisational commitment amongst those salespeople.

Furthermore, this would imply that both sales manager caring and aggressiveness will have indirect effects on salespeople's organisational commitment, positive and negative respectively.

4.8.4.2. Organisational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

Moving to a consideration of turnover intentions, debate over whether job satisfaction, organisational commitment, or both, influences turnover intentions has also flourished (Brown and Peterson 1993). In this case the main difference of opinion seems to be that some consider both job satisfaction and organisational commitment to directly influence turnover intentions (e.g. Singh, Verbeke and Rhoads 1996), and others argue that job satisfaction has only an indirect impact on turnover intentions, fully mediated by job satisfaction's impact on organisational commitment, which has the direct impact on turnover intentions (e.g. Brown and Peterson 1993; Johnston et al. 1990). In purely theoretical terms, it seems that job satisfaction could have a direct influence on turnover intentions, but that this is not likely to be *always* the case. For example, it is likely that those happier in their work would also be likely to stay in that job, but it also seems possible that various other

factors could significantly impact on their turnover intentions, for example job factors such as pay, or the job market itself. So it could be the case that job satisfaction *could* be correlated with turnover intentions, but not *necessarily* causally related. On the other hand, it appears highly likely that organisational commitment is directly causally related to turnover intentions. Essentially, those who are highly loyal and committed to their work place are highly unlikely to be intending to leave that job. Thus it would seem theoretically reasonable to consider a direct relationship between higher organisational commitment, and lower turnover intentions, but perhaps less plausible to expect a direct causal relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions (although to perhaps expect a reasonably high correlation). In fact, empirical research has supported the idea that organisational commitment is the primary influence on turnover intentions within the sales force, rather than job satisfaction (e.g. Brown and Peterson 1993; Johnston et al. 1990). In light of this then, one can formally hypothesise that:

C₉: Higher levels of organisational commitment amongst salespeople will be associated with lower levels of turnover intentions amongst those salespeople.

In addition, by virtue of their previously hypothesised influences on salespeople's organisational commitment, the control path above also implies that sales manager aggressiveness and caring will have positive and negative (respectively) indirect effects on salespeople's turnover intentions.

4.9. Summary

The aim of this chapter was to develop a conceptual framework of the salesforce consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles. The framework focused both on the direct consequences of sales manager willingness to respond, caring and aggressiveness, as well as the linkages between the dependent variables (including mediated relationships). Using existing literature for the most part, a number of formal hypotheses were advanced. The following chapter begins the quantitative operationalisation of the model of sales manager problem resolution styles, by describing the general research design and data collection process.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With the principal foundations of a conceptual framework laid down in the previous chapters, the focus now moves to the process used to generate data to test the hypothesised theoretical model. The first section of this chapter deals with the more general or ‘strategic’ notions of data collection, i.e. procedural issues to do with the data collection instrument and data type. Subsequently, more ‘tactical’ issues are explored, such as the actual step-by step design of the measuring instrument, as well as operationalisation of the necessary constructs. Building on this, a discussion regarding the testing and refinement of the measuring instrument is provided. Finally, the results of this iterative process are detailed, i.e. the actual instrument, sample design and data collection process.

5.1. General Issues Regarding the Data Collection Process

5.1.1. Temporal Issues: Longitudinal versus Cross-Sectional Data

As with any practically focused research study, the key tenets of the methodological design should be *consistent with the objectives of the study*. Regarding the present case, the key objectives include both *developing* valid and reliable measuring instruments for the key constructs of sales manager problem resolution styles, and also determining any associations between the measures of problem resolution styles and measures of key sales force consequences.

In terms of what might be called ‘classical’ survey design¹, there are two main approaches available for survey research, cross-sectional and longitudinal². One of

¹ The term ‘classical’, or ‘classic’, will be repeatedly used in the following chapters to refer to certain survey and analysis methodologies. It is not meant to be value-laden in that ‘classic’ does not imply better in this case. Merely, classic, or classical, methodology is used as a descriptive term, meaning ‘generally accepted’ among marketing academia, and referring to methods that have had a long and successful history within marketing academia, e.g. the scale development procedures introduced into marketing scholarship by Churchill (1979).

the key drivers of the decision between the two methods was concerned with the resources available. More specifically, longitudinal research tends to be far more resource-intensive to perform, both in terms of time and other resources such as finance (Churchill 1999). For example, considering the time factor, by definition longitudinal research is far more time consuming simply by virtue of the fact that measurements must be taken at repeated intervals. Secondly, due to the repeated measurements required of longitudinal studies, the financial resources needed are substantially increased, an untenable proposition for the present study.

A further issue was one of the trouble with gaining access to a longitudinal sample. In particular, it was anticipated that it would prove substantially more difficult to gain access to a wide-ranging longitudinal sample of sales representatives than a cross-sectional one. Furthermore, due to the sales management context under investigation here, longitudinal research was likely to prove problematical. Essentially, due to the particularly high turnover of the personal selling profession (cf. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997), any longitudinal sample would likely have an extremely high mortality rate, rendering such a sample of little use. Thus, for the above reasons, the decision was made to take a cross-sectional approach to the present study.

However, the use of longitudinal data does have several clear advantages of cross-sectional data in general. Perhaps the primary advantage is that of extending the range of analyses which one is able to perform on the data, and also the conclusions which can be drawn with confidence. Specifically, analyses based on longitudinal data are generally considered to provide the most compelling evidence of causality (cf. Churchill 1999). However, while causal logic is inherent in the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 4, the hypotheses are concerned with association between

² It is noted that other methods of study include experiments, quasi-experiments, and qualitative research designs. However, these methods are discounted from consideration for the present research due to the specific objective of measure development. Experiments and quasi-experiments are mainly useful in looking at causality of relationships rather than developing measures in the first instance (since they are usually unable to provide the sample sizes necessary). Qualitative research is also not appropriate for quantitative measure development (by definition), although the reader will note that it proved highly useful in earlier stages of the research.

variables, rather than causal relationships, due to the early stage of the research. Furthermore, cross-sectional research is well-accepted within sales management research of this type (perhaps due to the problems of longitudinal research discussed above), and many examples of cross-sectional designs can be found within the sales management field (e.g. Bagozzi 1978; Behrman and Perreault 1984; Challagalla and Shervani 1996; Cravens et al. 1993; Grant and Cravens 1996; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Oliver and Anderson 1994; Piercy, Cravens and Lane 2001).

Notwithstanding the evident popularity of cross-sectional designs within sales research, there are important implications of such designs for the analysis of the data collected. Specifically, when using cross-sectional research designs, one is “limited to the task of identifying patterns of *association* which are consistent with the *causal linkages implied from the conceptual model*” (Cadogan et al. 2001, p. 274, emphasis added). In more detail, analyses based on cross-sectional data are limited to examining patterns of correlation among variables, rather than causality. Any causal implications must be drawn from the theory which surrounds the concepts and variables. Therefore, any causal implications which are suggested by the pattern of correlations found can be considered as tentative, and it is impossible to safely reject alternative implications which may arise from the same pattern of correlations, no matter what method of analysis is used³. However, it must also be recognised that the theory developed in the present study, problem resolution styles, is at a very early stage in development. Therefore, one would not expect to see longitudinal or experimental research directly examining causality at this early evolutionary point. In fact, it makes good sense to begin by trying to discover correlational patterns amongst the theoretically relevant constructs, to be used as a guide for future, more causally-grounded research methods. Once tentative conceptual and empirical support is found for the importance of problem resolution styles in influencing sales force outcomes, further longitudinal and/or experimental research can investigate issues which provide more substantive support for causality, such as temporal sequentiality and confounding effects (cf. Hunt 1991). As Greenley recommended, where “evidence is recent and...limited, an incremental development of knowledge is clearly necessary, through the normal testing, refinement, and retesting of

³ Further discussion of causality issues pertaining to the analysis methods is provided in Chapter 8.

hypotheses” (1995 p. 88). The present study can be considered as an early step on the incremental testing path, with the aim to get a ‘broad’ indication of the relationships between problem resolution styles and sales force consequences. Future research can then build on this to take a more ‘fine’ approach, by way of longitudinal and/or experimental methods.

5.1.2. Choice of Respondent

Previous sales force studies have used a variety of respondents, from the sales manager (e.g. DeConinck 1992; Marshall, Stone and Jawahar 2001) to the salesperson themselves (e.g. Johnston et al. 1990; Tyagi 1985), or even dyadic studies of both the salesperson and their manager (e.g. MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Oliver and Anderson 1994; Russ, McNeilley and Comer 1996). Each of these methods has its own particular strengths and weaknesses.

However, there are some key variables to consider in the choice for the present study. First and perhaps foremost is the general area explored, i.e. sales manager problem resolution styles. More specifically, the theory developed from the field and literature studies (see Chapters 3 and 4) suggests that a number of sales manager-related constructs (i.e. problem resolution styles) influence a number of important salesperson-specific outcomes (such as role ambiguity). From this perspective then, it would appear that sales manager-salesperson dyads would be the most effective respondents for the study, since both types of construct could be measured ‘directly’ from their source. However, a particular disadvantage of dyadic research is that it is highly resource-intensive when one needs a significant number of responses. In the present case, a large number of responses is necessary in order to satisfactorily develop measures of sales manager problem resolution styles (cf. DeVellis 1991). If one was to use dyadic research, then response rates are a critical issue. Specifically, dyadic research requires an ‘overlap’ between sales managers and salespeople, in that a response is only useful if it includes a matched response from the other half of the dyad. In order to guarantee sufficient numbers for measure development activities, it is likely that a very large dyadic sample would be necessary. As a consequence then, dyadic research was discounted as a possibility for the present study, and consideration moved to other choices of respondent.

Discarding dyads as a possible choice, the decision is now between using sales managers or salespeople as respondents, each with their own particular strengths. Firstly, there are arguments for using sales managers as respondents, specifically that managers may have more knowledge of their own actions and motivations. For example a manager may be able to consider his/her internal motivation of caring in any action, but the sales rep may only see the external signs (which may not be exhibited for example if the manager is being deliberately 'tough' with the rep). However, the drawback here is that managers may be unwilling to describe themselves in negative ways, such as aggressive, or ruthless. This was uncovered in part by the earlier qualitative research, where managers seemed to only describe 'other' managers as aggressive or ruthless. Thus it seems likely that managers' answers to the problem resolution style items may be biased towards describing themselves in a positive manner. In addition, if sales reps are surveyed as to their perceptions of their managers' behaviour, rather than the behaviour in actuality, one may be able to get closer to the actual influences of sales rep behaviour. For example, as Tyagi (1985) stated: "A number of...studies indicate that perceptions, as opposed to objective realities...are what govern employees' behavior" (p.77). Butler and Reese (1991) also suggested that perceptions of salespeople may differ from managerial opinions of their own behaviour, and that these salesperson perceptions may be more important influences on salespeople's behaviour than managerial reports of their own behaviour (see Section 2.2.5.).

Furthermore, the hypothesised model of the *consequences* of sales manager problem resolution styles is focused on salesperson-specific consequences. That is, virtually all the hypothesised consequences refer to variables which are internal to the salesperson, either psychological job outcomes such as satisfaction and organisational commitment, or other psychological variables such as role ambiguity or emotional exhaustion. It is unlikely that sales managers would be able to provide valid information on these kinds of salesperson-specific variables. Finally, although sales managers could probably provide information on organisational citizenship behaviours, perhaps the majority of sales scholars have used the *actual performer* of the citizenship behaviour to provide information on the prevalence of such behaviour (e.g. MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Netemeyer et al. 1997), notwithstanding any potential for bias in describing themselves (cf. Organ and Ryan

1995). Therefore, as a result of consideration of the above arguments, the sales representative was chosen as the most useful respondent to the present study. Consequently, the following steps in the methodology were taken in knowledge of this decision, and specifically tailored to the sales representative as a respondent.

5.1.3. Method of Administration

Once the overall study type (whether experiment, survey or other types) and type of data are decided upon, one is required to turn towards issues concerning the method of administration of that study type (in this case a cross-sectional survey). Each method lends itself to a different study type, but in the case of the cross-sectional survey, one is generally restricted to choosing between mail questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, or using the internet (such as web-based or email surveys) to collect the data. When deciding upon which type of data collection method should be used, a number of different issues present themselves, most pressing of which are the inherent strengths or weaknesses of each method (see for example Churchill (1999) for a fuller explication of the strengths and weaknesses of each method). In this case, certain critical considerations were taken into account, which led to the choice of a mail questionnaire format for the survey's administration. Below is an attempt to detail the reasons for this choice and why other methods were less appropriate.

Perhaps the key driver for the decision to use a mail questionnaire was the measure development objective of the present study. In this case, this meant that personal interviews were inappropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly, in order to avoid the possibility of any kind of regional bias to the sample, it was considered necessary to obtain a wide geographic spread of reps across the UK. Thus, it became virtually impossible to use personal interviews because of the time and expense of travelling large distances in order to personally collect data. Furthermore, the number of responses required in order to develop measures statistically made the cost, in time and resources, of personal administration prohibitive. Furthermore, many researchers contend that using non-anonymous response forms such as personal interviews may potentially bias the results (e.g. Zikmund 1997). However, this oft-cited problem with personal administration did not, surprisingly, appear to be an issue. Specifically, respondents in the early qualitative phase of the present study appeared reasonably

comfortable discussing personal and sensitive issues of discipline with me, although some potential for bias was noted. That said, using a more anonymous form of response would naturally minimise this potential problem even further.

Telephone interviews were also discounted as a collection method, albeit for different reasons. In particular, the many constructs contained in the conceptual model as well as demographic and other data, meant that the data collection instrument was likely to be of substantial length. It is relatively standard practice to avoid using telephone administration for long questionnaires (Churchill 1999). Additionally, respondents may have felt awkward answering sensitive questions over the telephone, without having built up any level of trust in the interviewee (which was present in the earlier qualitative personal interviews⁴). Finally, the population of interest may have had a number of problems responding to telephone administration. Specifically, sales reps are often either in contact with customers, or in transit to a contact. In this case they are very difficult to reach on the phone during business hours, in a way in which other marketing operatives are not.

The use of the Internet was considered and ultimately discounted for a number of reasons. One of the key issues was that of access. More specifically, while it is likely that sales reps in many companies should have access to the internet provided by their employers, this is certainly not guaranteed, particularly with many smaller firms. Considering sales reps spend significant time out of the office, this may further reduce company-sponsored access to the world-wide web, although perhaps not email. Nevertheless, it was considered that using the Internet to administer surveys could provide some bias to the sampling frame (cf. Churchill 1999). Furthermore, administration of questionnaires by Internet places certain restrictions on when salespeople are able to respond, specifically when they are on-line with access to their computers. In addition, since e-mail can often be traced back to the sender, there is less anonymity than with mail questionnaires (Churchill 1999), an important consideration with potentially sensitive topics such as those covered herein.

⁴ Even though some personal interviews were conducted over the telephone, the longer conversation style of the interviews enhanced the relationship between respondent and interviewer. This would not be present if respondents were merely being asked to answer a questionnaire over the telephone.

Therefore, the choice is clearly restricted to a mail administration of a questionnaire. Firstly, although not quite as much as using the Internet, using a mail administration is extremely cost and resource-effective, particularly when aiming for a wide geographic dispersion of respondents, as in the present case (cf. Churchill 1999; Jobber 1989). However, using the anonymous form of a mail questionnaire reduces the bias associated with respondents answering sensitive questions over the phone, in personal interviews, or by email (Churchill 1999; Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch 1996). Finally, and perhaps specific to the sales context, using a mail questionnaire allows salespeople the opportunity to complete it at their leisure, or in their own time. Using either a telephone, personal interview, or (to a lesser extent) the Internet, would restrict salespeople to possibly using their valuable customer contact time to complete the instrument, which is likely to have a direct impact on their income (since many positions are commission-based), even if it were possible to reach a sales rep in business hours.

Unfortunately, using a mail questionnaire has a number of downsides. First and foremost among these are the spectres of low response rates and non-response bias (cf. Churchill 1999; Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch 1996; Jobber and O'Reilley 1995). In order to counter this, or at least provide some indication of its seriousness, researchers have gone to great lengths to explore alternatives to improve response rates within marketing and business research (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch 1996; Jobber and O'Reilley 1995), and also the extent of non-response bias can be estimated, and certain corrections can be made (e.g. Armstrong and Overton 1977). The mail questionnaire is not free from the problems of response biases similar to those discussed above either. Research has found that respondents to mail questionnaires can be subject to a number of conscious and unconscious biases such as acquiescence response style, mid-point responding (cf. Baumgartner and Steenkamp 2001) and the almost ubiquitous social desirability bias (e.g. King and Bruner 2001). However methods for exploring and correcting these biases are also available, especially social desirability bias (e.g. Jo 2000; Strahan and Gerbasi 1972).

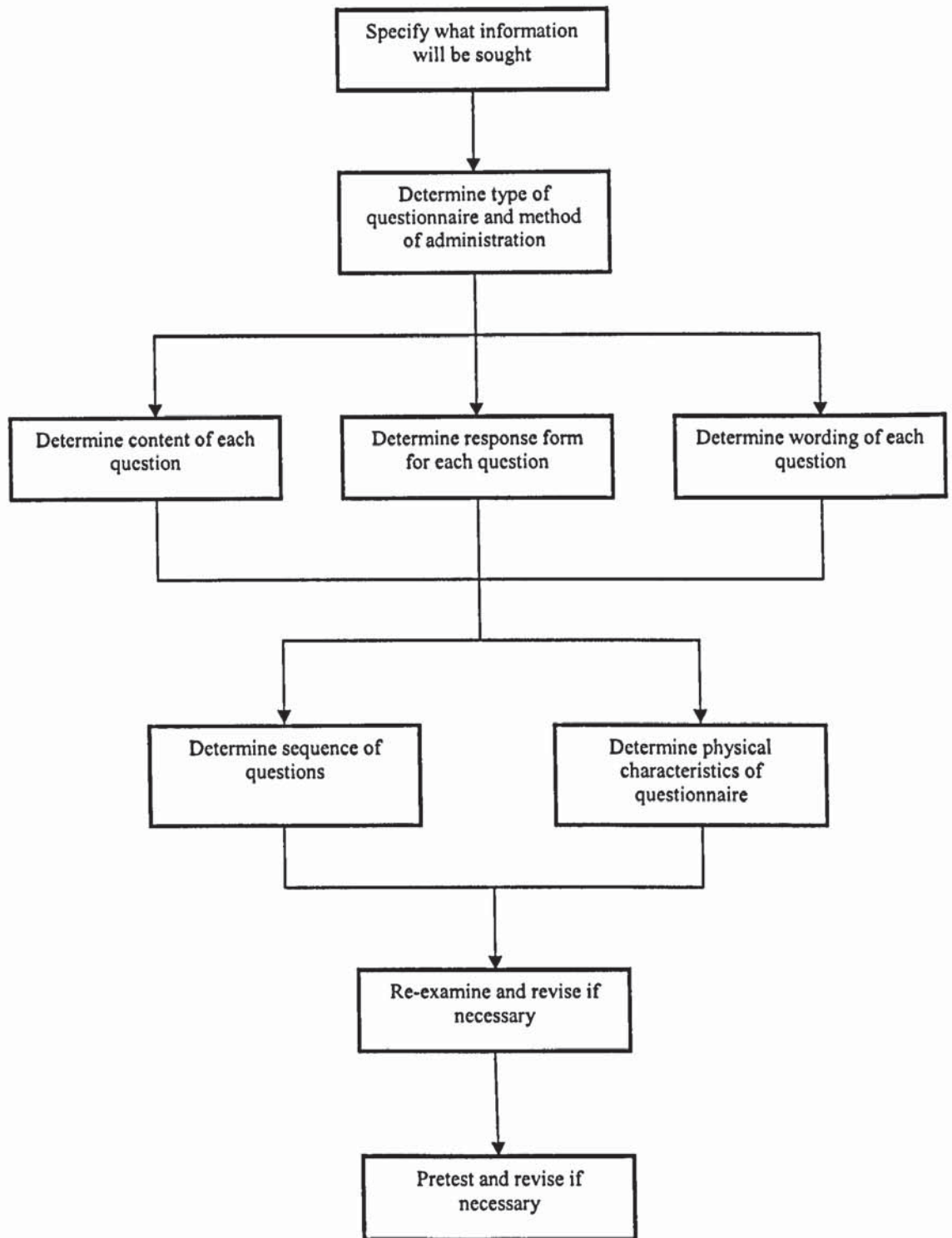
5.2. Design of the Measuring Instrument (Questionnaire)

The following section provides details of the physical design of the measuring instrument (i.e. the mail questionnaire), including operationalisations of the constructs used in the research. Figure 5.1 provides a graphical illustration of the procedure used in the present study to develop the questionnaire. However, the reader should note that, while the process looks linear, it is in fact highly iterative and the steps are interrelated in many cases, in this way the process is more like a general guide than a linear path (cf. Churchill 1999).

Having already determined the overall type of data to be collected, and the general method of administration, the next task was to generate items with which to create preliminary measures of the three sales manager problem resolution style constructs (willingness, aggressiveness and caring). Next, it was necessary to determine which measures were necessary in order to collect information regarding the conceptual framework outlined in the previous chapter. These variables included sales force psychological consequences such as role ambiguity, psychological work outcomes such as job satisfaction, and also behavioural outcomes like organisational citizenship behaviour. As well as this, demographic variables needed to be collected in order to describe and assess the characteristics of the respondents. Figure 5.2 shows an outline of the information to be sought in the questionnaire, furthermore, Appendix 2.1 provides a preliminary version of the questionnaire.⁵

⁵ It is important to note that many of the constructs included in the preliminary (and final) questionnaire are extraneous to the present study, and were included for future research tasks.

Figure 5.1: The Process for Developing the Questionnaire



Adapted from Churchill (1999)

5.2.1. Measuring Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

In the first instance, in order to measure any construct (in this case the three problem resolution style constructs), it is necessary to develop *multiple indicators* of each construct (cf. Churchill 1979). Following the classic treatises of Churchill (1979) and others (e.g. DeVellis 1991; Gerbing and Anderson 1988; Spector 1992), each item is designed to reflect a *single latent construct*. That is, an item designed to measure sales manager aggressiveness should *only* measure aggressiveness, and not in any part sales manager willingness and sales manager caring. Theoretically speaking, a measure of sales manager aggressiveness may have a number of items in its scale, and the latent construct (i.e. sales manager aggressiveness) is presumed to *cause* each of the item scores. Resulting from this, there is an assumed correlation between each individual item's score and the *true score* of the latent construct (DeVellis 1991). Thus, it seems essential that the conceptual domain of the construct be specified very clearly in order that the item pool generated for each construct actually corresponds to, or reflects, the construct of interest (cf. Churchill 1979).⁶

To this end, operational definitions of each of the constructs are now provided. *Sales Manager Willingness to Respond* refers to a sales manager's readiness and desire to resolve problem situations (e.g. taking responsibility for dealing with problems, using time effectively etc.). Crucially, sales manager willingness does *not* refer to emotional aspects of response or perceived motivations (such as caring for sales reps) for the response, and is independent of 'how' problem situations are resolved. *Sales Manager Aggressiveness* refers to whether a sales manager employs a highly physically demonstrative, hostile, and/or intimidating style of dealing with sales reps involved in problem resolution action (e.g. bullying behaviour, shouting, obvious or implied threatening, disciplining reps in front of their colleagues). Sales manager aggressiveness does not refer to any idea of the willingness to respond to problems,

⁶ It is recognised that there is a debate over concepts of reflective or formative indicators (e.g. Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001). However, this debate is not entered into here since the sales manager problem resolution style indicators are theorised to be reflective. More details on formative indicators are given later in this dissertation, when consideration moves to variables operationalised as formative.

Figure 5.2: Information to be Sought

- *Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles*
 - Sales Manager Willingness to Respond
 - Sales Manager Aggressiveness
 - Sales Manager Caring
- *Sales Representatives' Consequences*
 - Role Ambiguity
 - Job Satisfaction
 - Turnover Intentions
 - Organisational Commitment
 - Emotional Exhaustion
 - Organisational Citizenship Behaviour
 - Sportsmanship
 - Civic Virtue
- *Sales Representative Demographics*
 - Age, Education, Gender
 - Sales Manager's Gender
- *Organisational Characteristics*
 - Annual Turnover
 - Size of Sales Team
 - Number of Employees

or any idea of caring/not caring for sales reps (i.e. a motivation for the aggressiveness). Furthermore, sales manager aggressiveness is also not concerned with 'how' a problem is resolved, but rather the manner in which resolution action is implemented. *Sales Manager Caring* refers to a style of problem resolution by sales managers which involves the manager being concerned for the well-being of sales reps in the job (e.g. counselling, empathy, sympathy, and the like). Importantly, aspects of whether or not the manager is highly willing to respond are not included in the latter construct's domain.

Once the domain of each construct has been adequately delineated, Churchill (1979) suggests a number of different methods one can use to generate items to capture the domain of each construct. However, due to the theoretical novelty of the present three constructs, it was generally inappropriate to search through the existing academic literature for items to modify, as suggested by Churchill (1979). Instead, the primary focus of the item generation process was data from the previously discussed qualitative research interviews. Furthermore, practitioner-based literature was examined closely for insights into how sales managers might deal with problem situations.⁷

Apart from the obvious aim of generating items that captured the domains of each of the constructs in question, there are a number of other aims which scholars have considered an important part of item generation. Firstly, it is necessary to create items which tap different dimensions of each construct, and furthermore, incorporate items which provide different 'shades' of meaning, since the eventual measure will be refined at length, and "[e]xperienced researchers can attest that seemingly identical statements produce widely different answers. By incorporating slightly different nuances of meaning in statements in an item pool, the researcher provides a better foundation for the eventual measure" (Churchill 1979 p. 68).

⁷ The search of practitioner-based literature has been alluded to previously. In brief, it consisted of a search of the primary professional sales publication (i.e. *Sales and Marketing Management*). However, newspaper articles were also searched and examined for insight.

Furthermore, it was necessary to include some element of redundancy in the scale items (a process helped by the idea of tapping different shades of meaning), since classical measure development theory hinges upon the concept of redundancy to cancel out irrelevancies in the data while summing commonalities (cf. DeVellis 1991).⁸ Other crucial characteristics to avoid are; double-barrelled items, very long items, double or multiple negatives; and technical jargon, in order to reduce the risk of confusion (Churchill 1979; DeVellis 1991). However, certain minor colloquialisms were included (such as the term ‘fiery’ when referring to aggressiveness) at this stage since they came directly from sales reps themselves and were felt to be very descriptive of the concept.⁹

It was also important to include negatively-worded items in each scale in an attempt to avoid agreement bias (Spector 1992), or as Churchill puts it: “to reduce “yea-” or “nay-” saying tendencies” (1979 p. 68). However special care was needed here to avoid both conceptual confusion (such as negatively worded aggressiveness items tapping some aspect of caring), and confusing respondents. Attention was also given to reducing the socially desirable aspects of some of the items (cf. Churchill 1979), particularly ones which cast the sales manager in a negative light (such as the aggressiveness item “my sales manager is a bully”).¹⁰ Also, it was crucial to determine the response form of the items in order that the items be compatible with it (DeVellis 1991). To this end, a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” was used as a base for designing the items. Finally, since the sample would include a wide range of firms, it was important that the items be sufficiently general to apply across different types of firms (such as large and small,

⁸ However, it is necessary to avoid trivial redundancy, where there is no meaningful difference between items. An example of this would be if one included both “my sales manager is quick to deal with problems” and “my sales manager quickly deals with problems” in a measure of sales manager willingness to respond.

⁹ Nevertheless, items such as this were given special attention in the pretesting stages of the questionnaire’s development in order to determine whether they did indeed cause confusion.

¹⁰ However, it was recognised that, when dealing with constructs such as aggressiveness and caring, it is virtually impossible to remove *all* socially desirable meaning from some aspects of the scale, and thus (as previously mentioned and subsequently discussed) a measure of socially desirable tendencies was included in the questionnaire.

and different industries), and not be restricted to certain firms by, for example, use of industry-specific terminology.

For each of the three constructs of interest, a large pool of items was initially generated, as recommended by relevant literature (e.g. Churchill 1979; DeVellis 1991; Spector 1992). These items in the main came from the qualitative interviews with both sales managers and sales people. Therefore, since the present study was to employ salespeople as respondents, items which came directly from the sales managers had to be reworded to make them more appropriate. This was because sales manager items tended to be in the 'first person', i.e. describing themselves, while if they were to be administered to sales reps they had to be reworded to focus on describing someone else (i.e. the sales reps' managers). For example, a sales manager generated item for caring read "I have little tolerance for those sales people that create problems", one for aggressiveness read "I'm known as a sales manager that is prone to 'fly off the handle'", and one for willingness read "[i]f I notice a problem, then I act on it immediately". When reworded to be more appropriate to sales rep respondents, the items read; "[m]y manager has little tolerance for those sales people that create problems", "[m]y manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'", and "[i]f my manager notices a problem, then s/he acts on it immediately", respectively. The initial item bank for sales manager willingness consisted of 21 items, that for sales manager aggressiveness consisted of 28 items, and that for sales manager caring consisted of 19 items. The full initial item banks can be seen in Appendix 2.2.

Subsequent to the creation and editing of the initial item banks, a further developmental stage was undertaken. Specifically, academic experts were enlisted to examine the items for 'face' or construct, validity, as well as pragmatic things such as spelling and understandability. The use of experts in this way is recommended by a number of scholars in order to provide a 'first cut' of the scales, before further development and costly data acquisition (cf. DeVellis 1991; Spector 1992). Essentially, seven academic experts in sales and marketing were given a list of the items of each scale and asked to put them into categories pertaining to the three constructs. All the items were alphabetically assigned, in order that the construct

items be mixed to avoid bias in the responses. An example of the form used is given in Appendix 2.3.

Once the scales were returned, a simple count of which scale items seemed to be consistently categorised correctly was done. Three categories were created; 'A' class items were those in which at most one respondent incorrectly categorised the item, 'B' class items had two incorrect categorisations, and 'C' class items were those which had more than two incorrect categorisations. For example, a 'C' class item for caring was "[i]f I don't perform, then I know I won't last long in this job, whatever the reason", this item was incorrectly categorised by three respondents, as an aggressiveness item. Using these three categories, all items which fell into class 'C' were dropped from further development. This process resulted in the removal of six items from the responsiveness scale, eight from aggressiveness, and four from caring, leaving item pools of 15, 20, and 15 respectively.

5.3. Measures of Sales Force Consequences

The constructs of empirical interest here are more fully detailed in Chapter 4. These constructs include psychological job outcomes such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions, individual psychological constructs such as emotional exhaustion and role ambiguity, and the behavioural construct of organisationally-directed organisational citizenship behaviour. In the following discussion the operationalisations of each construct are explained along with their sources. In general, where possible sales force-specific constructs were used (i.e. those which had been developed on a sales force population), however this was often not possible, and thus preference was then given to measures which had a long tradition of use among employees (such as emotional exhaustion). Actual original item lists are given in Appendix 2.4.

5.3.1. Role Ambiguity

The measure of role ambiguity used was a shortened version of Rizzo, House and Lirtzman's (1970) scale, containing six items. The shortened scale has been used in many studies (e.g. House, Schuler, and Levanoni 1983; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and

Ahearne 1998), and has generally returned positive results of reliability and validity (cf. Bearden and Netemeyer 1999).

5.3.2. Emotional Exhaustion

The measure used to capture emotional exhaustion was a single dimension of Maslach and Jackson's (1981) multi-dimensional burnout inventory, which includes a dimension of emotional exhaustion (as well as other dimensions such as depersonalisation). Using exactly the same procedure as Maslach and Jackson (1981), the operationalisation in the present study consists of two separate scales for each dimension, one to measure how strongly the respondent feels about the item (seven-point scale ranging from "very strong, major" to "very mild, barely noticeable"), and one to measure how often the respondent experiences the feelings described in each item (six-point scale ranging from "every day" to "a few times a year"). Furthermore, these scales have been used in relevant marketing literature, although it is unclear whether scholars have tended to use one or both dimensions to measure emotional exhaustion (e.g. Babakus et al 1999; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). However, Boles, Johnston and Hair (1997) imply that only the 'how often' scale was used in their study. To this end, the present measuring instrument retained both dimensions in order to add flexibility to future analysis.

5.3.3. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured using a shortened version of INDSALES (Churchill, Ford and Walker 1974), developed by Comer, Machleit and Lagace (1989), which measures a number of specific dimensions of satisfaction. However, only the four-item "satisfaction with job" dimension was used, rather than the entire seven-dimension measure. This was done for both pragmatic and theoretical reasons, specifically that the entire seven dimensions would have taken up too much space in an already-long instrument, and also that only 'general' job satisfaction is considered important for the present purposes, rather than specific satisfaction with different aspects of the job. Again, positive results according to the measure's properties have been reported in the marketing literature (Bearden and Netemeyer 1999).

5.3.4. Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment was measured originally using Porter et al.'s (1974) 15-item scale, as used by other authors such as Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) and in sales by MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne (1998) amongst others. Generally positive results for reliability and validity have been reported in the marketing and sales literature for the 15-item version (Bearden and Netemeyer 1999).

5.3.5. Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions was measured using a three-item measure (based on Donnelly and Ivancevich 1975), sourced from Singh (1993), of which generally positive results have been reported previously (e.g. Johnston et al 1990; Rhoads, Singh and Goodell 1994). Furthermore, the latter measure has been shown to consistently predict actual turnover in previous research (cf. Singh 1993).

5.3.6. Organisationally-Directed Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Organisationally-directed organisational citizenship behaviours were measured using items from MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter's (1993) measuring instrument, of which generally positive results have been reported previously (cf. Bearden and Netemeyer 1999). The sportsmanship and civic virtue measures are used in the present study to capture the concept of 'organisationally-directed' OCBs.

MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter's (1993) measures were chosen primarily for the fact that they were developed and used on a sales population, as well as for their efficiency in only including three items each.

5.3.7. Demographic Variables

In order to profile and describe the characteristics of the samples, a number of demographic variables were included. However, since the target population was sales reps, certain company specific questions could not be asked because it was unlikely that sales reps would have access to the information. An example of this was firm size; some authors have contended that firm size is most effectively measured by including consideration of part-time as well as full-time staff (e.g. Cadogan 1996), however it was unlikely that sales reps would have access to such a level of information, thus reps were only asked to give an approximate amount of staff employed by their firm. Performance of the firm was also difficult to elicit, since

sales reps tend not to have access to overall firm performance, but are more concerned with their unit and individual performance, as a consequence, reps were merely asked to give an indication of the firm's annual turnover.¹¹

In light of the above issues, and also the fact that the consequences dealt with in the present research are specific to the individual sales rep (such as role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion), profile variables were mainly concerned with individual sales rep characteristics, and those of their manager. Firstly, the experience of the sales rep was measured in three ways; a) their time in sales in general, b) their time in the firm itself, and c) their time in their specific job. Secondly, the education of the sales rep was measured by asking the rep to tick their highest educational qualification ranging from high school to postgraduate degree (including a space to write other qualifications). Thirdly, gender of the sales rep and their manager was asked, along with the rep's age. Finally, the sales rep was asked to provide an indication of the number of salespeople that a first-line sales manager would generally supervise in the firm.

5.4. Response Form

A number of different forms of response were used throughout the questionnaire, each chosen for a specific reason. However, for most of the constructs of interest the general format was closed-ended. There are a number of reasons for the choice of a closed-ended format, one of which was the simple fact that with so many different constructs, it was crucial to reduce the amount of time taken to fill in the instrument, and also to reduce fatigue on the respondent. If each item required too much time and consideration to fill out, it was likely that the respondent would give up on the questionnaire eventually. Furthermore, due to the fact that one of the objectives of the present study was to develop valid and reliable measures of sales manager problem resolution styles, open-ended items were not appropriate. This was because the responses to open-ended items lack comparability, and thus would have been useless for statistical measure development. Therefore, for the sales manager problem resolution style constructs, the use of Likert scales (i.e. rating scales) was

¹¹ Indeed, this idea was borne out in the results, with many reps either unable or unwilling to comment on their firm's turnover or number of employees.

deemed appropriate. Similar methods of data collection have been used in many of sales-based studies in the past and thus a large amount of evidence points to their success in measuring sales-specific constructs. As mentioned previously, 5-point scales were utilised to capture the data.¹²

Most of the remaining constructs were also operationalised using itemised rating scales, since this was the method of choice for both their construction and previous use within sales management. For example, Anderson and Oliver (1994) make it relatively clear that their intrinsic motivation scale was constructed as a Likert scale. Other constructs to be measured by 5-point Likert scales were; role ambiguity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intentions, sportsmanship and civic virtue. However, emotional exhaustion was operationalised using 6-point and 7-point rating scales as done by Maslach and Jackson (1981) in their original scale. The latter scales were not strictly Likert scales in that they were not anchored by opposite ends of a continuum, but rather by descriptive terms pertaining to their meaning. For example, the scale used to measure 'how often' the respondent felt emotionally exhausted was anchored by 'a few times a year' and 'every day'.

For the other (demographic) measures, as a general rule the highest degree of measurement level was adopted in order to take full advantage of appropriate multivariate analyses. For the age and experience measures for example, the answers were open-ended since time is a necessarily ratio variable, in this way respondents were not forced to choose between a number of 'categories' which would have

¹² It is recognised that there is controversy over whether itemised rating scales such as Likert scales are truly interval data, or whether they are merely ordinal (cf. Churchill 1999). It is inappropriate to enter this debate in the present context, but the reader should be at least aware that in many areas of social science, including marketing and sales research, Likert and other itemised scales *are* treated as interval data as a matter of course. A key reason for this is that more powerful analyses can be undertaken on interval data, but it should be noted that at no point do informed researchers contend that the *actual measures* are of interval nature. However, there is substantial evidence to suggest that there is little difference between results obtained from ordinal and interval data when analysed with procedures appropriate to interval data only (cf. Churchill 1999), and particularly when the ordinal scale includes more than two or three points (West, Finch and Curran 1995). Nevertheless, researchers should take care when interpreting the results of analyses appropriate to interval and above levels of measurement, when they have been performed on ordinal data.

reduced the measurement level. Similarly, turnover, size of sales team, and number of employees were all measured by open-ended ratio scales. However, educational level was measured on an ordinal scale where the respondent was asked to mark the highest category of educational achievement, and an ‘other – please specify’ option was provided for the sake of exhaustiveness.¹³ Finally, questions pertaining to gender of the respondent or the sales manager were asked using dichotomous questions, where the respondent was asked to choose either ‘male’ or ‘female’.

5.5. The Physical Design of the Instrument

While there are no genuine ‘rules’ available when one designs the physical form of a questionnaire, and the order which the questions will appear in, several rules of thumb have been suggested (e.g. Churchill 1999; Malhotra and Birks 2000). The following section will detail the pertinent issues for the present research, as well as discuss the actual ordering of the questions in the original questionnaire (see Appendix 2.1 for a copy of the original questionnaire).

It is commonly assumed that a critical variable in the success of any piece of research involving questionnaires, is the order the questions are given in (Churchill 1999). In particular, the introductory questions are crucial in that they influence whether the respondent will bother to spend their time filling the rest of the questionnaire in. Common problems with introductory questions occur when the respondent finds them boring, irrelevant, or threatening, and also if they are particularly difficult to answer. Therefore, one should avoid asking such questions until the latter stages of the questionnaire, if they must be asked at all (cf. Churchill 1999).

Additionally, recognised authorities on the subject of mail questionnaire design suggest that the researcher should divide the questionnaire into logical sub-sections (Malhotra and Birks 2000). However, it is also important that the respondent not be

¹³ That said, it is recognised that, within the UK context of the research, the points on the scale correspond to generally sequential levels of achievement in education, without missing any obvious milestones out. As a result some may argue that this scale could be considered virtually interval. However, since one is unaware of the nature of the ‘distance’ between scale points, the scale must be considered as ordinal.

confronted with sudden changes in topic, and that the order of the sections be clear and logical, furthermore, respondents should not be asked to return to a topic once they have answered questions on it – i.e. all questions on a particular topic should be answered at once (Churchill 1999).

Concerning the scales for sales manager aggressiveness, caring and willingness, a single pool of items was created, in alphabetical order, to be presented in a single section of the questionnaire. This was done to avoid any bias from the respondent, who may have tended to answer all items pertaining to a single construct in the same manner if each scale were presented separately ('halo' bias). Further, it was felt that many of the concepts dealt with were slightly sensitive in nature, and thus the scales should not be presented first. Additionally, some of the questions might have required respondents to think carefully about their past history in the workplace, and if they were presented first the respondent may have felt that they were too difficult and/or time-consuming. However, since these questions were critical to the success of all the research objectives (including measure development), it was felt that they should not be placed too far back in the questionnaire. Specifically, if they were too far towards the end of the questionnaire, respondents who got bored halfway through would miss these vital scales out, reducing the amount of data available for the measure development process. However, if the scales to be developed were closer to the front, fewer respondents would miss these out if they gave up completing the questionnaire.¹⁴

As a consequence of the above, the questionnaire was sequenced as follows.¹⁵

Section 1 was entitled "Your Feelings About Your Organisation and Your Job". This section was split into sub-sections and contained measures of (in this order); role ambiguity, organisational commitment, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, civic

¹⁴ Although respondents would miss out other constructs in this case, it was felt that it was most crucial to have the maximum amount of data available for measure development activities first and foremost.

¹⁵ As previously mentioned, a number of constructs were included in the questionnaire, which are not examined in the present research for various reasons. These constructs and their scales are not included in consideration presently, although are included in each version of the questionnaire in the Appendices.

virtue and sportsmanship. These questions were probably the least awkward and/or disturbing for the respondents to answer, and furthermore seemed likely to be easy to answer as they dealt with affective reactions and behaviours of the sales rep themselves.

The second section was entitled “Your Immediate Sales Manager’s Behaviour”, and contained the three sales manager problem resolution style scales (i.e. willingness, caring and aggressiveness). As previously mentioned, the scales were not separated, and items were presented alphabetically, to avoid response biases. These questions were thought to be slightly intimidating to the respondent since they asked for what might be negative opinions of their supervisors, so they were not placed first. However, due to their importance, they did need to go relatively close to the front in order to maximise response.

Section 3 contained emotional exhaustion and social desirability scales (in that order) and was titled “Your Well-Being and Emotions”. These scales were placed towards the back since it was felt that they were quite awkward to answer, and in particular the emotional exhaustion scale had potential to be a difficult one to answer. Finally, Section 4 contained the demographic profile items pertaining to the respondent and their firm. This was placed last since respondents may have felt uneasy about answering some of the personal questions (e.g. education), or may not have known some of the company information, which could have influenced them to give up if these questions were too far toward the front (Churchill 1999)

Since it was crucial to ensure that the data was not corrupted because of respondent confusion, instructions on how to complete each type of scale were provided where appropriate, and at the start of each section. The appropriate scale was also provided at the beginning of each section. Furthermore, respondents were thanked for their time and effort at the end of the questionnaire, and requested to send their business card if they wished for further information, or a summary of the findings.

In terms of the actual physicality of the mail questionnaire, it was felt to be crucial to reduce the *appearance* of length and bulk, notwithstanding the large number of items and constructs measured. While there is little evidence attesting to a direct link

between questionnaire size and response rate (cf. Jobber 1989), it stands to reason that in today's busy work environment, respondents will be more likely to fill in questionnaires that appear shorter rather than longer. This assumption is borne out in the research of Jobber and Saunders (1993) when they suggest that business people may be more sensitive than the general population when it comes to questionnaire length.¹⁶ So, in order to reduce the appearance of length, the questionnaire was printed on both sides of the paper, resulting in a five-page (four double-sided and one single sided) questionnaire. Unfortunately, since the questionnaire was 9 pages long, it was unable to be produced in booklet format, which requires the pages to be in multiples of four. That said, it is tempting to reduce font size and spacing when aiming to reduce the size of a questionnaire, and I was careful to avoid this temptation where possible. As a result most text (in particular the items themselves) was reasonably large, and plenty of space was available in which to answer each item.

5.6. Pretesting the Questionnaire

Once the physical design of the questionnaire is confirmed, the next stage of its development is pretesting. Essentially, the pretest consists of using the questionnaire in a small-scale study in order to see how well it works without consuming large amounts of time and expense. Furthermore, pretesting allows for an estimation of the likely response rate for the main survey, in order to aid sample size selection. It has been said that satisfactory pretesting is essential to the success of any collection of data (cf. Churchill 1999; Hunt, Sparkman and Wilcox 1982; Reynolds Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch 1993).

It has also been suggested that there be two pretests (Churchill 1999). "The first of these should be by personal interview, regardless of the actual mode of administration that will be used" (Churchill 1999 p. 366). This type of pretest, which is also called 'protocols' (cf. Diamantopoulos, Reynolds and Schlegelmilch 1994) can provide information on problem questions, confusion, and formatting issues (such as sequencing of questions). Assuming any changes are minor, the modified

¹⁶ It should also be noted that Churchill (1999) contends that questionnaires over 4 pages in length have lower response rates than shorter instruments.

instrument can then be pretested using the actual method to be used in the main data collection process, in order to uncover problems in the mode of administration (Churchill 1999). Therefore, the development procedure followed a two-stage process, discussed in the following sections.

5.6.1. Protocols

Essentially, protocols consist of watching a respondent fill in the questionnaire and receiving feedback on any pertinent issues as the respondent proceeds through each question (cf. Diamantopoulos, Reynolds and Schlegelmilch 1994). While a large amount of crucial information can be generated by protocols, the intellectual exercise of completing the questionnaire may alter feedback received, or in other words; “thinking about how the decision is made may alter the decision itself” (Diamantopoulos, Reynolds and Schlegelmilch 1994 p. 297). Furthermore, the presence of the researcher may bias the feedback given, for example the respondent may not want to criticise the questionnaire in front of its creator. At this stage of the study’s progress, a large company had expressed interest in participating, therefore the protocols were performed on a sales rep and a sales manager of the particular firm.¹⁷

A common theme among both interviewees was the overall length of the questionnaire. However the manager seemed to find the length rather more of a problem than the sales rep, suggesting that managers are very worried about their reps spending time on non-selling activities. Unfortunately, not much could be done to shorten the questionnaire without compromising the data quality. However, positive comments from the sales rep about the ‘interest value’ of the questionnaire were encouraging, in that the rep was of the opinion that other reps would be more likely to fill in the questionnaire since the topic was interesting.

¹⁷ While Churchill (1999) and others suggest that protocols be carried out on the actual audience for the questionnaire (in this case sales reps) a sales manager was used for a particular reason. Specifically, it was already recognised that sales managers may have to be used in at least a partial manner, to distribute the questionnaires to their sales reps. Therefore it was crucial to note whether sales managers found any of the items and/or concepts particularly threatening so that steps could be taken to improve the likelihood of distribution.

In terms of the difficulty of filling in the questionnaire, only one problem was noted, to do with the emotional exhaustion scale. That is, the original format of the scale (see Appendix 2.1) was deemed to be virtually impossible to fill in, and therefore it was changed to a different format (see final questionnaire in Appendix 2.5), which spread the scale out in a more simple and pleasing manner. Additionally, both respondents reported difficulty in remembering the itemised rating scale they were supposed to be using for each section. Therefore it was suggested that the appropriate rating scale be included where relevant at the top of each page. As a final point, the respondents also suggested the inclusion of a note offering a report on the results to be placed at the end of the instrument.

In terms of the questionnaire items, a number of the initial items for the sales manager problem resolution style constructs were dropped. This was for a number of reasons. Firstly, a number of items were deemed to be confusing to the respondent, both by the rep and the manager. Furthermore, the manager was uneasy about a number of items and suggested that he would be uncomfortable administering a questionnaire containing them to any of his sales reps.¹⁸ For example one item removed for the latter reason was “if a sales rep is not performing, my manager simply doesn’t care why”. As a consequence, a number of items were removed from the item pools for sales manager caring, willingness and aggressiveness. Thus, the final item pools were 10 for caring, 10 for responsiveness, and 13 for aggressiveness (see Appendix 2.6).

Other than the issues previously described, the protocols suggested that there were few problems with the questionnaire, and that it appeared to be very interesting to the target population. Therefore the questionnaire was revised (see Appendix 2.5) and prepared for use in the next stage of the pretest.

¹⁸ In addition the manager suggested that top managers would be unlikely to be pleased with those items, making it very difficult to get their agreement on administering the questionnaire within their company.

5.6.2. Mail Pretesting

Following the personal interview stage of the pretest process, a small-scale mail survey was undertaken in order to anticipate any potential problems in the final survey, as well as provide an indication of the likely response rate. It was at this stage that earlier fears were confirmed. Specifically, it proved impossible to obtain a sampling frame for salespeople in the traditional form (i.e. a commercial database). A number of database companies were contacted, including Profords, FT Business Lists, Kompass, and Dun and Bradstreet, and all confirmed that they were unable to supply a list of sales representatives. The primary reason for this was because of the high turnover within field sales, according to contacts within Dun and Bradstreet and Profords.

As a result of this, the sampling frame was compromised, and the decision was made to attempt to use personal notification in order to obtain responses. Essentially, it was felt that contacting sales directors of companies and asking their permission to administer questionnaires to members of their sales forces would be the most resource-effective way of obtaining the required number of sales rep responses. In order to put this strategy into action, a commercial database was thus unnecessary. A number of approaches were taken in order to obtain 'leads' into organisations. In the case of the pretest, a publicly available business directory was used to generate names of firms in various different categories throughout the UK. The use of publicly available directories is common within sales research, especially when the research is aimed at eliciting responses from a large number of different industries (e.g. Babakus et al. 1996; Baldauf, Cravens and Piercy 2001; Cravens et al. 1993; Grant and Cravens 1996).

For the pretest, Sales Directors or their equivalents (e.g. Marketing Directors) in 15 large sales organisations were contacted. Of the 15 firms, two refused to participate outright, one saying that they were too busy, and the other maintaining that they did not use field sales reps. Of the remaining 13, seven requested to see the questionnaire before deciding whether to participate, while the other six said they would participate in the research. Of the seven firms who requested to see the questionnaire, all agreed to participate in the research. None of the firms would provide direct contact details for their salespeople, but instead undertook to distribute the questionnaire internally

to their first-level sales managers themselves. Unfortunately, this made it impossible to directly conduct follow-up analysis.¹⁹ As a result, 89 questionnaires were sent out to the 13 companies, and each first-level sales manager was instructed to distribute a single questionnaire to a salesperson in their team. The use of first-level sales managers to deliver questionnaires to field salespeople has been used in a number of other sales-based studies, and appears well accepted within sales research (e.g. Oliver and Anderson 1994; Schwepker 1999).

Each questionnaire was packaged in its own sealed envelope to avoid possible concerns over confidentiality. Additionally, an instruction sheet was provided for the manager, asking their cooperation in administering the sealed envelope to one of their sales reps without opening it, as well as providing an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, the importance of the sales manager's participation was highlighted and copious thanks were given. An example of this letter is given in Appendix 2.7. Within the sealed envelope given to the sales rep was a personally signed cover letter stressing the importance of the research, and of the sales rep's participation in it (see Appendix 2.8), and again assuring confidentiality and anonymity. Furthermore, the sales rep was asked not to discuss their answers with their colleagues or managers until after returning the questionnaire in the post-paid envelope provided. Unfortunately, personalisation was not possible, and as a result each cover letter was addressed 'Dear Sir/Madam'.

5.6.3. Response to the Mail Survey Pretest

There were 38 returned questionnaires from the original 89 administered in the pretest. Therefore, an initial estimation of the response rate is 43% (i.e. $38 \div 89 \times 100$). However, it was noticed no questionnaires at all had been received from a number of firms, therefore the initial contacts of each firm were telephoned and asked a number of questions regarding their participation. Firstly, two firms confirmed that they had not administered a number of questionnaires, since they had inadvertently asked for too many. This reduced the sample size to 85, and increased the response rate to 45%. Furthermore, five of the 13 Directors admitted that they

¹⁹ Nevertheless, most directors committed themselves to following up the questionnaire personally, usually by way of e-mail.

had not given any of the questionnaires out. Two of the Directors said that they were uncomfortable with the content of the questionnaire, and three said that the length had proved too large for them to give out to their employees. At this point it was important to realise that all of the firms who had refused to administer the questionnaires had *not* asked to see the questionnaire previously.

The total number of questionnaires not administered by these five firms was 25. Subtracting this from 85, the total number of questionnaires actually administered to sales reps was in fact 60. Therefore a more generous estimation of the response rate could be said to be 63%. Unfortunately, none of the Directors who refused to administer the questionnaire could be persuaded otherwise, and therefore it was considered that telephone calls would be an ineffective way of increasing the number of responses. That said, it was important to know whether a given company had ordered too many questionnaires, so they could be removed from consideration. Furthermore, the personal calls did prove useful in determining potential difficulties in administering the questionnaire. Analysis of these calls, and also of the returns, suggested changes needed to be made in particular to the procedure of the data collection process, and these are discussed in the following section.

5.7. The Main Data Collection Procedure and Sample

One of the major upshots of the pretest was that no real modifications to the questionnaire instrument itself were deemed necessary. In particular, the revised form of the emotional exhaustion scale was correctly filled in by all respondents, which was an area of serious concern. A number of comments did mention the length of the questionnaire (as did some sales managers) but again it was felt that little could be done here to shorten the instrument without compromising its quality. However, one modification was made, and that was the inclusion of a self-rated sales performance measure at the end of the questionnaire.²⁰ The reason this was included was essentially as a ‘backup’ to the other consequences, and the thinking was that

²⁰ The measure used was a 9-item self-rated scale (5-point Likert format) also used by Cravens et al. (1993) in their study. The scale has also been used by authors such as Behrman and Perreault (1984). One item was modified to include reference to products as well as services.

sales performance may need to be used as a consequence if necessary. However, the reduction in items for the problem resolution scales (resulting from the protocols testing) meant that a large amount of extra space was available. This increase in space made the questionnaire look far more inviting. Nevertheless, since none of the measures that were already in the questionnaire were changed from the mail pretest, it was felt that the responses from the mail pretest could be integrated into the final sample in order to increase the size of the data set (cf. Morgan and Hunt 1994).

Additionally, modifications to the actual procedure suggested themselves. First and foremost, it was seen to be absolutely critical to gain agreement from the firm on the *actual form* of the questionnaire before sending out questionnaires, and not merely on the 'idea' of the questionnaire. This meant that each firm contact (e.g. the Sales Director) had to physically see the questionnaire before agreeing to participate in the study. This necessity was as a result of the large proportion of firms who had not requested to look at the questionnaire prior to receiving it, ending up refusing to administer the instrument when they did receive it. Once the potential alterations to the instrument and procedure were considered, the questionnaire was then professionally printed and bound, an example of the final mail questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 2.5.

5.7.1. Sample Frame Selection and Administration of the Questionnaire

A number of unavoidable issues played a major role in the choice of sampling frame. First and foremost, the pretest response rate suggested that, once sales managers had given their agreement to administer the questionnaire, a response rate with a lower bound of around 40% did not seem over-optimistic (even though this was rather high in general for industrial mail surveys). The next issue was to consider how many responses would in fact be needed for the planned analysis methods, and in conjunction with the expected response rate, an approximate sample size could be generated. In terms of analysis, it has previously been mentioned that one of the primary objectives of the research was measure development, and a number of authors have pontificated upon the subject of appropriate data set sizes for measure development activities. While there appears no agreed upon minimum number of cases for measure development, it is generally suggested that researchers need between 150 and 200 cases to develop statistically sound measures (cf. DeVellis

1991). Therefore, and remembering that 38 cases from the pretest were deemed valid for inclusion, a sample size of approximately 450-500 was deemed sufficient.

However, it was not felt necessary to individually address the responses to the sales reps themselves, even though it has been found to increase the response rate of mail surveys (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch 1996). Specifically, since sales and/or marketing directors were being personally contacted at length in order to organise the administration, it was difficult to obtain lists of the salespeople themselves, and impossible to obtain them in a database form suitable for printing letters and envelope labels. Therefore, personalised mailing was not deemed either possible, or critical to the success of the mail survey.

The difficulty of obtaining databases of salespeople has already been discussed in some detail previously. As mentioned, it was impossible to obtain a commercial database of sales representatives, and therefore public business directories were used in order to generate possible firms to administer the questionnaire to. In terms of the overall population, it proved difficult to obtain some measure of the size of the 'population' of UK organisations using field sales forces, since one would expect virtually all organisations to use some form of sales force. Therefore, theoretically speaking, the population is virtually all sales reps in the UK. According to the latest (2000) quarterly labour force survey (UK Data Archive), there are 2,338,241 people who work in sales occupations, or 4% of the working population of the UK.

However, the UKDA estimates that approximately 30,882,854 people did not answer this question, and removing these non-respondents raises the percentage to 8.4%²¹.

While this means that a traditional probability sample was unable to be used, and the chances of a given respondent being selected are unable to be ascertained, little can be done here. That said, the use of public lists of organisations as the sampling frame (where one would expect all firms to be included) does have some positive characteristics in this case.

A further consideration on sample selection was the procedure chosen. Specifically, it was deemed necessary to contact each firm and ensure they viewed the

²¹ Statistics taken from the UK Data Archive (<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/home/>)

questionnaire before agreeing to administer it. This was necessary because of the high percentage of companies that decided not to administer the questionnaire in the pretest not having seen it previously. However, this did have the procedural disadvantage of questionnaires being likely to be administered at different times, as different firms agreed to participate, but this problem was not thought to be too serious.

As a result of these considerations, Sales Directors or their equivalents from thirty large sales organisations were contacted. Of these 30, 18 agreed to view the questionnaire, of which 10 eventually agreed to administer it. Of these firms, two were very large, and one of the latter had structured its operation into a number of completely separate SBUs. In total, the number of questionnaires administered was 462 at this point. Therefore the decision was made to stop contacting firms.

The administration method was almost totally the same as the pretest. Essentially, each firm was sent a pack containing a number of sealed envelopes for administration to their first level sales managers. Again, the manager was given an instruction sheet as to how to administer the questionnaire, personally signed by me, and also containing a number of emotional appeals and appeals for the expert assistance of the manager and firm (see Appendix 2.7). The manager was also offered a copy of the research results. Within the sealed envelope addressed to the sales rep was a cover letter (the same as the one in the pretest, presented in Appendix 2.8 and more fully discussed previously), and a prepaid envelope for return of the questionnaire to me. Again, the letter was hand-signed by myself.

5.7.2. Improving the Response Rate

A major potential problem in the use of mail surveys is that of non-response bias (as previously mentioned). Non-response bias will occur when the characteristics of those who did return their questionnaire differ in a substantive manner from those who did not return their questionnaires. Since this bias can compromise the external validity and generalisability of a study's results, Armstrong and Overton (1977) among others, recommend that all feasible efforts be made to increase response rates of mail surveys.

A number of different authors have proposed varying methods of increasing response rates of mail surveys, however it is difficult to get a clear picture of which methods are more or less effective in this case (Churchill 1999). Churchill (1999) provides a number of suggestions drawn from the extensive research on mail surveys, to increase response rates of mailouts, as do Jobber and O'Reilley (1995) and Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (1996). An overview of these different methods is given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Methods to Increase Response Rate

Preliminary notification*
Follow-ups and/or repeated contact*
Sponsorship (e.g. company or trade association)
Monetary incentives
Non-monetary gifts*
Pre-paid return postage*
Assurance of anonymity or confidentiality*
Appeals (e.g. egoistic, social utility, altruism)*
Personalisation (e.g. hand-signed, or personal cover letter)*
Second mailing of questionnaire and letter
Interesting topic* and not sensitive or controversial in nature
Simple questions and layout*
Specification of return deadline
Questionnaire shorter than or equal to 4 pages

* = Methods used in some form in the present study

While these techniques may all be helpful (notwithstanding the debate over which are more effective than others) it is crucial that the benefits of increasing response rates incrementally not be outweighed by the increase in time and resources needed – particularly in the case of a doctoral dissertation where both factors are limited. However, pre-notification of a sort was used, where the sales directors were contacted at length to discuss the research. Furthermore, the conversations with the Directors were able to reduce fear of the questionnaire by explaining exactly what the research was intended to do. Sponsorship was also used, in that the sales reps generally received their questionnaires from their own organisations and managers, lending them some legitimacy. As mentioned earlier, a set of various appeals (such as emotional, utility, expert power) was used in the cover letter to the sales rep, and also the instruction letter to the manager, and a pre-paid reply envelope was included with each questionnaire. All respondents were also assured of the confidentiality of

their responses. A non-monetary reward of a sort was also included, with the option for respondents to receive a summary of the results. However, monetary incentives were not used, since they would have been too expensive, and there is some doubt over their utility in increasing response rates (cf. Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch 1996).²² Also, the questionnaire was rather long, compared to some guidelines (cf. Churchill 1999), but it was not reduced in length in order to maintain data quality.

In terms of follow-ups, the procedure of questionnaire administration made it impossible to follow up the respondents directly, since the firms used were unwilling to give out personal contact details of their managers or reps. However, each firm contact was telephoned 4 days after dispatch of the questionnaires, to ensure they had received it. Following this, they were contacted exactly one week (if possible) after they said they had received the package, and asked if it had been administered yet. A third call was made one week after the contact had said the questionnaires were administered, in order to request that a follow up e-mail or communiqué be sent to the necessary people, to enhance response. A final call was made one week later to deliver a final 'push' to the firms. The downside of this method was that no real data is available on how effective these follow ups were. Furthermore, none of the organisations was willing to accept a second batch of questionnaires to administer, such as might be done in a more traditional mail follow-up. Finally, the methodology prevented me from contacting any non-responding reps for reasons on why they did not respond.

5.7.3. Response Rate

Unfortunately, after distribution of the questionnaires, one of the companies decided to remove their support from the research project. Making the situation worse was that this firm was one of the two large firms which made up the bulk of the mailout. Essentially, the reason given for the non-participation was that, while the sales staff and managers thought it was a valuable piece of work, the human resources staff did not at all, and refused to administer the questionnaire. Therefore, part-way through the data collection process, the sample size was reduced to 292, which made the

²² However, Churchill (1999) maintains that monetary incentives are in fact the most effective in increasing response rates.

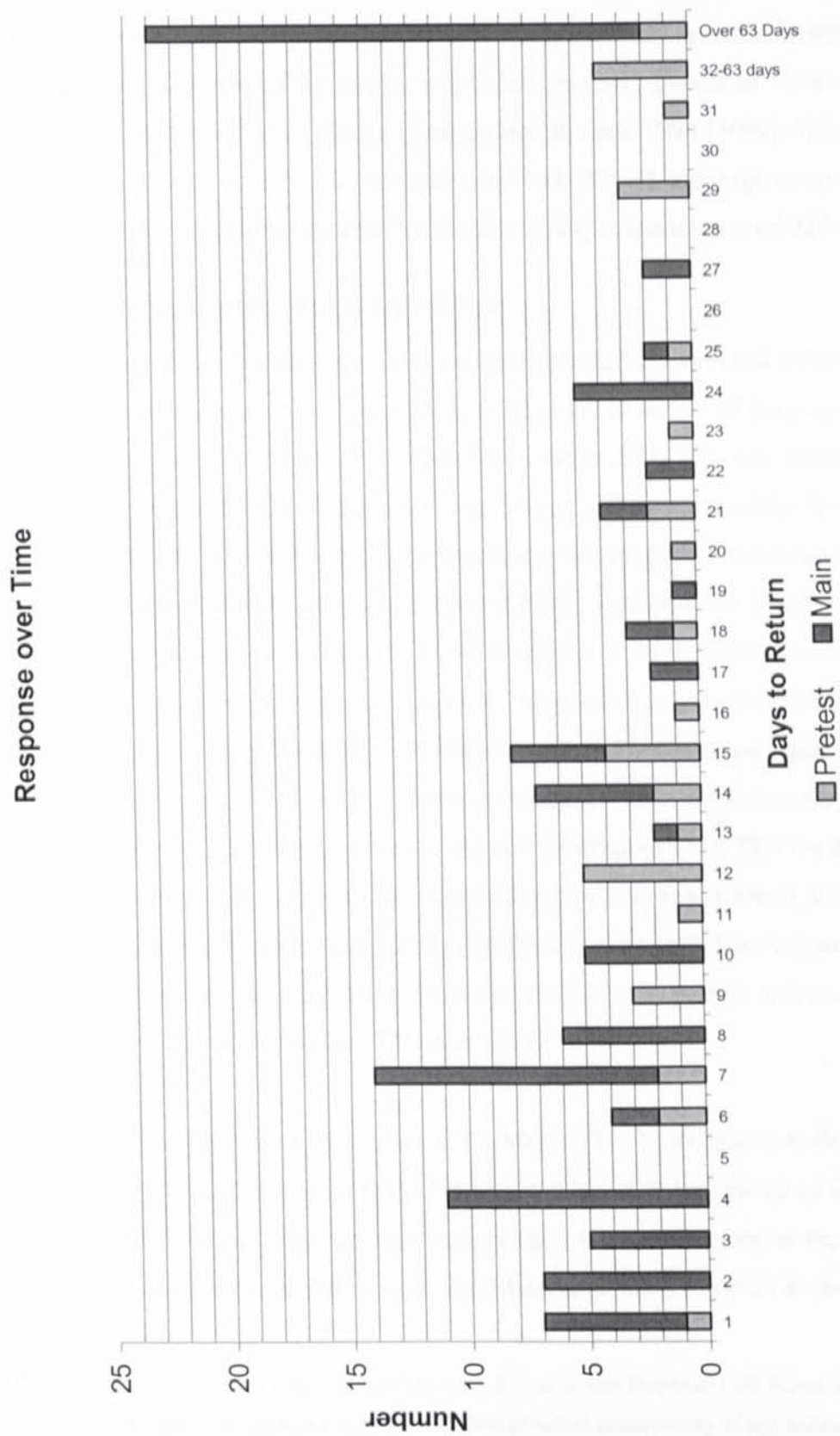
likely amount of data collected a lot smaller, although with the pretest responses, still sufficient for data analysis.²³

In total, 105 questionnaires were returned from the original mailout, of which 102 were fully useable (i.e. all relevant measures had full responses). However, each company was contacted after receipt of questionnaires had ceased, and asked how many of the questionnaires they had actually administered. Unfortunately, it seemed that each firm had been rather overconfident about the number of questionnaires they could administer, and 78 of the questionnaires had not even been used, reducing the sample size further to 214. Thus, when combined with the pretest respondents, the total data set numbered 140 fully useable cases. While this was slightly lower than hoped for, there were still enough data points in the set to enable subsequent analysis, and thus data collection efforts were terminated. Figure 5.3 shows the pattern of responses over time, with data combined with that of the pretest. It is important to note that, since the data were administered at different time periods, actual dates are not used on the time axis, but rather numbers of days and weeks taken between administration and return. This allows a far easier consideration of the entire response set. Furthermore, a large anomaly is noticeable at the extreme edge of the x-axis. This is caused by one respondent firm requesting to collate and send all the salesperson responses as one large package, rather than allow salespeople to return the questionnaires themselves. Therefore there is no way of knowing how long salespeople from this firm actually took. Thus, those questionnaires are excluded from later non-response analysis.

In terms of the response rate for the actual main data collection procedure, and removing the large firm who refused to administer the questionnaire at all, the response rate is a creditable 35%, however, removing the 78 questionnaires which were ineligible the response rate improves to 48%. Combining these figures with the ones from the pretest as well, the total effective response rate for the survey is 51% ($140 \div [214 + 60]$). This response rate is substantially higher than that generally

²³ Issues of data set size and suitability for the relevant types of analyses are discussed at length in Chapters 7 and 8.

Figure 5.3: Response Pattern over Time



expected in industrial mail surveys, of which response rates of around 25% are deemed average (cf. Jobber and Bleasdale 1987), and some authors deem the maximum expected response rate to be around 30% (Fox, Robinson and Bordely 1998). Furthermore, a response rate of 51% compares very favourably with response rates reported in other sales surveys, which are generally similar or lower (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999 [58%]; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994 [50%]; Wotruba and Tyagi 1991 [31%]; Futrell and Parasuruman 1984 [52%]), although the present rate is rather lower than Behrman and Perreault's (1984) response rate of 92%.²⁴

5.7.5. Estimating Non-response Error

Non-response error, also known as non-response bias (cf. Churchill 1999), occurs when a study “fails to obtain information from some elements of the population that were...designated for the sample” (Churchill 1999 p. 580). The key problem here is that non-respondents may differ from respondents on “characteristics of interest” (Malhotra and Birks 2000 p. 383). Furthermore, non-response bias is not necessarily reduced or eliminated by increased response rates (Malhotra and Birks 2000). Therefore, it is very important to undertake some form of non-response analysis, in order to generalise with more confidence to the general population (Churchill 1999). A number of strategies have been advanced for the estimation and adjustment of non-response bias (Churchill 1999), however, perhaps the most prevalent method in marketing is that suggested by Armstrong and Overton (1977). This method is based on extrapolation, and hinges on the assumption that later respondents are more similar to non-respondents, and that by comparing early with late respondents, one can generate an indication of the difference between respondents and non-respondents (cf. Armstrong and Overton 1977).

One of the key tasks in Armstrong and Overton's (1977) method is to define what are early and what are late respondents. However, there is no real standard for such a decision. Churchill (1999) suggests comparing those who respond to the first mailing with those of subsequent follow-ups, and Slater and Narver (1996) define an ‘early

²⁴ However, although they used a similar method, Behrman and Perreault (1984) had the advantage of support from important trade associations and used personal interviewing of top executives to elicit participation. In the present case, these advantages were unavailable, due to resource and time constraints mainly, as well as difficulties getting access to trade associations.

majority' of respondents as those who respond in the first three days. However, for the present study these methods were difficult to put into practice. This is because a) the questionnaires were finally administered to the sales reps by another party (their first-line managers), leaving me unable to determine the exact day each was administered reliably; and b) the follow ups were conducted by managers, leaving me unable to determine whether responses were as a result of follow-ups. Therefore, the following groups were defined in a relative manner;²⁵ questionnaires received within the first three days ('early majority') were deemed early responders, and those received following the 23rd day were deemed late responders. The 23rd day was a relatively arbitrary choice, although it can be seen to come after the main proportion of data has been received, and where the responses become more infrequent across time.

Table 5.2: Nonresponse Analysis

Key Variables	Mean Value		Significance of <i>t</i> *
	Early Responders	Late Responders	
Sales experience (years)	20	14	0.09
Organisational Experience (years)	11	6	0.09
Job Experience (years)	7	4	0.26
Firm turnover (£ 000)	174000	11561	0.23
Firm size of sales team	11	8	0.52
Number of employees	984	1567	0.51
Sales manager caring	3.58	3.29	0.29
Sales manager willingness	4.29	4.09	0.48
Sales manager aggressiveness	2.33	2.20	0.75
Role Ambiguity	-0.11	0.20	0.20
Organisational Commitment	3.62	3.83	0.44
Job Satisfaction	0.26	0.23	0.09
Turnover Intentions	0.34	0.22	0.10
Emotional Exhaustion	1.48	1.91	0.39
OCBs	0.31	0.003	0.53

* 2-tailed significance (0.05)

²⁵ As previously mentioned, the 21 main survey questionnaires on the extreme edge of the x-axis of Fig. 5.3 are not included.

The early responders numbered 19, and by coincidence the late responders also numbered 19. The early and late responders were compared across the profile variables, as well as on their scores for the theoretical constructs of interest (sales manager willingness to respond, aggressiveness and caring, and their hypothesised consequences).²⁶ The results are shown in Table 5.2. As can be seen, neither the demographic variables, nor the problem resolution style scales and consequence variables, show any significant difference between the early and late responders at a 5% level of significance.

In addition to the estimation of non-response error, further testing was deemed necessary due to the characteristics of the data set. More specifically, it was noted in Section 5.7. that the 38 responses from the mail pretest were included in the main data set. As a result it is important to determine whether there are any substantive differences in the responses to the key variables of interest between the pretest and main samples. To this end, the same mean-comparison procedure was utilised here as for the early-late response analysis, and the results are presented in Table 5.3. As can be seen there appears little cause for concern. However, it is necessary to point out that three of the firm demographics do return significant differences between the pretest and main samples. As can be seen, all three of the ‘experience’ variables (organisational, job, and sales) appear to return statistically significant differences, with the means for the main sample being higher than those for the pretest. However, this is not deemed to be a major problem in analysis terms since none of these are variables of particular analytical interest, and the differences are arguably not of substantive size (i.e. the mean differences of 4, 3 and 8 years are small in the context of the ranges of the variables, which are 23, 23 and 44 years respectively). Nevertheless, it is worthy of comment since it may have a bearing on subsequent interpretation of the results. More importantly, none of the variables used in the analysis have any statistically significant differences between their levels in the pretest and main samples, at a 5% level of significance.

²⁶ Details on the measure development procedure are given later, suffice it to say that early and late responders were compared on their levels of the *final scales*.

Table 5.3: Comparison of Pretest and Main Samples

Key Variables	Mean Value		Significance of <i>t</i> *
	Pretest Sample	Main Sample	
Sales experience (years)	8.7	16.8	0.00
Organisational Experience (years)	3.9	7.6	0.00
Job Experience (years)	3	5.9	0.01
Firm turnover (£ 000)	96213	1482109	0.41
Firm size of sales team	7.9	10.1	0.07
Number of employees	343.9	2179.4	0.15
Sales manager caring	3.1	3.2	0.38
Sales manager willingness	3.9	3.9	0.83
Sales manager aggressiveness	2	2	0.45
Role Ambiguity	1.9	2.1	0.45
Organisational Commitment	3.7	3.4	0.06
Job Satisfaction	3.6	3.5	0.60
Turnover Intentions	2.3	2.2	0.51
Emotional Exhaustion	1.6	1.3	0.35
OCBs	0.3	-0.1	0.06

* 2-tailed significance (0.05)

5.8. Summary

This chapter provided details of the general methodology used in this study. Essentially, a measuring instrument (in the form of a self-report questionnaire) was designed and used to perform a mail survey of UK sales reps. The design of the instrument was based on the previously described qualitative research, as well as a survey of relevant literature. Rigorous pretesting, according to standard procedures advocated by previous authors, was employed, and following this the survey was sent to a sample of UK sales reps. In total, the questionnaire was actually administered (after removing ineligibles) to 274 sales reps. The effective response rate of 51% was shown to compare favourably with those reported in both mail survey literature and also sales research. Non-response analysis (by way of a comparison of early and late respondents) was performed, and indicated that there was no reason to suggest non-response bias was a problem. Therefore, the 140 complete, useable responses are deemed to be suitable for further analysis. This analysis is presented in the following three chapters.

6. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

In the previous chapter, details were given of the general methodology used in the present research project. Now that the methods are clear, the following three chapters are designed in order to clearly present the analysis of the data obtained, and to detail the results of the analysis. In order to most effectively fulfil the research objectives, the analysis is presented in three distinct components, each discussed in its own separate chapter. The first component is a descriptive analysis, following this is a measure development process, and finally is a hypothesis-testing component.

The present chapter is concerned with the descriptive analysis component. Essentially, the descriptive analysis had two main parts, firstly was an analysis of the demographic profiling variables of the sales representatives and their organisations, sales reps were profiled on their age, education, gender, experience, and their sales manager's gender, while organisations were profiled on their size, turnover, and the average number of sales reps to each manager. To more clearly present the data, and aid its interpretation, graphical techniques are used in addition to measures of dispersal and central tendency. The second task of the descriptive analysis was to explore and develop the measures of sales force consequences; i.e. role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion; job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intentions, and organisational citizenship behaviour. In this case, more sophisticated techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis were used as well as graphs and measures of the characteristics of the measures (i.e. central tendency and dispersion).¹

It is necessary to perform such analyses for a number of reasons. Firstly, the hypothesis-testing component of the present study will use multivariate analysis techniques in order to test the hypothesised model. In this case, the identification of patterns in, and characteristics of, the variables of interest is necessary in order to identify (and if possible minimise) any violations of the test assumptions and enable

¹ The actual process used in the development of these measures is discussed in depth in later sections of this chapter.

a more robust interpretation of the results. Secondly, it is critical to examine the characteristics of the measures of interest in the study (i.e. the sales force consequences) in order to be confident of their operationalisations and properties. Or in other words, to take the example of job satisfaction, does the measure of job satisfaction used presently exhibit the necessary levels of statistical robustness to make it valid for inclusion in the final model to be tested?

6.1. A Demographic Profile of the Responses

In this section the responses are profiled on two levels. Firstly the individual sales reps responding are profiled (since they are the unit of analysis), and secondly the organisations participating are profiled. Salespeople are described by the variables of gender, age, education, experience, and manager's gender. Organisations are described in terms of turnover, number of employees, and size of sales team.

6.1.1. Sales Representative Gender

Figure 6.1: Pie Chart of Sales Representative Gender

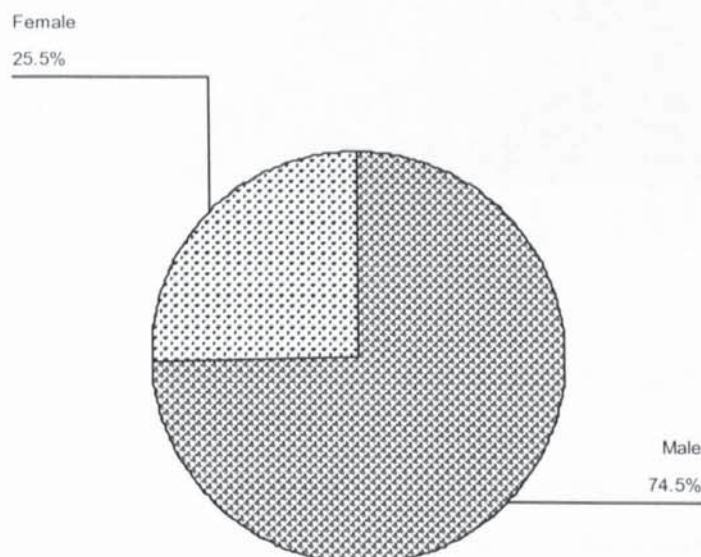


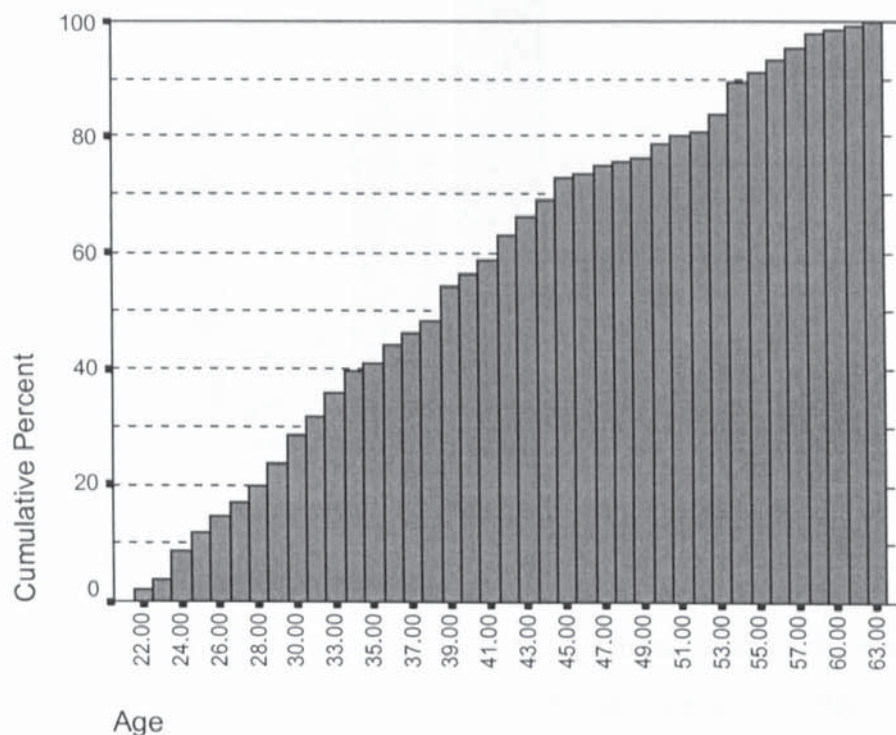
Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of gender among the sales reps who responded to the survey. There were three missing values here. It can be seen that males far outnumber females in the sample, with 25.5% and 74.5% respectively. While this may look skewed, one must consider the population sampled from carefully. Specifically, it is a common assumption that sales is a male dominated profession,

and a number of studies in the academic context have supported this idea (e.g. Bellizzi 1995; Sayre, Joyce and Lambert 1991).²

6.1.2. Sales Representative Age

Respondents were requested to give their age, and Figure 6.2. shows the cumulative distribution for this item, measured in years. There were four missing values for this item. Respondent age varies from a minimum of 22, to a maximum of 69. As can be seen, the distribution is relatively symmetrical, with both mean and median being 39 (mean standard deviation = 11).

Figure 6.2: Cumulative Distribution of Sales Representative Age



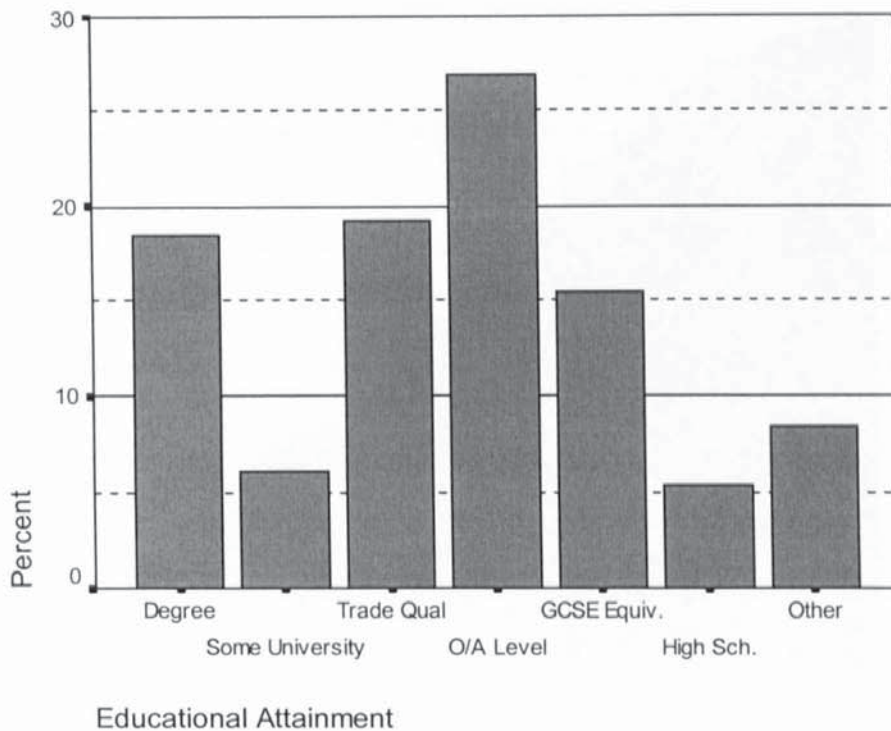
The distribution shows a rather wide range, with a surprisingly large amount of sales reps being over 50, whereas one would assume that a large number of reps would have moved on to other, higher, positions within the organisation by then. However, the large rewards which can be achieved by a high performing sales rep (which can exceed those offered to a manager) could explain this.

² Bellizzi (1995) reported that 88% of his sample were men, while Sayre, Joyce and Lambert reported that 75% of their sample were male.

6.1.3. Sales Representative Educational Achievement

On the final page of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of educational achievement they had attained. An open option was also given so that respondents could indicate anything they achieved which was not specifically shown in the question. Figure 6.3. shows the results of this question.

Figure 6.3: Bar Chart of Sales Representatives' Educational Achievement



There were four missing values for this item. It can be seen that the most common achievement was either 'O' or 'A' levels, although a large proportion of respondents had achieved some form of 'trade' qualification. This is not particularly surprising since sales is generally thought of as a 'profession' and, while not traditionally requiring any formal qualifications, is likely to be populated by those of above average education. Furthermore, many sales positions are filled by technical staff who qualified for their trade first (e.g. electronics sales reps). What is somewhat more surprising is the high level of degree-qualified sales reps responding to the survey. This could be explained by the changing of UK culture of late, in that many more young people are achieving university qualifications than previously. With around 24% of the sample under 30, it is likely that this has influenced the high level of degree qualifications observed.

6.1.4. Experience

Experience was measured in three ways in the questionnaire. Specifically, respondents were asked to provide the number of years they have worked in sales, the number of years they have worked for their present firm, and the number of years they have held their present sales job within that firm.

Figure 6.4: Cumulative Distribution of Sales Representatives' Experience in Sales

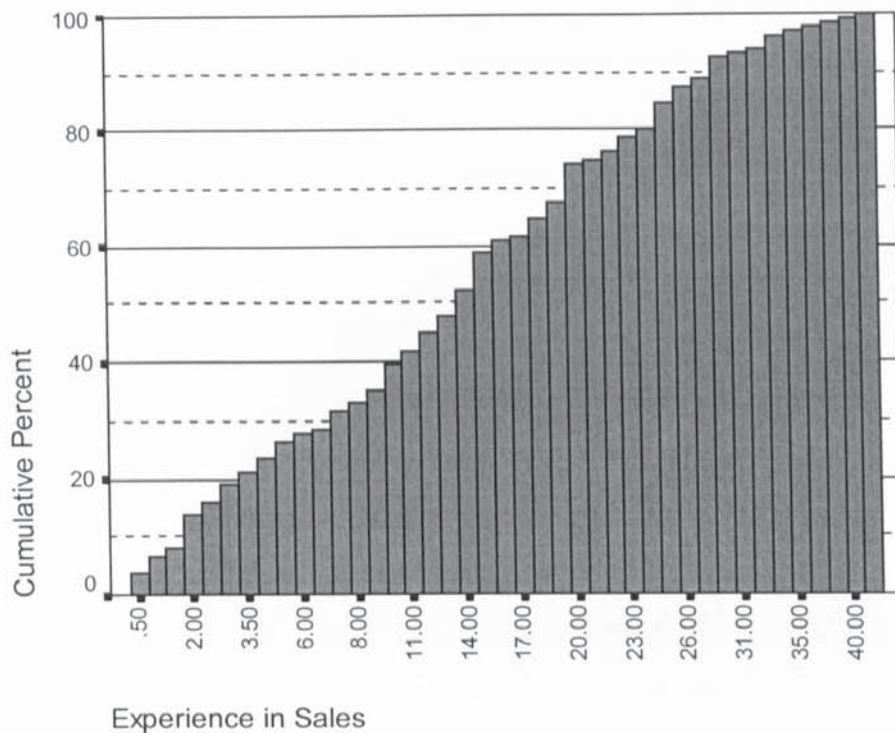


Figure 6.4. shows the cumulative distribution for experience in sales. There were four missing values. Experience varies from a maximum of 44 years, to a minimum of 6 months. The distribution is not particularly skewed here, with both the mean and median approximately 14 years (mean standard deviation = 10.4). There were very few respondents who had less than two years experience in sales, and a considerable amount have over 10 years, giving them plenty of time to formulate their opinions on sales-related issues.

Figure 6.5 shows the cumulative distribution of respondents' experience in their current organisation. There were three missing values here. The responses range from a minimum of approximately 2 months, to a maximum of 40 years. There appears to be something of a positive skew to the responses with the mean being 6.6

years (standard deviation = 6.5), while the median is 4 years, and around 60% of the respondents indicating that they had less firm experience than the mean level. However, only approximately 10% of respondents indicated that they had less than one year's experience in the firm, which implies that the vast majority of the respondents had had enough time to formulate stable opinions of their firm's culture and climate.

Figure 6.5: Cumulative Distribution of Sales Representatives' Experience in Their Current Organisation

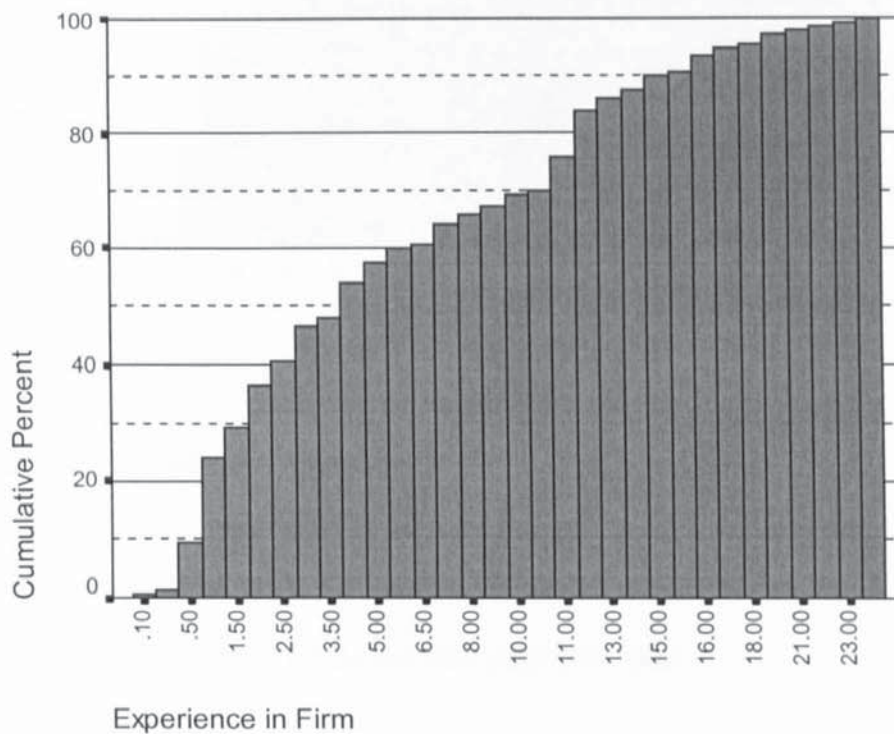
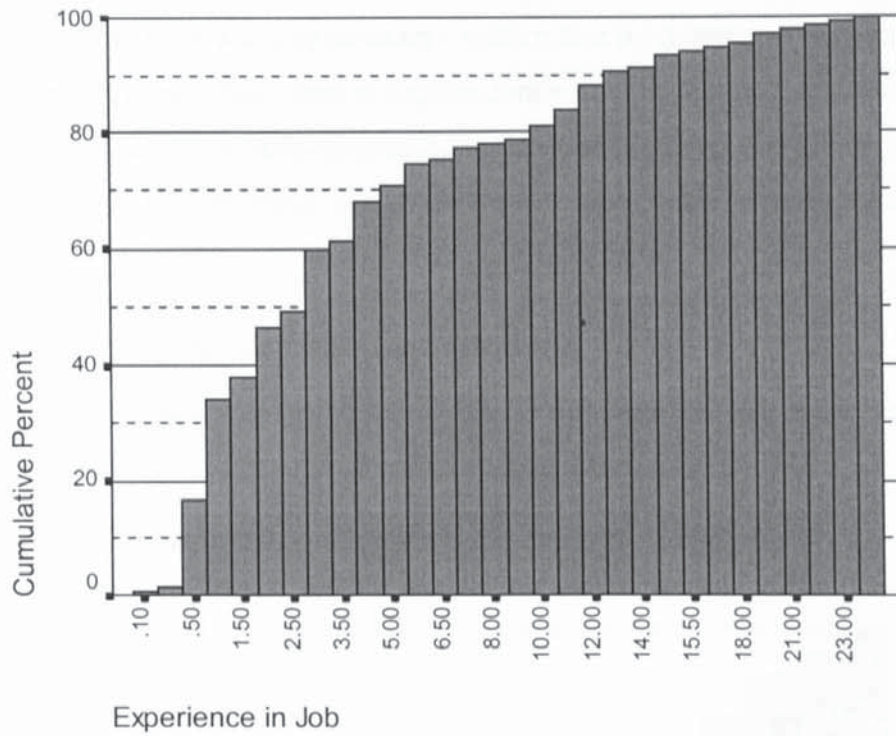


Figure 6.6 shows the cumulative percentage distribution of the respondents' experience in their particular sales position. There were also three missing values. The minimum value is again approximately 2 months, while the maximum value in this case is 38 years. Again there is a positive skew to the data, with the mean value being 5 (standard deviation = 6.1), and the median being 3. Around 70% of the respondents indicated that they had less experience in their job than the mean level. Around 15% of respondents reported that they had less than one year's experience in their job, meaning that the substantial majority of the respondents can be seen to have had enough time to formulate opinions of their sales manager (the critical subject of the research).

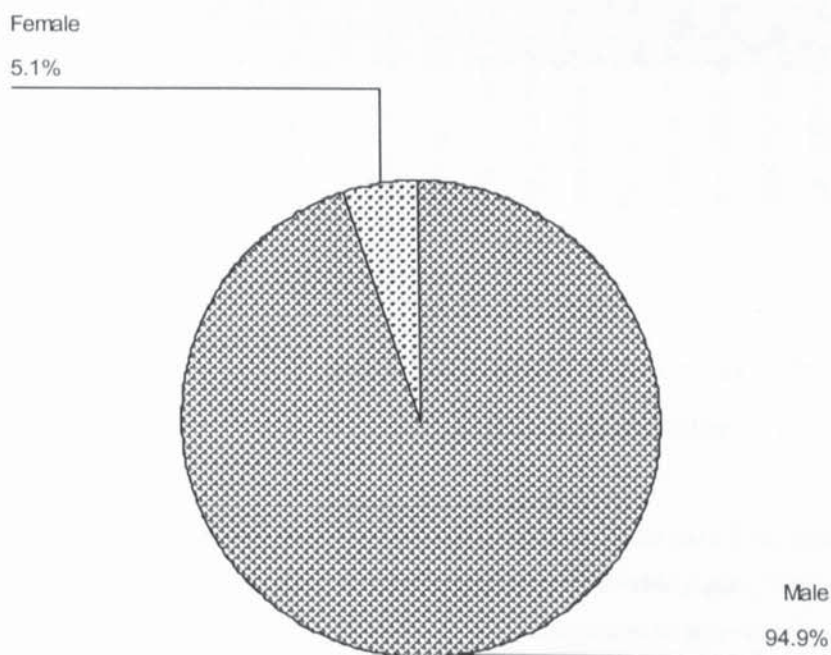
Figure 6.6: Cumulative Distribution of Sales Representatives' Experience in Their Current Job



6.1.5. Sales Manager Gender

Respondents were also asked to indicate the gender of their sales manager on the questionnaire's final page. The results of this item are shown in Figure 6.7,

Figure 6.7: Pie Chart of Sales Manager Gender

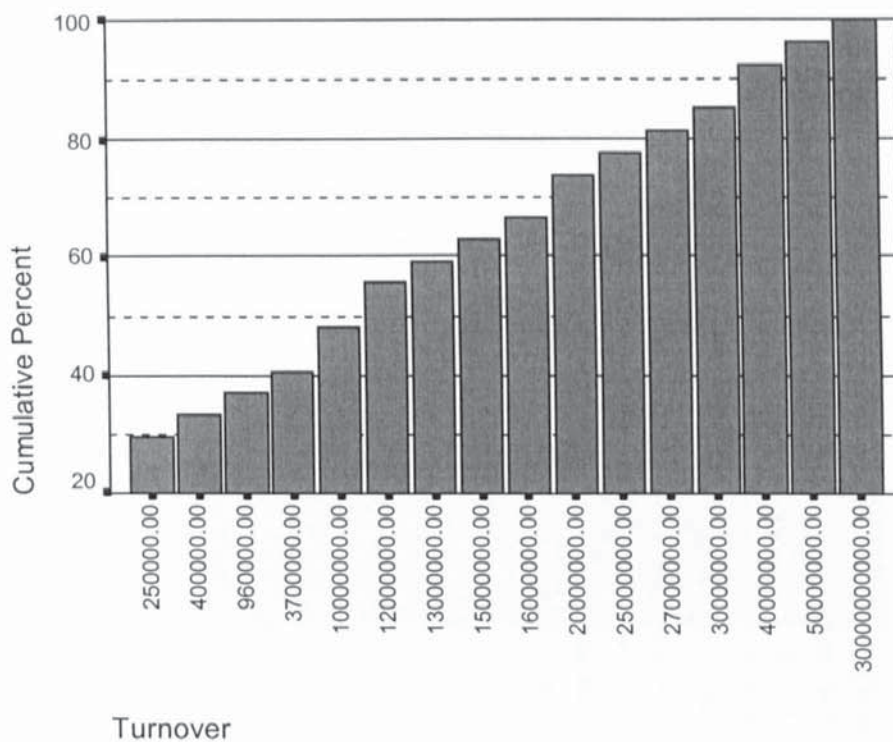


However, it is important to note that 62 respondents declined to answer this question, for unfathomable reasons. Therefore the results here should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, it is clear to see that there were very few female managers reported, with only 5.1% of sales reps stating that their manager was female. Again, it is relevant to note that sales is a male-dominated profession, and it is also likely to have been even more male-dominated in the past, meaning that fewer females are likely to have accumulated enough experience to progress to management (cf. Comer et al. 1995).

6.1.6. Firm Statistics:³ Annual Turnover

Figure 6.8 shows the cumulative percentage distribution of the annual turnover of the organisation. There were seven missing values here.

Figure 6.8: Cumulative Distribution of Firm Turnover



Unfortunately, one outlier makes a substantial contribution to these results, increasing the mean to £1,517,265,500 (standard deviation = £6,704,154,308) while

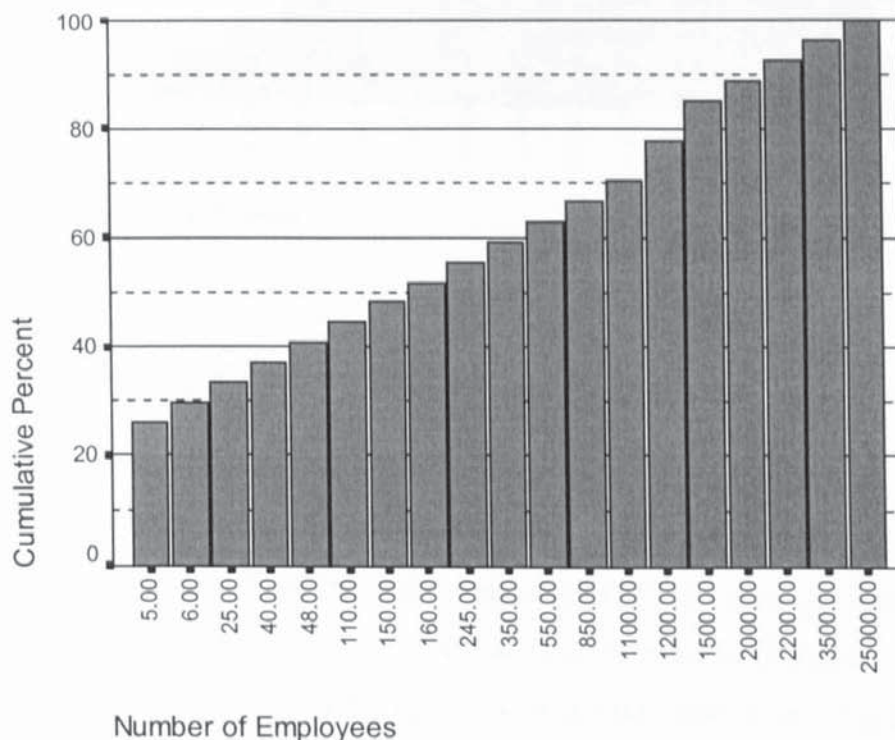
³ Here it must be noted that there were multiple respondents for each firm, and that responses from the same firm were collated together in order to gain a more reliable figure. Where responses differed from the same firm, an average was taken. It is also important to note that the one of the large firms used in the study had split its operation into a number of separate SBUs, which are treated separately.

the mode was only £10,000,000. This meant there was a large skew to the data, with all except the single outlier falling below the mean value. However, it is clear to see that there is a very wide range of firm turnover reported, testifying to the heterogeneity of the organisations responding to the survey.

6.1.7. Firm Statistics: Number of Employees

Figure 6.9 shows the cumulative percentage distribution of the number of employees working in each firm. There were six missing values. Again a single outlier dominates the results, with 25000 employees. Thus, the mean of 1987.57 (standard deviation = 5352.53) is substantially larger than the median of 550. Furthermore, a large skew is evident with around 87% of the respondents falling below the mean. Nevertheless, the wide range of this statistic (minimum of 5, maximum of 25000) show that the study aim to sample a wide range of organisations was achieved.

Figure 6.9: Cumulative Distribution of Firms' Number of Employees

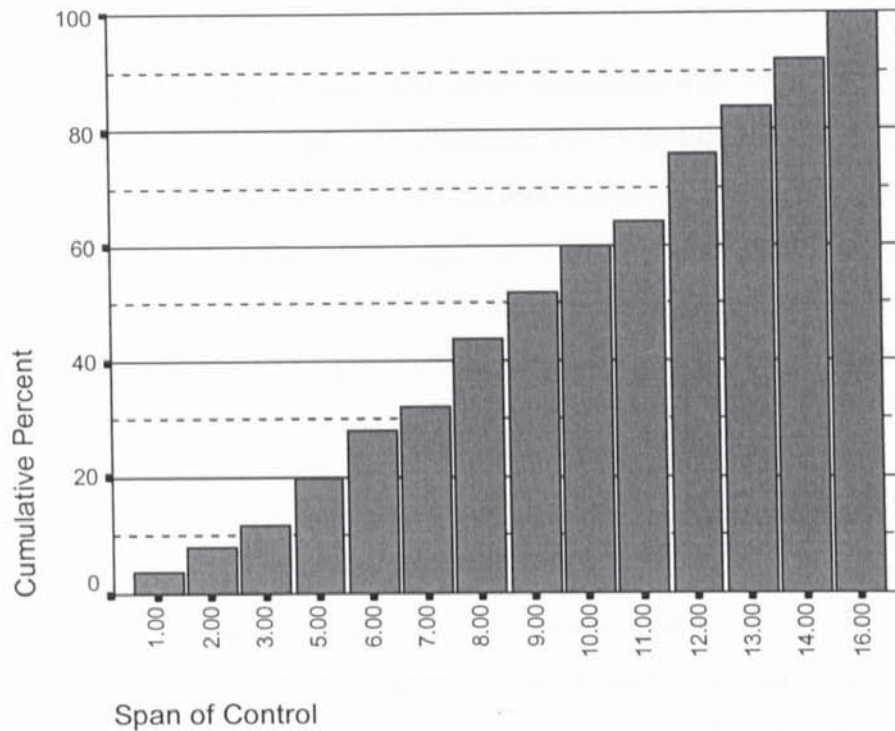


6.1.8. Firm Statistics: Size of Sales Team

Figure 6.10 displays the cumulative percentage distribution of the size of sales team variable, which essentially refers to how many sales reps an average first-line sales manager would supervise in the organisation. Outliers do not seem to be a problem in

this case, and the mean of 9.2 (standard deviation of 4.17) is virtually identical to the median of 9. No skew is evident, with roughly 50% of the respondents falling above and below the mean. A wide range is also evident, with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 16 sales reps supervised per manager.

Figure 6.10: Cumulative Distribution of Size of Sales Team



6.2. Analysing Existing Multi-Item Measures

While brand new measures were developed for the key constructs of the present study – willingness, aggressiveness and caring⁴ – a number of existing measures were utilised to tap the hypothesised consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles. Unless otherwise reported, responses for each measure were obtained on a five-point “strongly agree – strongly disagree scale”. The following section reports the origins and results of analysis of the properties of these existing measures. The general procedure followed was similar to that used to develop the new measures. However, the main aim of the analysis of existing scales was to

⁴ See Chapter 7 for specific information regarding the newly developed scales of sales manager problem resolution styles.

‘verify’ their properties for the present research, since all of the scales had previously been developed and published in reputable sources. As a consequence, the procedure used presently was slightly simpler than that used to develop the new measures (see Chapter 7), focusing on examining the properties of the scales and also on conducting analyses which had not been previously done on the scales (such as confirmatory factor analysis and social desirability bias testing).

Essentially, a two-step approach was taken, beginning with exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach’s alpha (cf. Churchill 1979), and then following up with confirmatory factor analysis (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988). While it is common practice to use confirmatory factor analysis with a separate sample, it is not technically incorrect to use it in a more exploratory mode, consisting of model respecification following exploratory factor analysis on the same sample (Gerbing and Anderson 1988).⁵

6.2.1. Concerning Unidimensionality and Validity

It has been argued that the most important assumption in reflective scale development theory is that there is a single construct underlying any set of items intended to measure that construct (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988). In other words, to be meaningful, a multi-item measure of say, job satisfaction, should tab job satisfaction *only*, and nothing else in a substantive manner. In a more technical sense, the variation in each job satisfaction item should be influenced solely by the subjects’ true job satisfaction score (and random error) and no other latent construct or systematic bias/error.

However, unidimensionality is but one indicator of a scale’s validity, in that a lack of unidimensionality provides negative evidence of validity, but acceptable

⁵ It is important here to note that the term ‘confirmatory’ factor analysis is used as the name for a specific *technique*, rather than an adjective. In other words the term confirmatory factor analysis is not meant to be understood presently as ‘confirming’ previous exploratory factor analyses (which would require a separate sample), but as referring to the application of methods of factor analysis based on structural equation modelling theory, in order to assess the properties of a given measure (cf. Kelloway 1998).

unidimensionality does not totally assure one of a measure's validity (Peter 1981). Validity is simply whether a multi-item measure of a construct actually measures the construct it purports to (cf. Churchill 1999). The existing scales were evaluated as to their levels of two different kinds of validity, convergent and discriminant. However, since the scales had all been subject to reasonably rigorous development in the past (by their original authors), and had also received repeated usage in marketing research, their nomological validity was assumed to be sufficient. Convergent validity, is concerned with whether a measure of a construct is highly correlated with other measures of the same construct (Churchill 1979), while discriminant validity refers to whether a measure is independent of measures of *different* constructs (cf. Anderson 1987). Convergent validity and discriminant validity were both assessed mainly by using information from the confirmatory factor analysis procedure detailed subsequently.

Information on the dimensionality and validity of multi-item scales can be obtained through a variety of methods, some of which do not appear to have been previously implemented with regard to the existing measures used. Firstly, one potential area for examination is the *social desirability bias* (SDB) inherent in each item comprising a scale (cf. King and Bruner 2000; Spector 1992). SDB is an individual trait which concerns whether a respondent is likely to respond to measures in a 'socially desirable' direction, i.e. to make themselves look better by agreeing with favourable items about themselves (Spector 1992). If a measure seems to be influenced by respondents' SDB, then by definition it can not be unidimensional or valid. As Spector suggests; "[i]n this case, the validity of the scale will be open to question. Is it measuring the intended construct or [SDB]?" (1992 p. 36).

Dimensionality and validity can also be suggested by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and internal consistency. Internal consistency analysis taps into whether the items from a scale have high intercorrelations with each other, and with the total of all the items (cf. DeVellis 1991). If a scale has high internal consistency, then a high proportion of that scale's variance is assumed to come from a common source (DeVellis 1991), generally assumed to be the latent construct of interest. Internal consistency is typically measured (within marketing research in particular) with

coefficient alpha, and high levels of internal consistency are usually considered desirable (Churchill 1979). EFA however, taps more directly into the unidimensionality issue, by using the interitem correlations to determine whether there is an underlying latent variable responsible for the pattern of correlations observed in the data (Sharma 1996). By examining EFA results, a researcher can gain a picture of whether there is a single factor underlying the measure (i.e. unidimensional), or multiple factors (i.e. multidimensional and thus invalid).

Further information on dimensionality can be obtained from confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA has been carried out on few of the existing scales used in the present study within marketing and/or sales research, therefore it was deemed necessary to focus on the latter form of analysis in order to assess the scale properties more robustly than has perhaps been done before. Scale development techniques carried out on the existing scales by previous researchers has tended to focus on item-total correlations⁶ and exploratory factor analysis, following Churchill's (1979) method. However, Gerbing and Anderson (1988), and Anderson and Gerbing (1982) argued that this is insufficient to assess the unidimensionality (and thus the validity) of multi-item scales, and that unidimensionality is defined by *both* internal and external consistency. Specifically, Gerbing and Anderson (1988) showed that item-total correlations do not measure *external* consistency and may "fail to discriminate between sets of indicators that represent different, though correlated, factors" (Gerbing and Anderson 1988 p. 188). Furthermore, they argued that exploratory factor analysis does not in fact test for unidimensionality and that scales developed with only exploratory forms of factor analysis "do not correspond directly to the constructs represented by each set of indicators" (Gerbing and Anderson 1988 p. 189). Thus the decision was taken to employ CFA in the analysis of the existing scales.

6.2.1.1. Analysing Social Desirability Bias

In order to provide one indication of validity, each item of the existing scales was examined for possible contamination by SDB. SDB was measured using a 20-item

⁶ Item-total correlations are essentially analogous to the well-known statistic 'Cronbach's alpha' (cf. Nunnally 1978).

scale developed by Strahan and Gerbasi (1972). In order to detect the potential presence of SDB, each scale item was correlated with the SDB measure, with large and significant correlations taken as indications that the items were contaminated with SDB. If items were found to be contaminated with SDB, there were two main strategies available to remove this contamination. Firstly, Spector (1992) suggests that one could delete these items, and thus remove the SDB present in the scale. However, one potential disadvantage with the latter method is that the number of items available to measure the construct is reduced. When evaluating existing scales this can be a major problem, since item numbers are already low because of the purification procedures taken by the original scale developers. For example the measure of turnover intentions used presently has only three items. Reducing item numbers can then lead to lower reliability, and overall lowering of variance captured by the measure (cf. Kline 2000).

Therefore, in order to avoid this issue, when evaluating the existing measures, items which correlated with SDB were not deleted outright. Instead, any items found to have significant correlations with SDB were *transformed* by regressing them against SDB and using the standardised regression residual as the item score, rather than the raw item score (cf. Ganster, Hennessey and Luthans 1983). In this way, the variance in each item which was attributable to the contaminating SDB construct was removed. Additionally, all items in measures where SDB problems were evident were also standardised, so as to allow further analysis and scale construction (e.g. taking means of the items requires all items to be on the same scale).

6.2.1.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Internal Consistency

Following SDB analysis, each measure was analysed for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, and entered into an exploratory factor analysis routine. Since the scales being analysed were pre-existing, and thus had been subjected to significant amounts of prior analysis, a lower bound of 0.7 was used in the first instance when evaluating internal consistency scores (cf. Churchill 1979; Nunnally 1978). Each scale was also subjected to EFA singly at first, and purified as a result. Two main criteria were used when determining whether the items were appropriate for EFA. Firstly, to provide a statistical measure of item homogeneity, the Bartlett's test for sphericity was used. The latter check provides a statistical test for the presence of

correlations amongst the variables (Hair et al. 1998). A significant Bartlett's test result suggests that the correlation matrix is not orthogonal (i.e. the variables are intercorrelated), and thus the data are appropriate for factoring (Sharma 1996). However, the Bartlett's test is rather sensitive to sample size (Hair et al. 1998; Sharma 1996), and thus one should not use it solely to assess appropriateness of the data for EFA. As a result, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was also used. This index (ranging from 0 to 1) determines the extent to which variables are homogenous (Sharma 1996). While there are no statistical tests for the KMO measure, it is generally considered that values above 0.5 imply that the data are appropriate for factor analysis (Hair et al. 1998; Sharma 1996).

When examining the loadings of each item on the extracted factors, a minimal loading of 0.45 was used as the lower bound to indicate a significant factor loading. This is in contrast to the more traditional 0.3 loading, which is commonly considered a threshold level (cf. Spector 1992). A loading of 0.45 was used because it has been suggested that one should take into account sample size when determining what factor loading is significant (cf. Hair et al. 1998). Specifically, a loading of 0.3 requires a sample size of over 350 to be significant at the 5% level. When the sample size is around 150 cases, the critical value for the factor loading increases to 0.45 at the 5% level (Hair et al. 1998).⁷

Following the individual EFAs, the constructs were split into two groups and each group was subjected to another EFA (with the same procedures as discussed above), to gain a first indication of whether there was independence between the constructs. Two groups were used because it was considered that a sample size of 140 may not be enough to assure stability of the factor loadings of so many individual items. Group One consisted of the individual salesperson psychological consequences of

⁷ Essentially, the factor loading represents the correlation between the observed item, and the 'factor' which it loads upon. Thus, one should take into account the statistical significance of the loadings when interpreting the factor structure. However, it has been argued that loadings be evaluated in a stricter manner than correlations, since factor loadings have inflated standard errors (Hair et al. 1998). Thus, taking the concept of power into account, critical values for factor loadings can be computed for

role ambiguity, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, and Group Two consisted of the final work-related outcomes of turnover intentions, and the two OCB scales. The groups were selected mainly to test the constructs within sets of maximally similar variables (cf. Baker and Sinkula 1999). In other words, rather than randomly splitting the constructs, efforts were made to select groups of theoretically similar constructs. These groups were also used in the later CFA procedure (see Section 6.2.1.3.).

The EFA procedure used in all factor analyses was principal axis factoring⁸ with an Oblimin oblique rotation. This is in contrast to the original development process of many of the measures, where orthogonal rotations appeared to be used. An oblique factor rotation was considered conceptually superior here for a number of theoretical reasons, which will be briefly outlined here, and have further specifics detailed in the relevant sections of Chapter 7 (see Sections 7.2.1.2 and 7.2.2.2). It is recognised that orthogonal rotations such as Varimax are the rule rather than the exception, particularly within marketing (cf. Stewart 1997). However, the popularity of orthogonal rotation methods may stem mainly from non-theoretical reasons, such as convenience (i.e. Varimax is the default procedure within most statistical packages such as SPSS) and tradition. For example, at no point in his seminal work on measure development for marketing research does Churchill (1979) mention the possibility of using an oblique rotation in exploratory factor analysis. Unfortunately,

a given sample size and desired level of power. The power level of the present loading value (0.45) is – depending on the exact sample size of course – around 80% (Hair et al. 1998).

⁸ Principal axis factoring (PAF) was used in preference to principal components analysis (PCA) for one critical reason, which sometimes remains unconsidered in marketing research (perhaps because PCA is the default option on SPSS). Specifically, PAF hinges on the assumption that a set of common factors are the cause for any covariation in the data set (cf. Sharma 1996; Kim and Mueller 1978), while PCA makes no such assumption (Bollen and Lennox 1991) and aims to reduce the number of variables to a minimum, and explain the maximum amount of variance in the data (Sharma 1996). Thus, in PCA “the variables determine the latent construct” (Bollen and Lennox 1991 p. 306), and thus form a composite index rather than reflective factors (Sharma 1996). Given that in the present case one is attempting to explain underlying variance in a data set by creating a set of reflective indicators, PAF is the appropriate method, as it is for the majority of marketing research applications.

it also appears that orthogonal methods have rather less theoretical merit than their oblique counterparts.

Specifically, orthogonal rotations assume that the factors are uncorrelated (Sharma 1996), which is an extremely unlikely event when one is considering psychological and even physical variables. As Cattell (1978) states “it makes sense for factors to be correlated rather than represented artificially in rigid orthogonality, because influences in the real world do get correlated” (emphasis in original, p. 104), and further “we should not expect influences in a common universe to remain mutually uninfluenced and uncorrelated. To this we can add an unquestionable statistical argument, namely, that if factors were by some rule uncorrelated in the total population they would still nevertheless be correlated (oblique) in the sample; just as any correlation that is zero in the population has a nonzero value in any sample. And whenever we impose orthogonal axes on factors that are oblique we distort the meaning of the factors, so that the sample would yield mixtures of the true factors” (emphasis in original p. 128).

At the time of his writing, Cattell (1978) implied that the physical effort and computational complication of hand-rotating oblique factor structures could be behind the prevalence of orthogonal rotations (which, as well as being generally simpler to compute, were available in computer form before oblique methods), however, at the dawn of the 21st Century we have no such excuses to fall back on, given the phenomenal capability of statistical packages such as SPSS. Nevertheless, orthogonal rotations offer *statistical* advantages to the researcher that go beyond mere simplicity. Specifically, the creation of correlated factors by use of oblique rotation has potential to cause substantial problems in later model testing due to multicollinearity of the predictor variables, which is likely to result if oblique rotation methods are used to delineate sets of predictor variables in any theory. However, there are techniques to deal with such problems, and they will be discussed subsequently (see Chapters 7 and 8). Nevertheless, it is possible that the multicollinearity issue has also caused many researchers to avoid the use of oblique rotations when the latter methods may have in fact been more theoretically appropriate.

Thus, the decision boils down to a trade-off between logical rigour (which would suggest oblique rotation) and statistical simplicity (which would suggest orthogonal rotation). Furthermore, it seems that researchers would be advised to reverse the standard procedure, and instead beginning with oblique rotations by default, and only using orthogonal rotations when they were appropriate or necessary. In the present case, there was no theoretical reason to suggest uncorrelated factors in any situation in which factor analysis was used, thus oblique rotations were used in the first instance. As Cattell (1978) argues; “one does not need to confound logical, ideational independence with statistical independence in the domain of empirical observation...[t]he sad fact for research is that constraint to an artificial orthogonality destroys both the correctness of the pattern discovered and its constancy from one research to another” (p. 128).

6.2.1.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Procedure

Subsequent to any scale modifications suggested by the above process, the remaining scale items were analysed further using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation (MLE). After the previously described purification process, all remaining items were entered into two CFAs (using LISREL 8.3), and models hypothesising that each item reflected its relevant latent construct were specified. The CFA models contained the same constructs as the two separate EFAs. That is, Group One consisted of psychological consequences (i.e. role ambiguity, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion), and Group Two of final outcomes (i.e. turnover intentions, and the two OCB scales).

Two models were used in the case of CFA since it is reasonably sensitive to sample size (cf. Kelloway 1998). More specifically, Bentler and Chou (1988) suggest a minimum ratio of sample size to parameters estimated of 5:1. In its original form, after the purification procedures described in Sections 6.2.1.1. and 6.2.1.2., there were 28 items left to input into CFA, a ratio of 5 respondents to every item (sample size 140). However, since all of the correlations between the constructs were also to be estimated,⁹ which added another 21 parameters to be estimated, the subsequent

⁹ One could set these correlations to zero, however since oblique EFA rotations were used, this would have been a misleading and fundamentally wrong tactic.

parameters – samples size ratio was poor. However, splitting the model into two allowed an adequate ration to be retained.

Results of the CFA procedure for each model were then used to purify the measures by removing items that had a strong influence on any model-fit problems, such as items which appeared to have highly correlated errors (cf. Kelloway 1998). Subsequent to this, construct reliability was assessed using the composite reliability formula presented in equation 6.1, suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Sharma (1996), and Fornell and Larcker (1981). The variance extracted by each construct was then assessed by the formula presented in equation 6.2, also suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Equation 6.1: Composite Reliability (CR)

$$CR = \frac{\left(\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_{yi} \right)^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_{yi} \right)^2 + \sum_{i=1}^p \text{var}(\varepsilon_i)}$$

Adapted from Fornell and Larcker (1981)

The key terms in the CR equation are as follows; the top line represents the squared sum of all the individual indicator loadings on the latent construct, as does the left term on the bottom line, the right term on the bottom line represents the sum of the indicator error variances. The CR equation has increased in use recently, and it is generally assumed that values of above 0.60 are acceptable returns from the composite reliability formula (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that Fornell and Larcker (1982) argue that an adequate composite reliability value is enough to conclude that a given construct exhibits sufficient convergent validity.

Equation 6.2: Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

$$AVE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_{yi}^2}{\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_{yi}^2 + \sum_{i=1}^p \text{var}(\varepsilon_i)}$$

Adapted from Fornell and Larcker (1981)

Equation 6.2, the AVE equation, contains the following key terms; the top line represents the sum of all the individual item loadings on the latent variable, as does the left term on the bottom line, the right term on the bottom line represents the sum of the error terms of each variable. Essentially, the AVE is an examination of “the amount of variance that is captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error” (Fornell and Larcker 1982 p. 303). A minimum threshold of 0.50 is generally advocated for the AVE (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Theoretically speaking, if the AVE is less than 0.50, the variance due to measurement error exceeds the variance captured by the construct, therefore, the validity of the construct can be called into question (Fornell and Larcker 1982).

6.3. Individual Scale Results

The following section provides the results of the first stage of the development of the existing measures, where each measure is discussed individually, in isolation from the others. As detailed above, the procedure at this first stage was to correlate each item with SDB, removing any problems by using regression residuals as detailed in Section 6.2.1.1. Secondly, an iterative process of EFA and internal consistency analysis was used to eliminate any items which appeared to be detracting from the unidimensionality of the scale. Specific results are presented in the following sub-sections

6.3.1. Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity was originally measured on a six-item version of Rizzo, House and Lirtman’s (1970) scale. Social desirability bias was found to correlate significantly (-0.184) with one item of the role ambiguity scale (“*I know that I have divided my time*

properly while performing tasks connected with my selling”). This item was subsequently transformed (see Section 6.2.1.1.), and the entire measure standardised. Cronbach’s alpha was initially 0.831, higher than the threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally 1978). Additionally, EFA extracted one factor explaining 56% of the variance. The KMO and Bartlett’s tests were both indicative of an appropriate data set. Thus, all six items were retained at the first stage. Table 6.1 presents the EFA results

Table 6.1: EFA Results for Role Ambiguity

Scale Item	Factor Loading
I feel certain about how much authority I have in my selling position	0.512
I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my selling position	0.732
I know that I have divided my time properly while performing the tasks connected with my selling	0.588
I know what my responsibilities are in my selling position	0.893
I know exactly what is expected of my in my selling position	0.801
I receive clear explanations of what has to be done in my selling position	0.580

Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 6 iterations.

KMO = 0.819; Bartlett’s Test = 364.388, df: 15, $p = 0.000$

6.3.2. Emotional Exhaustion

Originally, both dimensions of Maslach and Jackson’s (1981) emotional exhaustion scale were included, i.e. how often the respondent experienced each feeling, and how strong the feeling was. However, existing sales force research tends to measure only how strongly respondents agree with various emotional exhaustion statements (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999), losing some of the information inherent in Maslach and Jackson’s (1981) instrument, while simplifying interpretation of the construct. Therefore, in the present case, the ‘how often’ scale was used to represent the level of emotional exhaustion felt by the sales representative, in order to both maintain consistency with Maslach and Jackson’s *original* (1981) construct, and also to simplify the measurement process in a similar way to Babakus et al. (1999) by only using a single dimension. Cronbach’s alpha was well above the 0.7 threshold (Nunnally 1978) at 0.877. However, EFA results indicated that, while there was one factor explaining 51% of the common variance, a second factor explained a further 13%. Two of the original 9 items loaded strongly on this second factor, while one item did not reach the required loading on either. The pattern matrix for the two factors is presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: First EFA Results for Emotional Exhaustion

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
I feel emotionally drained from my work	0.756	
I feel used up at the end of the workday	0.762	
I feel fatigued when I have to get up in the morning and face work	0.662	
Working with people all day is really a strain for me		0.729
I feel burned out from my work	0.819	
I feel frustrated by my job	0.652	
I feel I'm working too hard on my job	0.745	
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me		0.824
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	NS	NS

NS = Nonsignificant (<0.45) loading on any factor
Note: Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

KMO = 0.863; Bartlett's Test = 586 651, df: 36, $p = 0.000$

Analysis of the pattern matrix presented in Table 6.2 suggested that the second factor could represent some kind of 'people-related' strain factor, judging by the items that loaded on the factor. Drawing from the conceptual definition of emotional exhaustion (see Section 4.3.), it seems that this 'people-related' strain is more likely to be an *antecedent* to emotional exhaustion, rather than some kind of subcomponent of emotional exhaustion (cf. Maslach and Jackson 1981). As a result, a decision to delete the two items which comprised the 'people-related' strain factor was taken. The item which failed to load adequately on either factor was also deleted. As a result, the Cronbach's alpha for the remaining six-item scale was slightly reduced to 0.873. When a second EFA of the six items was conducted, no problems were noted, and therefore the six remaining items were retained for further analysis. The results of the second EFA are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Second EFA Results for Emotional Exhaustion

Scale Item (reduced wording)	Factor Loading
I feel emotionally drained from my work	0.754
I feel used up at the end of the workday	0.724
I feel fatigued when I have to get up in the morning and face work	0.744
I feel burned out from my work	0.787
I feel frustrated by my job	0.685
I feel I'm working too hard on my job	0.736

Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 4 iterations.

KMO = 0.857; Bartlett's Test = 390.827, df: 15, $p = 0.000$

6.3.3. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured on a four-item scale, and social desirability was found to be significantly correlated with two of the items. These items were consequently transformed (see Section 6.2.1.1.) to remove the bias, and the entire measure

standardised. Cronbach's alpha was higher than the 0.7 threshold (Nunnally 1978) at 0.895, while EFA extracted a single factor accounting for 77% of the common variance. Furthermore, the KMO and Bartlett's tests both indicated the suitability of the data set for EFA. Thus no items were deemed necessary for removal prior to the subsequent stages. The results of the EFA procedure are detailed in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: EFA Results for Job Satisfaction

Scale Items	Factor Loading
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment	0.811
My job is exciting	0.761
My work is satisfying	0.923
I'm really doing something worthwhile in my job	0.834

Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 7 iterations.

KMO = 0.816; Bartlett's Test = 352.486, df: 6, $p = 0.000$

6.3.4. Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment was originally measured on a 15-item scale. Cronbach's alpha was very high at 0.91, exceeding Nunnally's (1978) recommended threshold.¹⁰ However, EFA extracted three factors, explaining 62% of the common variance. The pattern matrix for the three-factor solution is presented in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: First EFA Results for Organisational Commitment

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading ^a		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
I am willing to put in a great deal of extra effort to help this firm	0.715		
I talk up this firm to my friends as a great firm to work for	0.763		
I feel very little loyalty to this firm (R)	NS	NS	NS
I would accept almost any job to keep working for this firm		-0.720	
I find that my values and the organisation's are very similar		-0.519	
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this firm	0.784		
I could just as well work for another firm doing the same work (R)	NS	NS	NS
This firm inspires the best in me in the way of performance		-0.494	
It would take little change to make me leave this firm (R)			0.99
I am glad I chose this firm over the others I was considering	0.675		
There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this firm			0.535
Often I find it hard to agree with this firm's policies (R)	NS	NS	NS
I really care about the fate of this firm	0.760		
For me, this is the best possible firm to work for	0.714		
Deciding to work for this firm was a mistake on my part (R)	0.595		

NS = Nonsignificant (<0.45) loading on any factor
Note: Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

KMO = 0.909; Bartlett's Test = 1049.199, df: 105, $p = 0.000$

¹⁰ However, it is also recognised that Cronbach's alpha is directly dependent on the number of items in a scale, so as the item count increases, so does the alpha score (Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

It can be seen that Factor 1 appears to capture the key ‘gestalt’ of organisational commitment, with aspects of ‘pride’ in working for the firm, caring about the firm’s fate, and being willing to give extra of one’s efforts for the firm all being evident. Factor 3 on the other hand appears mainly to tap into something related to turnover intentions, which in the present study is treated as a distinct construct, measured separately. Therefore the two items loading on Factor 3 were deleted. Factor 2 is somewhat more confusing, as there does not appear to be a strong common theoretical underpinning to the three items loading on this factor, and one would expect the three items to tap into the same commitment factor as those loading on Factor 1, on face value at least. However, one could consider the three items loading on Factor 2 to be *consequences* of organisational commitment, rather than actual reflectors of the underlying construct. More specifically, one item seems to tap into some kind of ‘behavioural loyalty’ to the firm, and another to a performance improvement consequence. The other item taps into something related to ‘value congruence’ between the organisation and the individual, which could be considered a consequence of a highly committed individual, i.e. that their own values become more congruent with the firms. Thus, it can be argued that the three items comprising Factor 2 do not specifically reflect the organisational commitment construct itself, but more the influence of organisational commitment on the individual. As a result of these conceptual arguments, the items loading on Factors 2 and 3 were deleted, along with the three items which did not load on any factor. The resulting 7 items were then re-analysed using EFA, with a single factor explaining 65% of the variance extracted, and no problems evident. KMO and Bartlett’s tests were all suggestive of the appropriateness of the data set, and loadings all high and significant. Cronbach’s alpha for the reduced scale was 0.88. As a result, the 7 item scale was retained for future analysis. The results of the second EFA process are presented in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Second EFA Results for Organisational Commitment

Scale Item (reduced wording)	Factor Loading
I am willing to put in a great deal of extra effort to help this firm	0.681
I talk up this firm to my friends as a great firm to work for	0.836
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this firm	0.872
I am glad I chose this firm over the others I was considering	0.800
I really care about the fate of this firm	0.659
For me, this is the best possible firm to work for	0.753
Deciding to work for this firm was a mistake on my part (R)	0.757

*Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 5 iterations.
KMO = 0.893; Bartlett’s Test = 586.820, df: 21, p = 0.000*

6.3.5. Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions was measured using a three item scale, of which two items were found to be significantly correlated with social desirability bias, and consequently transformed (see Section 6.2.1.1), and the entire scale standardised. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.905, well above Nunnally's (1978) recommended cut-off level. EFA extracted a single factor explaining 84% of the common variance, and neither the KMO nor the Bartlett's test suggested that the data set should not be factor analysed. As a result, none of the items was deemed to be a candidate for removal prior to the later stages of analysis. The EFA results for the turnover intentions scale are presented in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: EFA Results for Turnover Intentions

Scale Item (reduced wording)	Factor Loading
It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year	0.924
I often think of quitting	0.738
I will probably look for a new job next year	0.980

*Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 11 iterations.
KMO = 0.695; Bartlett's Test = 338.452, df: 3, p = 0.000*

6.3.6. Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

In Chapter 4, the concept of 'organisationally-directed' OCBs was defined as consisting of discretionary behaviours from salespeople which were specifically directed at helping the organisation. Furthermore, in Chapter 5, the measurement of organisationally-directed OCBs was described as consisting of two existing OCB dimensions – sportsmanship and civic virtue. Each of these individual OCB constructs was modelled using an existing reflective scale, the properties of which will be examined first, before consideration is given to the overall OCB construct. More specifically, each scale was examined using EFA separately, and then both scales entered into a second EFA to determine whether the scales appeared to overlap or not.

6.3.6.1. Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship was measured on a three-item scale. However, all three of the items were found to be significantly correlated with social desirability bias, and thus transformed (see Section 6.2.1.1). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.79, above

the recommended threshold (Nunnally 1978). EFA extracted one factor, explaining 71% of the common variance, with neither KMO nor Bartlett's tests indicating any problems. Results of the EFA are presented in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8: EFA Results for Sportsmanship

Scale Item (reduced wording)	Factor Loading
I generally consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters (R)	0.669
I tend to make 'mountains out of molehills' (R)	0.897
I always focus on what's wrong with my situation, rather than the positive side of it (R)	0.721
<i>Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 16 iterations.</i>	
KMO = 0.682; Bartlett's Test = 138.989, df: 3, $p = 0.000$	

6.3.6.2. Civic Virtue

Civic virtue was also measured on a three-item scale, however none of these items were found to have significant correlations with social desirability bias, and were thus retained in their original form. Cronbach's alpha was unfortunately rather low at 0.54, under the recommended threshold (Nunnally 1978),¹¹ although no items were suggested as potential candidates for removal on further analysis. However, results for the EFA did suggest a candidate. The results of the first EFA are presented in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: First EFA Results for Civic Virtue

Scale Item (reduced wording)	Factor Loading
I generally 'keep up' with developments in the company	0.712
I generally attend functions that are not required, but help the company's image	0.695
I am willing to risk disapproval in order to express my beliefs about what's best for the firm	NS
<i>NS = Nonsignificant (<0.45) loading on any factor</i>	
<i>Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 5 iterations.</i>	
KMO = 0.893; Bartlett's Test = 586.820, df: 21, $p = 0.000$	

While a single factor was extracted, explaining 51% of common variance, one item did not load on the factor at a high enough level to ensure significance for the sample size. On further examination, it was considered that this item may tap something slightly different from the other two. More specifically, the first two items appear to tap behaviours which may be slightly 'inconvenient' for the employee (e.g. take extra effort above that required normally), the third item taps a behaviour which may lead to unpleasant consequences from superiors. Thus, while employees may be willing to 'put themselves out' for the firm, they may be less will to actually risk

¹¹ However, it is noted that Cronbach's alpha may underestimate reliability of scales with small numbers of items (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

reprimand. This may explain the lack of loading of that third item. As a result, this item was removed, and the analysis rerun and results presented in Table 6.10

Table 6.10: Second EFA Results for Civic Virtue

Scale Item (reduced wording)	Factor Loading
I generally 'keep up' with developments in the company	0.656
I generally attend functions that are not required, but help the company's image	0.656
<i>Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 5 iterations.</i>	
KMO = 0.500; Bartlett's Test = 28.235, df: 2, $p = 0.000$	

The KMO and Bartlett's tests both indicated the suitability of the data set for factor analysis, and the Cronbach's alpha for this two-item scale was 0.61. Thus, the items were both retained for input into subsequent stages of analysis.

6.3.6.3. Analysing Both OCB Scales Simultaneously

Subsequent to the individual analyses of the Sportsmanship and Civic Virtue scales, they were both entered into an EFA together. The rationale behind this was to gain an indication of whether there was any cross-loading between the constructs, which would suggest that the items actually reflected a similar underlying factor, rather than distinct dimensions of organisationally-directed OCBs. KMO and Bartlett's tests indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis, and two factors were extracted, together explaining 72% of the total variance. As a consequence of these favourable results, both OCB scales were considered suitable for further analysis. The results of the EFA are presented in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11: EFA Results for Both OCB Constructs

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading	
	Sportsmanship	Civic Virtue
I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters (R)	0.677	
I tend to make 'mountains out of molehills' (R)	0.889	
I always focus on what's wrong with my situation (R)	0.727	
I generally 'keep up' with developments in the company		0.543
I generally attend functions that are not required but help the firm		0.790
<i>Note: Rotation converged in 3 iterations.</i>		
KMO = 0.657; Bartlett's Test = 175.779, df: 10, $p = 0.000$		

6.4. Group Analysis Using EFA

Subsequent to the individual scale analyses using EFA which are detailed above, two groups of similar constructs were created and subjected to EFA in an attempt to gain an impression of the independence of the construct measures. Group One consisted

of the individual salesperson psychological consequences of role ambiguity, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, and Group Two consisted of the final work-related outcomes of turnover intentions, and the two organisationally-directed OCB scales. A rationale for the group selection was detailed in Section 6.2.1.2., and thus will not be repeated here. The following subsections detail the results of the EFA for each group.

6.4.1. Group One: Salesperson Psychological Consequences

The first group of constructs consisted of role ambiguity, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. When subjected to an EFA, four factors were extracted, explaining 66% of the total variance. KMO and Bartlett's tests both indicated the suitability of the data set for factor analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6.12. As can be seen from the results, simple structure was achieved, and all items loaded on their respective constructs, bar one organisational commitment item. This item was removed and the results of a second EFA without this item are presented in Table 6.13. No problems were observed in the second EFA, and as a result of this, all of the scales were retained in those operationalisations for further analysis with CFA.

Table 6.12: First Results for Group One EFA

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading			
	Org. Com	Job Sat.	Amb.	Exh.
I am willing to put in a great deal of extra effort to help this firm	NS			
I talk up this firm to my friends as a great firm to work for	0.806			
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this firm	0.884			
I am glad I chose this firm over the others I was considering	0.818			
I really care about the fate of this firm	0.545			
For me, this is the best possible firm to work for	0.688			
Deciding to work for this firm was a mistake on my part (R)	0.623			
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment		-0.582		
My job is exciting		-0.533		
My work is satisfying		-0.835		
I'm really doing something worthwhile in my job		-0.639		
I feel certain about how much authority I have			0.499	
I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my selling position			0.706	
I know that I have divided my time properly			0.595	
I know what my responsibilities are in my selling position			0.928	
I know exactly what is expected of me in my selling position			0.780	
I receive clear explanations of what has to be done			0.562	
I feel emotionally drained from my work				0.791
I feel used up at the end of the workday				0.731
I feel fatigued when I have to get up in the morning and face work				0.713
I feel burned out from my work				0.788
I feel frustrated by my job				0.664
I feel I'm working too hard on my job				0.733

NS = Nonsignificant (<0.45) loading on any factor
Note: Rotation converged in 9 iterations.
 KMO = 0.884; Bartlett's Test = 2054.422, df: 253, *p* = 0.000

Table 6.13: Second Results for Group Two EFA

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading			
	Org. Com	Job Sat.	Amb.	Exh.
I talk up this firm to my friends as a great firm to work for	0.799			
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this firm	0.879			
I am glad I chose this firm over the others I was considering	0.820			
I really care about the fate of this firm	0.531			
For me, this is the best possible firm to work for	0.680			
Deciding to work for this firm was a mistake on my part (R)	0.634			
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment		-0.577		
My job is exciting		-0.530		
My work is satisfying		-0.840		
I'm really doing something worthwhile in my job		-0.635		
I feel certain about how much authority I have			0.500	
I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my selling position			0.705	
I know that I have divided my time properly			0.591	
I know what my responsibilities are in my selling position			0.924	
I know exactly what is expected of my in my selling position			0.779	
I receive clear explanations of what has to be done			0.558	
I feel emotionally drained from my work				0.788
I feel used up at the end of the workday				0.746
I feel fatigued when I have to get up in the morning and face work				0.712
I feel burned out from my work				0.792
I feel frustrated by my job				0.662
I feel I'm working too hard on my job				0.733

Note: Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

KMO = 0.876; Bartlett's Test = 1926.684, df: 231, $p = 0.000$

6.4.2. Group Two: Final Psychological and Behavioural Outcomes

The second group consisted of the final outcome variables of salesperson turnover intentions, and the two organisational citizenship behaviour constructs (sportsmanship and civic virtue). When entered into EFA, three factors were extracted explaining 77% of the total variance in the data set. KMO and Bartlett's tests both indicated that the data sets were appropriate for factor analysis. The results of the EFA are presented in Table 6.14, showing simple structure. As a result, all three scales were considered suitable for further analysis.

Table 6.14: Results for Group Two EFA

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading ^a		
	Turn. Int.	Sports.	Civ. Vlrt.
It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year	0.933		
I often think of quitting	0.651		
I will probably look for a new job next year	0.998		
I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters (R)		0.669	
I tend to make 'mountains out of molehills' (R)		0.935	
I always focus on what's wrong with my situation (R)		0.665	
I generally 'keep up' with developments in the company			0.491
I generally attend functions that are not required but help the firm			0.851

Note: Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

KMO = 0.744; Bartlett's Test = 559.637, df: 28, $p = 0.000$

6.5. Group Analysis Using CFA

Following EFA, each of the groups were analysed using CFA. Reasons for utilising CFA in addition to EFA are detailed in Section 6.2., and thus will not be reiterated here. The procedure for the CFA was as follows. After the exploratory analyses detailed above, all the relevant items were entered into a measurement model using LISREL 8.3. (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996), and each model was respecified to obtain satisfactory unidimensionality. The main criteria for respecification were twofold. Firstly, items with high values in the residual matrix were considered as candidates for deletion. High values in the residual matrix indicate that the covariances in the data are not being adequately explained by the model, and thus the model may need respecification (cf. Sharma 1996). Secondly, items which appeared to reflect more than one of the hypothesised constructs were candidates for deletion, as were those items which had error terms correlated with errors in other items (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). Items with the last two characteristics violate the unidimensionality assumption, and thus should be deleted (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). The following subsections detail the analyses performed on each group.

6.5.1. Group One: Salesperson Psychological Consequences

In the first instance, significant problems were noted with highly correlated errors between the organisational commitment items in particular. Furthermore, the measures of role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction also had some problems with cross-loading items and correlated errors. These issues implied none of the measures were sufficiently unidimensional at the first cut, requiring some respecification. This respecification was done in an iterative process, with variables displaying the most serious problems (i.e. highest modification indices) removed first, and then the model re-run and the process repeated until no major problems were observed. Specifically, three organisational commitment items, three emotional exhaustion items, three role ambiguity items and a single job satisfaction item were removed throughout the course of the iterations. As a result, a final measurement model contained three-item scales for each latent construct. These results are presented in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15: CFA Results for Measurement Model One

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Standardised Factor Loading (t-value)			
	Org. Com.	Role Amb.	Job. Sat.	Exh.
Proud to be a part of this firm	0.85 (fixed) ^a			
Glad I chose this firm to work for	0.82 (11.08)			
Deciding to work for this firm was a mistake	0.82 (11.14)			
Feel certain about my authority		0.53 (fixed)		
Clear goals and objectives		0.83 (4.90)		
Have divided my time properly		0.57 (4.67)		
My job is exciting			0.77 (fixed)	
My work is satisfying			0.88 (10.66)	
Really doing something worthwhile			0.88 (10.67)	
Feel emotionally drained by my work				0.77 (fixed)
I feel used up at the end of the workday				0.71 (6.57)
I feel I'm working too hard				0.71 (6.58)
Composite Reliability (CR)	0.87	0.69	0.88	0.77
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.69	0.43	0.71	0.53

Fit indices: Chi Square = 59.81, df = 48 ($p = 0.12$), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.042 ($p = 0.63$), Adjusted Goodness of fit index (AGFI) = 0.89, Incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.98, Comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.98

a: fixed items do not return a t-value

Overall, the CFA measurement model for Group One returned excellent statistics, as can be observed in Table 6.15. The χ^2 statistic was a non-significant 59.81 ($p = 0.12$), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.042 ($p = 0.063$). Heuristic fit indices were also excellent as can be seen.

In terms of the individual scales, results appeared to be quite satisfactory with the exception of the AVE for role ambiguity. Specifically, role ambiguity's AVE is 0.43, which is slightly below the recommended cutoff point (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). All other CR and AVE values were above their recommended cutoffs of 0.6 and 0.5, respectively, indicating acceptable levels of reliability and convergent validity (cf. Fornell and Larcker 1982). Furthermore, the results in Table 6.15 show that all factor loadings are significant. As a result, it is clear that, pending further validity assessment (see Section 6.6.), the measures of organisational commitment, role ambiguity, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are suitable for hypothesis testing purposes.

6.5.2. Group Two: Salesperson Final Outcomes

The analysis of the second group of consequences illuminated a problem with a cross-loading turnover intentions item, and two cross-loading OCB items. As a result

of this lack of unidimensionality, one turnover intentions item and one sportsmanship item was deleted, using the same iterative process as explained in Section 6.5.2. Following this, the final measurement model was estimated, containing two-item scales for all three constructs (sportsmanship, civic virtue and turnover intentions). The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 6.16.¹²

Table 6.16: CFA Results for Measurement Model Two

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Standardised Factor Loading (t-value)		
	Turn. Int.	Sports.	Civ. Virt.
It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year	0.92 (fixed) ^a		
I will probably look for a new job next year	0.99 (11.58)		
I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters (R)		0.55 (fixed)	
I always focus on what's wrong with my situation (R)		0.83 (3.36)	
I generally 'keep up' with developments in the company			0.79 (fixed)
I attend functions that are not required but help the firm			0.54 (2.35)
Composite Reliability	0.95	0.65	0.62
Average Variance Extracted	0.91	0.50	0.46

Fit indices: Chi Square = 6.41, df = 6 (p = 0.38), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.022 (p = 0.58), Adjusted Goodness of fit index (AGFI) = 0.95, Incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.99, Comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.99

a: fixed items do not return a t-value

As can be seen from Table 6.16, the overall model results for Group Two are encouraging. The χ^2 was 6.41 and nonsignificant ($p = 0.38$), and the RMSEA was also nonsignificant ($p = 0.58$) at 0.022. Furthermore, all the heuristic fit indices were excellent.

In terms of the individual scale results, similar results can be observed here as in Group One. More specifically, all CR and AVE values are above their respective 0.6 and 0.5 cutoff values, indicating acceptable validity and reliability (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1982), bar one scale. Specifically, the civic virtue AVE is slightly below 0.5 at 0.46. Nevertheless, all factor loadings are significant, providing evidence of the measures' quality. Thus, the operationalisations of the three scales (turnover intentions, civic virtue and sportsmanship) are deemed acceptable for further analysis.

¹² Two-item scales are acceptable if the constructs are oblique (correlated) rather than orthogonal (Kelloway 1998). As was discussed earlier, the scales have been allowed to correlate throughout the analysis process.

6.6. Discriminant Validity Analysis

Since there were two separate measurement models created, it was necessary to further analyse the measures in order to gain some kind of picture of their discriminant validity when compared with measures in the other model. For example, analysing turnover intentions in relation to the measures examined in the model containing job satisfaction, organisational commitment, emotional exhaustion, and role ambiguity. Discriminant validity was assessed by testing a series of two-factor covariance structure models, one for each of all possible pairs of constructs¹³ (i.e. $(7 \times 6) \div 2 = 21$), alternately fixing to unity, and then freeing the phi-coefficient (i.e. the correlation between the constructs). A χ^2 difference test was then performed (Anderson 1987; Bagozzi and Phillips 1982; Baker and Sinkula 1999). More specifically, the latter procedure is based on the theory of nested covariance structure models. One model can be said to be *nested* within another if “one can obtain the model with the fewest number of free parameters by constraining some or all of the parameters in the model with the largest number of free parameters” (Kelloway 1998 p. 35). In this case, the model with the *fixed* phi parameter, is nested within the model with the *free* phi parameter.

This becomes important when one considers that the difference between two nested models may be statistically tested using the χ^2 difference test, allowing a direct assessment of which model is superior. The testing of discriminant validity using nested models revolves around the critical value for χ^2 with one degree of freedom (i.e. 3.84). In the present case, if the χ^2 statistic of the model with the *fixed* phi coefficient exceeds the χ^2 statistic of the model with the *free* phi coefficient by over 3.84, then one can consider that the two constructs display adequate discriminant validity, since there is a *statistically significant difference* between the models, and the model hypothesizing two constructs performs better. The results of the nested model testing for discriminant validity are shown in Table 6.17. The correlations

¹³ Discriminant validity between the measures of sales manager problem resolution styles and the measures of consequences detailed in the present chapter are examined in Chapter 7. However, at this point I restrict my analysis to the consequence variables described in the present chapter only.

between the constructs are shown as well as the change in χ^2 resulting from the test. The constructs were operationalised exactly as they were during the CFA procedures.

Table 6.17: Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Role Amb. (1)		-0.47	-0.53	0.38	-0.07*	-0.12*	-0.58
Job Sat. (2)	31.43		0.71	-0.66	-0.03*	0.42	0.52
Org. Com. (3)	19.26	8.49		-0.65	-0.16*	0.34	0.59
Turn. Int. (4)	27.34	13.9	5.95		0.20	-0.48	-0.33
Emot. Exh. (5)	23.77	17.8	19.02	24.01		-0.38	0.15
Sports. (6)	46.79	87.55	20.51	21.64	31.02		0.08*
Civ. Virt. (7)	31.85	33.5	21.16	29.41	15.73	42.62	

Above diagonal are correlations (*non-significant flagged*)
Below diagonal are change in chi-squares (*non-significant flagged*)

As can be seen, all of the relevant constructs display adequate discriminant validity according to the nested models tests. As a result, all measures of salesperson consequences were considered suitable for hypothesis testing applications, subject to descriptive analysis, which is presented in the following section.

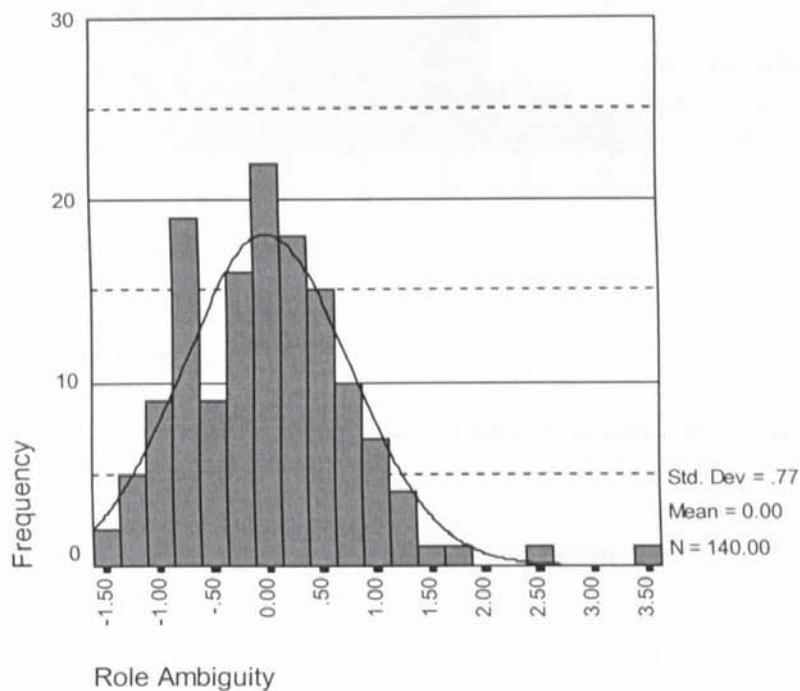
6.7. Descriptive Analysis of Individual Scales

Following the construction of the measures of individual salesperson consequences, based on existing scales, as was detailed above, it was also necessary to examine the characteristics of the final scales. This was necessary to determine whether the measures were appropriate for further use in hypothesis testing applications, such as structural equation modelling. The main thrust of this examination was focussed around the distributional characteristics of the measures, including a search for significant outliers, and statistical testing of the distribution. In particular, graphical techniques were used to gain a basic picture of each measure's distribution, while the Kogomorov-Smirnoff (KS) test was also used to provide a statistical test of the normality of the distribution. The KS statistic is a test of the hypothesis that the observed distribution differs from a normal distribution. A nonsignificant KS result indicates that the null hypothesis of no difference between the observed and a normal distribution can not be rejected, or in other words that the observed distribution approximates normality (Hair et al. 1998).

6.7.1. Role Ambiguity

Figure 6.11 displays the frequency distribution of the final role ambiguity scale. No missing values were in evidence. As can be seen, a skew towards lower values is evident, however a nonsignificant KS test was returned. As a result, it is considered that the role ambiguity scale displays sufficient robustness to be utilised in the next stage of analysis as it stands.

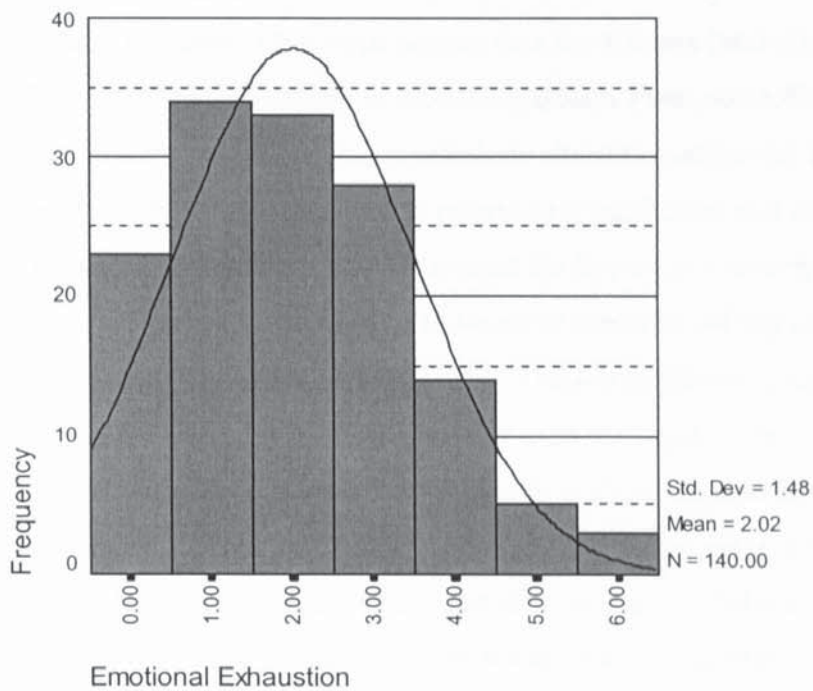
Figure 6.11: Histogram of Role Ambiguity



6.7.2. Emotional Exhaustion

Figure 6.12 displays the histogram for the emotional exhaustion measure, no missing values were observed. As can be seen from Figure 6.12, a skew towards lower values is evident. Nevertheless, a nonsignificant KS test was returned, suggesting no significant deviation from normality. As a result, the measure of emotional exhaustion was considered to display sufficient characteristics for inclusion in future analyses as it stands.

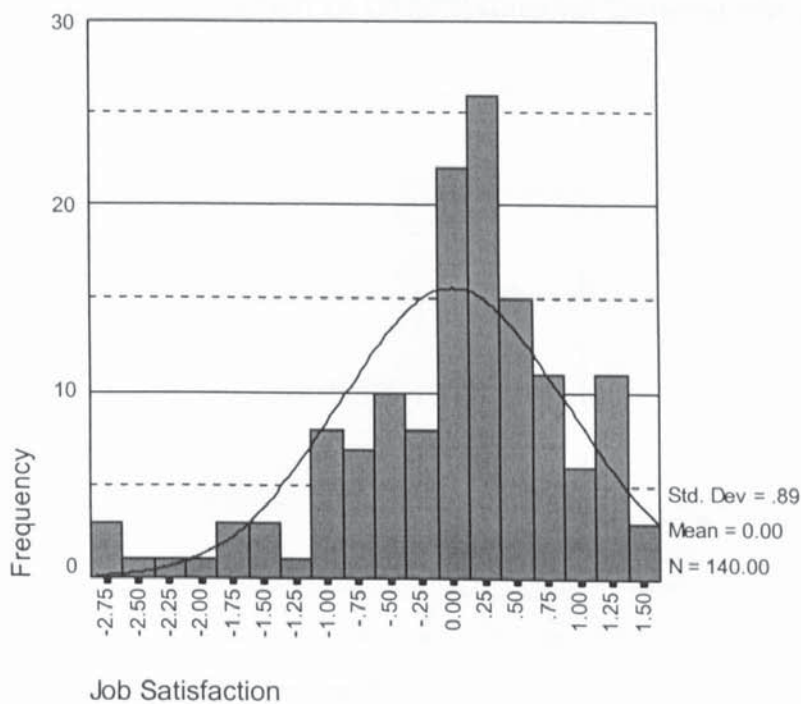
Figure 6.12: Histogram of Emotional Exhaustion



6.7.3. Job Satisfaction

Figure 6.13 presents the histogram for the job satisfaction measure. No missing values were seen.

Figure 6.13: Histogram of Job Satisfaction

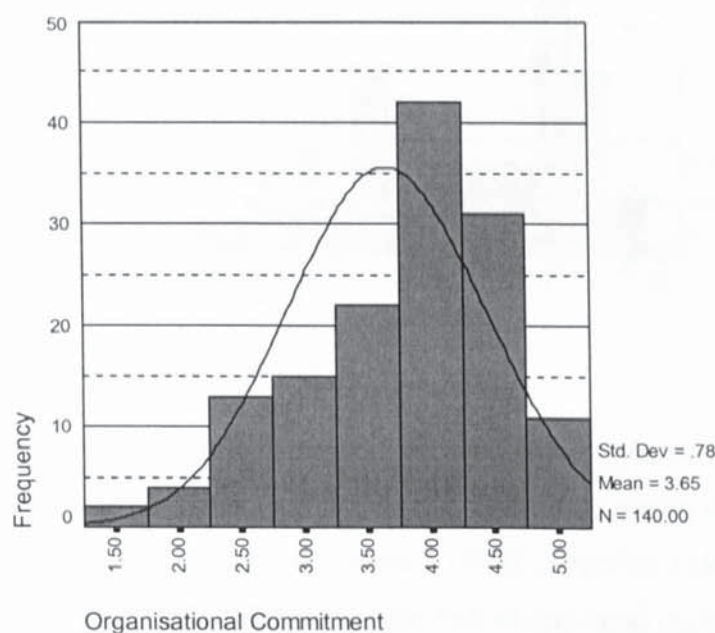


As can be seen, a skew towards larger values is quite evident in this distribution, and in fact a significant KS test result was returned ($z = 1.53, p = 0.019$). This is unfortunate, however it has been argued that the KS test (and other statistical tests of this ilk) is extremely sensitive to minor departures from normality (cf. Sharma 1996). Thus, it has been suggested that researchers should examine the kurtosis and skewness values of any distribution returning a significant test result. Furthermore, the proposed analysis technique to be used for hypothesis testing (structural equation modelling) is generally considered to be quite robust to all but severe departures from normality (Chou and Bentler 1995). The job satisfaction variable returned values of -0.93 and 1.06 for skewness and kurtosis respectively. However, severely non-normal variables have been described in relevant literature as having skewness and kurtosis in the range of 3 and 21 respectively (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995). Furthermore, on examination of the distribution itself, it did not seem as if there were major departures from normality, such as bimodal characteristics. As a result, it was considered that there were no serious concerns regarding the normality of the variable, and it was retained without transformation for future analysis.

6.7.4. Organisational Commitment

No missing values were evident in the distribution of the organisational commitment variable, which is graphically displayed in Figure 6.14.

Figure 6.14: Histogram of Organisational Commitment

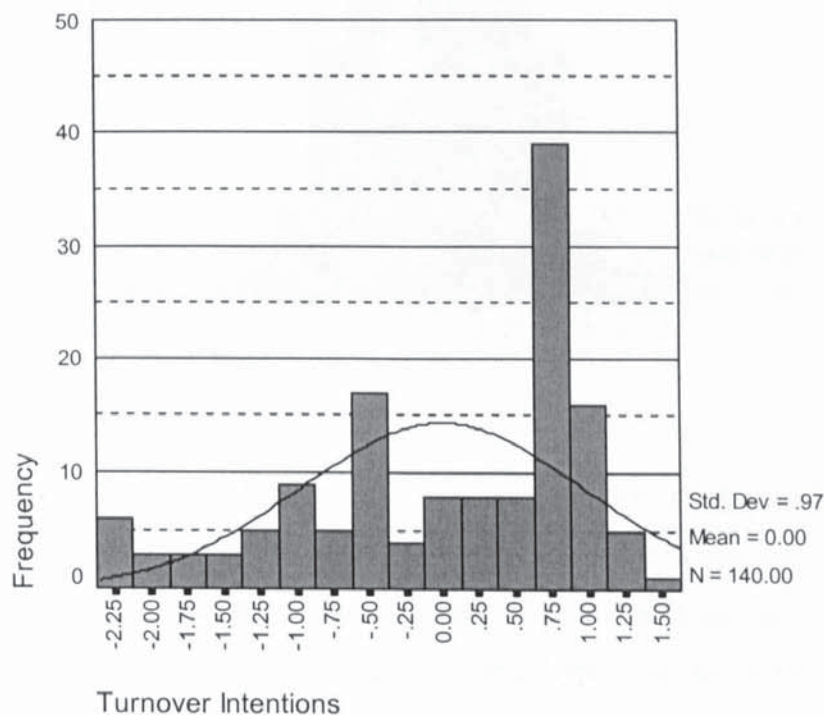


As can be seen, a slight skew towards the larger values can be seen, although it does not look particularly significant. However, a significant KS result was returned ($z = 1.77, p = 0.004$), suggesting that further investigation was required (cf. Sharma 1996). Examination of the skewness and kurtosis figures showed values of -0.7 and -0.01 respectively, both which seemed substantially below what would be considered as particularly non-normal, for SEM purposes in particular (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995). Therefore, and since the distribution did not display any major problems such as bimodality, it was considered that the organisational commitment variable could be retained for further analysis and hypothesis testing in its original state, without needing transformation.

6.7.5. Turnover Intentions

Figure 6.15 displays the histogram for turnover intentions, which did not indicate any missing values.

Figure 6.15: Histogram of Turnover Intentions



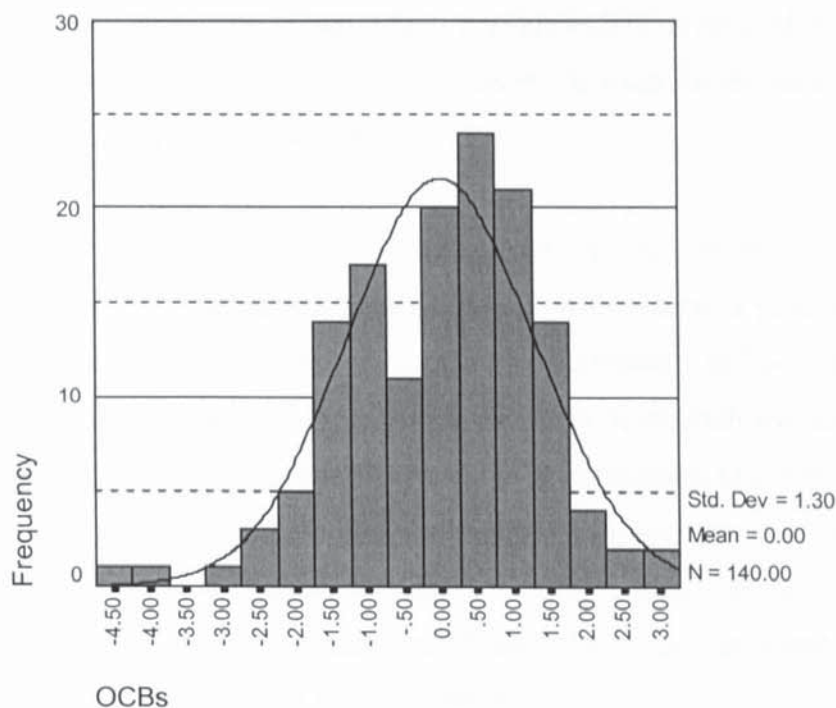
As can be seen the distribution does look rather non-normal, and indeed a significant KS test was observed ($z = 2.09, p = 0.000$). As a result, the distribution was examined more closely (cf. Sharma 1996), returning a skewness of -0.752 , and a kurtosis of -0.537 . Neither of these values appeared cause for concern in the context

of structural equation modelling (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995). Furthermore, there did not appear to be any other significant problems with the distribution, in particular there was only a single mode. As a result of this examination, it was considered that the turnover intentions scale should be retained in its present form, rather than transformed.

6.7.6. Organisationally-Directed OCBs

Figure 6.16 shows the distribution of the organisationally-directed OCB construct.¹⁴ No missing values were evident from the analysis.

Figure 6.16: Histogram of OCBs



As can be seen, a slight skew is in evidence, but the distribution looks approximately normal. Unsurprisingly, a nonsignificant KS result was obtained. Thus, as a result it was considered that the organisationally-directed OCB variable displayed sufficient characteristics to be entered into the formal hypothesis testing procedure as it stands.

¹⁴ For the purposes of the analysis, the construct was modelled by summing the scores of both OCB factors (both dimensions were standardised) to create an aggregated score.

6.8. Summary

This chapter provided a description of responses to the key variables of interest in the study, excluding those which are to be developed in the next chapter (i.e. the sales manager problem resolution style constructs). Responses were profiled in two ways, firstly by individual and secondly by organisation. Concerning the organisational profile, Chapter 5 noted the difficulty in delineating the population for the study, however, it was seen that a wide variety of organisations were represented in the sample, particularly in terms of turnover and number of employees. In terms of individual respondents, it was observed that the sample does seem to follow characteristics of previous sales samples, particularly in terms of gender issues. Further, a wide variety of individuals appears to be represented in the sample, which is reassuring in terms of tentatively assessing any sample biases and the potential generalisability of the findings.

A number of previously-developed measures were also assessed in the chapter, relating to the hypothesised consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles. The assessment process consisted of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, as well as item analysis and reliability. Each item was also assessed for its correlation with social desirability bias. In general, most of the measures performed adequately. However, particular problems were noted with the organisational commitment and emotional exhaustion measures, which did not appear to be unidimensional in the first instance. Measures were also assessed for their discriminant validity, and no problems were noted.

The next chapter reports the measure development procedures regarding the newly-developed sales manager problem resolution style constructs, i.e. sales manager willingness, aggressiveness and caring.

7. DEVELOPING MEASURES OF SALES MANAGER PROBLEM RESOLUTION STYLES

Having previously described the domain of sales manager problem resolution styles (PRSs) in Chapter 3, developed reflective items to capture the constructs, and collected data in Chapter 5, the present chapter describes the measure development and purification process used to develop the summated rating scales. Since the problem resolution style measures are newly created, a slightly different strategy was used to that outlined in Chapter 6 to examine the existing summated scales, although they were both along the same lines. In developing the problem resolution style measures, a two-pronged strategy was utilised, and will be detailed as such. Firstly, the chapter will focus on using well-established procedures for assessing the reliability, validity, and dimensionality of the constructs, such as Cronbach's alpha and exploratory factor analysis (e.g. Churchill 1999; 1979; DeVellis 1991; Spector 1992). At this stage, more detailed item analysis was carried out on the problem resolution style measures than was the case in Chapter 6. Secondly will be a more rigorous consideration of dimensionality, reliability and validity using more recently developed techniques of confirmatory factor analysis (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988; Hair et al. 1998; Kelloway 1998; Sharma 1996). However, the confirmatory factor analysis methodology is virtually identical to that used for the pre-existing measures in Chapter 6. Thus, in Section 7.1. the first stage of measure development is outlined, followed by Section 7.2., which details the actual purification and development of the measures as specified in 7.1. Following this, in Section 7.3. the second stage of measure development is outlined, and in Section 7.4 the actual confirmatory factor analysis model is detailed. Finally, in Section 7.5. the validity of the measures is assessed, and the chapter is summarised in Section 7.6.

7.1. The Process of Measure Development Part One

7.1.1. Item Analysis

The measures of sales manager problem resolution styles used for the present study all comprise sets of items, which are hypothesised conceptually to *reflect* the relevant latent construct (be it sales manager willingness, caring or aggressiveness). When developing a scale of such reflective, or effect, indicators (see for example Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001, or Bollen 1984, for more information on the concept of effect versus cause indicators), the developer is attempting to select a set of items which most accurately reflects the variation in the latent construct. Not all items originally developed for this purpose will perform as expected, and these items must be identified and eliminated (DeVellis 1991). Therefore, having already generated data using these items (see Chapter 5), the next task was to analyse each item ‘atomistically’ in order to discover which items (if any) were candidates for elimination.

When developing a scale of effect indicators, it is conceptually (and practically) important that the items are positively correlated with one another, or in other words ‘internally consistent’ (cf. Churchill 1979). As put in no uncertain terms by Spector (1992) “the purpose of item analysis is to find items that form an internally consistent scale” (p. 29). So, it can be seen that scales displaying high levels of internal consistency will also exhibit high correlations between their individual items. High correlations between an item and the other items in its respective scale should thus be considered a particularly desirable quality in any reflective scale item (Churchill 1999; DeVellis 1991). As a consequence, the first step in item analysis is examination of the correlations between the individual items in each scale. Assuming all items are coded in the same direction,¹ those items which either correlate negatively or poorly with the others are strong candidates for exclusion. Furthermore, one can also examine the *item-total correlation* of each item, which is the extent to

¹ The reader will note that a number of items in the problem resolution style scales were coded in a negative direction in order to avoid bias (see Chapter 5).

which an individual item correlates with the sum of the entire scale.² Items with particularly low item-total correlations are also candidates for elimination.

However, internal consistency is not the sole characteristic which scale items should be evaluated on, and a number of other attributes are desirable in a high-quality scale item (Churchill 1999). Firstly, high variance is desirable, since it means the item is able to provide greater discrimination among individuals with different levels of the relevant construct. Secondly, it is also generally desirable that the item mean is close to the centre of its range, which reduces the skewing of the scale's distribution towards the extremes of the range. Therefore, these characteristics should also be examined to provide further information on the quality of each item, and can also contribute to the decision to reject or retain any individual item.

Additionally, each item was analysed for its correlation with a measure of social desirability bias (SDB, Strahan and Gerbasi 1972), as was also done for the items comprising the existing scales (see Section 6.2.1.1. for a full discussion of the procedure used for the existing scales). However, unlike the procedure detailed in Section 6.2.1.1., the problem resolution style items which were highly correlated with SDB were deleted (cf. King and Bruner 2000; Spector 1992). The items were removed (rather than transformed as was done in Chapter 6) because of the early stage of measure development. Specifically, when developing new measures (rather than using existing ones) it is better to completely remove any items which show the potential to be biased, than to retain them for future analysis and use of the scale. In this way, the scale will be developed in the most rigorous way possible from the outset, without inflicting potential biases on future users of the scale. Furthermore, the generation of large item pools allows the removal of suspect items without making a significant impact on the quality of the scale, which can be the case with scales which have been previously purified (see Section 6.2.1.1.).

² However, there are two methods for calculating the item-total correlation. The *uncorrected* item-total correlation correlates each item with all the items in the scale *including itself*. The *corrected* item-total correlation correlates the item with all items in the scale *excluding itself*. It is considered advisable to examine the corrected item-total correlation (DeVellis 1991).

Having examined the characteristics of each item above, one should next examine the *reliability* of the entire scale. In purely conceptual terms, the reliability of any measuring instrument or procedure is a gauge of whether the instrument produces the same results over a course of repeated use (cf. Carmines and Zeller 1979; Zikmund 1997). There are many different methods of assessing reliability, most of which rest on the assumption of separate data sets (often taken over two time periods) such as the test-retest, and alternative form methods (DeVellis 1991; Zikmund 1997). However, the most popular method to assess reliability in marketing literature has traditionally been the coefficient alpha (also known as Cronbach’s alpha) measure of internal consistency (cf. Churchill 1999).³ While Cronbach’s alpha has had its critics (e.g. Boyle 1991; Cortina 1993; Gerbing and Anderson 1988), it has been suggested that it has the same status as any other method of reliability analysis (Carmines and Zeller 1979). Churchill (1999) also praises the coefficient, stating that the “*square root of coefficient alpha is the estimated correlation of the k-item test with the errorless true scores*” (italics in original p. 462).

In theory, Cronbach’s alpha can vary between a low of 0.0, and a high of 1.0. However, it has been suggested that a lower bound of 0.70 be used as a threshold of acceptability in scale development (cf. Churchill 1979; Nunnally 1978). Nevertheless, it has been suggested that lower values may be used when scales are in the early stages of development, and DeVellis (1991 p. 85) provides the following range of benchmarks for coefficient alpha.

Below 0.60	Unacceptable
Between 0.60 and 0.65	Undesirable
Between 0.65 and 0.70	Minimally acceptable
Between 0.70 and 0.75	Respectable
Between 0.80 and 0.90	Very good
Much over 0.90	Consider shortening scale ⁴

³ It is highly likely that the popularity of Cronbach’s alpha can be traced to the fact that it only requires a single data set, and also that it is easily performed and interpreted using statistical analysis software such as SPSS. Therefore, its application using cross-sectional surveys and quantitative analysis methods (both extremely popular in marketing research) is relatively simple.

⁴ As previously alluded to in Chapter 6, Cronbach’s alpha is influenced directly by the number of items in the scale, meaning that it is positively biased with large scales (cf. Carmines and Zeller 1979), and negatively biased with small scales (Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

Most of the issues discussed previously will directly influence the alpha statistic. Specifically, low or negative inter-item correlations, weak or negative item-total correlations, skewed means and low variances will all tend to reduce the alpha statistic. Thus, in developing the scales, items which appear to substantially reduce the alpha statistic are strong candidates for elimination. However, the final decision to remove an item is based on a combination of the above issues. In particular, items which are highly correlated with SDB will not necessarily decrease alpha. Therefore, alpha should be but one of a number of preliminary item analysis methods, rather than the sole criteria for scale purification.

7.1.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Dimensionality

A key assumption of any reliability analysis is that each scale measures a single underlying construct. As Gerbing and Anderson put it, measures on a scale are “meaningful only if...the measure is acceptably unidimensional” (1988 p. 186). Therefore, the scale development process must include analysis of whether the multiple items of any scale can “acceptably be regarded as alternative indicators of the same construct” (Gerbing and Anderson 1988 p. 186).

However, the issue of unidimensionality has resulted in two different approaches to measure development. Within marketing research, the first (perhaps more traditional) approach is best exemplified by Churchill (1979) when he argues that dimensionality should only be assessed *after* the scale has been examined for internal consistency and purified if necessary. The second (more recent) approach suggests that one should first assess dimensionality, and *then* examine reliability (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

Examining these approaches in more conceptual terms, it is clear that the second approach rests on the likelihood that measure development may not have created a set of unidimensional items, and thus the researcher needs to determine whether any other dimensions are being captured (cf. Churchill 1979). However, Churchill (1979) goes further to argue that this approach is undesirable since any assessment of dimensionality done *before* item analysis and reliability assessment will be influenced by the error and unreliability of any poor-quality items. Thus, any

examination of dimensionality will be inaccurate, and likely to produce a number of conceptually spurious dimensions.

It is perhaps for this reason that Gerbing and Anderson (1988) do not categorically reject the notion of scale purification before dimensionality assessment. In fact, they go so far as to suggest that purification can be useful in reducing a large number of items to a more manageable number, prior to dimensionality assessment. Thus, in an attempt to take both schools of thought into account, each scale was subjected to the item analysis procedures described in the previous section (i.e. inter-item and item-total correlations, and internal consistency), before its dimensionality was assessed.

In assessing dimensionality, a factor analytic approach was adopted. Factor analysis is particularly useful when one is examining scales for dimensionality, since it can “help the investigator determine whether one broad or several more specific constructs [are present in] the item set” (DeVellis 1991 p. 92). More specifically, there are two main approaches which can be employed to examine the dimensionality of a scale. The first can be characterised as purely exploratory. Specifically, one makes *no assumption* about the number of underlying dimensions present in the item set. Evidence of unidimensionality would be present if the items in the factor analysis loaded significantly on only one factor (Spector 1992). However, if more than one factor emerges, and the additional factors actually make theoretical sense, then evidence of multidimensionality is provided (Spector 1992). However, if the additional factors are not interpretable, then evidence of multidimensionality is *not* provided, and it is likely that the other factors may represent error (DeVellis 1991). In this case, one could remove the items loading on the secondary factors.

A less exploratory approach is given by Hair et al. (1998). More specifically, if the researcher is testing a hypothesis about a *specific number of factors* which underlie a set of items, then one could simply stop the factor analysis algorithm when that number of factors has been extracted (DeVellis 1991; Hair et al. 1998; Sharma 1996; Spector 1992). In this case, unidimensionality would be in evidence if the items loaded on the hypothesised factor(s).

While both approaches could be utilised in the present case, it can be argued that in some ways the former approach is more rigorous. Specifically, if a single factor *does* underlie the data, then the factor analysis routine will stop *itself* when that factor is extracted. Since factor analysis is based on repeated iterations (cf. Sharma 1996), stopping the process artificially does not allow the routine to extract the full amount of ‘information’ from the item set. Thus, if any items do *not* load on the single factor, the solution will not provide enough information for the researcher to assess whether any secondary factors are trivial, or conceptually valuable. Thus, even though each construct was hypothesised to have a specific number of dimensions (i.e. one), the factor analysis routine was *not* instructed to stop iterating at the hypothesised number of factors.

7.1.3. Validity

The validity of any given scale is essentially its correspondence with the unobservable construct that it is claimed to be a measure of (cf. Churchill 1999). The creation of an internally consistent, unidimensional scale is a necessary prerequisite to any assessment of any reflective scale’s validity (Churchill 1979). However, reliability and unidimensionality are merely *necessary but not sufficient* characteristics for a scale to be considered valid (Peter 1981). Specifically, examination of reliability and dimensionality such as that in the previous sections can only provide *negative* evidence of validity, in that if a measure is not reliable, it is not valid (Churchill 1999), and if it is multidimensional, then it *cannot* be valid since it simply measures some construct other than the one it is claimed to measure. A number of different types of validity may be assessed. The types of validity assessed in the present study are discriminant, criterion-related, and nomological validity, although convergent validity is also touched on (cf. Churchill 1999).⁵

Criterion-related validity is present if a given construct behaves as expected with relation to some criterion. However it is irrelevant whether there is a theoretical basis for the association (cf. DeVellis 1991). Specifically, if the correlation between the

⁵ Note that convergent and discriminant validity will be discussed in Sections 7.4.5., and 7.5. respectively, since they are assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (see Section 6.7 for additional discussion of discriminant validity).

scale and the criterion is high, then the measure is said to have criterion-related validity (Churchill 1999). However, criterion-related validity is often confused with nomological validity. Nevertheless, the distinction is conceptually clear, in particular, nomological validity is obtained if a given measure behaves as expected in relation to another construct which it is *theoretically related to* (Churchill 1999). That said, in practice the same correlation can prove evidential of criterion-related *and* nomological validity simultaneously (DeVellis 1991).

In Chapter 4, the theoretical bases for relationships between the sales manager problem resolution styles and a number of other constructs were provided in detail. More specifically, there were strong conceptual grounds to assume associations between a) sales manager willingness to respond and salesperson role ambiguity, and OCBs, b) sales manager caring and salesperson job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, role ambiguity, and organisational commitment, and c) sales manager aggressiveness and salesperson emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions. For this reason, these relationships were used to assess nomological and criterion-related validity of sales manager willingness, caring and aggressiveness. Firstly, validity was examined using the correlation coefficients between the constructs. Evidence of nomological validity would be provided by existence of a large number of the relevant associations. Furthermore, more robust evidence can be drawn from Chapter 8 from the results of the hypothesis testing process.⁶

7.2. Constructing the Measures Part One

The first step in constructing the measures was to reverse score any negatively worded items so that high scores would correspond to high levels of each construct.⁷ This was done firstly to ensure that all items were consistently scored,⁸ and secondly to aid in conceptualising the constructs and models. Specifically, if a high level of

⁶ More specifically, support for the hypotheses would provide further evidence of nomological validity.

⁷ In fact, this was done even before descriptive analysis was undertaken.

⁸ Although this could have also been done by negatively scoring all positively worded items.

say, sales manager willingness was hypothesised to decrease levels of role ambiguity, then if all constructs were scored positively, a *negative* statistical relationship would be expected (i.e. exactly the same as the hypothesis).

Following this, each construct was analysed in isolation from the others at first, in order to purify the scale without the potential confusion of the other scales.

Following this, all three purified scales were entered into an exploratory factor analysis, to gain an idea of the independence (or otherwise) of the three scales.(see Section 6.2.1.2. for a full explication of the factor analysis procedure used here).

7.2.1. Sales Manager Willingness

7.2.1.1. Item Analysis

As detailed in Section 7.1., the first stage of measure development was an examination of the correlation matrix for the original 10 items included in the questionnaire (see Appendix 3.1 for the full correlation matrix). It was seen that item 4 (“*my manager doesn’t waste any time when dealing with a problem*”) was not correlating as strongly with the rest of the items, as the other 9 items. More specifically, while no correlations were negative, four of the 9 correlations were below 0.3, although all were significant. Furthermore, the corrected item-total correlation was relatively low⁹ at 0.42.

However, the scale alpha was an excellent 0.9087 already, and dropping item 4 would increase the alpha to 0.9145, a marginal increase at best. Furthermore, item 4 displayed the desirable characteristics of a relatively central mean of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.131. Therefore, it was decided to retain the item for future analysis, although with a caveat of giving it special attention in future stages.

⁹ While there is no generally accepted minimum value for the item-total correlation, it has been said that a value below 0.40 is low, and below 0.30 is unacceptable (cf. Spector 1992).

Table 7.1: Profile of Sales Manager Willingness Items

Scale Item	Mean	SD
In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly	3.54	1.09
Manager doesn't seem to have the confidence to take the necessary action to solve a problem (R)	4.04	1.07
My manager doesn't seem to take the initiative when dealing with a problem (R)	4.01	1.07
My manager doesn't waste any time when dealing with a problem	3.59	1.13
My manager often needs to be forced to deal with problems (R)	3.94	1.1
My manager often passes the buck when dealing with a problem (R)	3.86	1.14
My manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored (R)	4.2	1.01
My manager waits until the problem absolutely has to be dealt with before acting (R)	3.79	1.03
Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation (R)	3.95	1.1
Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so (R)	4.03	1.06

Note: Scale runs from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"

The correlation matrix and corrected item-total correlations were analysed further, but no other items seemed to be of concern. Therefore, at this stage, information regarding each item's mean, variance and impact on coefficient alpha was taken into account in order to make a final decision on which items should go forward to future analysis. Table 7.1 shows the profile of the means and standard deviations of each item. It can be seen that a number of items have relatively high means, although only item 7 ("*my manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored*") is substantively higher than any other, and it also had a relatively low (although still over 1) standard deviation. However, removing this item would not increase the scale alpha, although it would only decrease it to 0.899. Therefore, similar to item 4, it was decided to retain item 7, but to give it special attention in the following stages.

Furthermore, each item was correlated with a measure of social desirability bias (SDB, see Section 7.1.1.). Here, item 5 ("*my manager often needs to be forced to deal with problems*") was found to be significantly correlated with SDB ($r = 0.24, p = 0.004$), and was removed. Thus, based on the above, 9 of the original 10 items were retained as the measure for sales manager willingness, with a coefficient alpha of 0.8934.

7.2.1.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Dimensionality

The dimensionality of the sales manager willingness scale was assessed using the procedure outlined in Section 7.1.2. Essentially, the items were entered into a

principal axis factoring routine¹⁰ with an oblimin oblique rotation. Justification for the oblique rotation is discussed in Section 6.2.1.2, but in essence, it was used since any emergent factors could be expected to correlate with one another.¹¹

The oblique rotation resulted in a single factor explaining 59.24% of the variance, and this solution is displayed in Table 7.2. All the items loaded on the single factor in excess of 0.3. However, as alluded to in Section 6.2.1.2., one should take into account sample size when determining what factor loading is significant. When the sample size is around 150 cases, the critical value for the factor loading is 0.45 at the 5% level (Hair et al. 1998). Therefore, to provide maximum rigour, 0.45 was chosen as the threshold of significance for the factor loadings. It was noted that one item (*“my manager doesn’t waste any time when dealing with a problem”*) did not reach the required level. Furthermore, it was noted that this item was also a candidate for exclusion during the item analysis stage. Therefore, it was removed from further consideration, leaving a final eight-item scale measuring sales manager willingness to respond. The factor matrix of this eight-item scale is displayed in Figure 7.2.

Table 7.2: Factor Matrix of Sales Manager Willingness

Scale Item	Factor Loading
In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly	0.562
Manager doesn't seem to have the confidence to take the necessary action to solve a problem (R)	0.78
My manager doesn't seem to take the initiative when dealing with a problem (R)	0.769
My manager often passes the buck when dealing with a problem (R)	0.781
My manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored (R)	0.739
My manager waits until the problem absolutely has to be dealt with before acting (R)	0.773
Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation (R)	0.75
Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so (R)	0.677
<i>Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 3 iterations.</i>	
KMO = 0.905; Bartlett's Test = 566.099, df: 28, $p = 0.000$	
Items: 8; Mean: 3.93; Std. Dev: 0.82; Range: 1.63 – 5; Alpha: 0.9; No. of Cases: 140	

¹⁰ See section 6.2.1.2. for a fuller discussion of why principal axis factoring (PAF) was used in preference to principal components analysis (PCA).

¹¹ By contrast, an orthogonal rotation aims to produce a structure where all items load on a single factor, and that a given item should only load highly on one factor (Sharma 1996). While this is likely to produce a clearer solution, in the present case it could also mask any genuine multidimensionality. Thus, in the present case it is argued that an oblique rotation provides a more rigorous assessment of unidimensionality by removing the assumption of uncorrelated factors and allowing items which load on more than a single factor to do so without restriction.

As can be seen, the KMO and Bartlett's tests were both supportive of the data set's suitability for EFA. It can be seen that the results of the item analysis and dimensionality assessment provide strong evidence as to the quality of the scale items, i.e. that they are internally consistent and unidimensional. Table 7.2 also provides the scale statistics (number of items, sample mean, standard deviation, range, coefficient alpha and number of cases) for the final measure. Prior to the calculation of these statistics, an average score for sales manager willingness was calculated for each case by summing the item scores and dividing by eight. This transformed the range to between one and five, allowing easier interpretation of each case's sales manager willingness score. A similar transformation was undertaken for all of the scales developed, to ease interpretation.

7.2.2. Sales Manager Caring

7.2.2.1. Item Analysis

An examination of the correlation matrix of the original 10 sales manager caring items (see Appendix 3.2 for the full matrix) showed two which were performing relatively poorly. Firstly, item 1 (*"I only approach my manager as a last resort"*) returned four out of the 9 correlations under 0.2, and all four of these were not significant at the 5% level. Additionally, item 10 (*"my sales manager is very considerate to those sales people who cause problems"*) showed three correlations under 0.2 (in fact these were all under 0.1), and all three were not significant at 5%. Furthermore, the corrected item-total correlations for both these items were below 0.4, generally considered undesirable (cf. Spector 1992). Therefore, both these items were removed, without regard for their other characteristics. The scale alpha at this point, for the remaining 8 items, was 0.823.

Table 7.3: Profile of Sales Manager Caring Items

Scale Item ^a	Mean	SD
Manager can see the reason for problem, and is concerned with helping the sales person correct it	3.73	1.02
My manager deals with problem sales people in a very friendly manner	3.44	1.1
My manager has very little tolerance for those sales people who create problems (R)	2.86	1.1
My manager is very empathetic when he has to deal with a problem sales person	3.31	0.95
My manager seems to be able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person who is causing problems	3.02	1.04
My manager seems very sympathetic towards a problem sales person	3.02	1.08
My manager treats problem sales people with a lot of sensitivity	3.09	1.01
My sales manager is something of a counselor when dealing with problem sales people	3.23	1.03

Note: Scale runs from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"

^aReduced form of items used.

Analysis of the correlation matrix and coefficient alpha did not throw up any further items which showed potential for removal. Thus, each item's mean, variance and impact on coefficient alpha was taken into account, in order to make the decision on which items should be kept for further analysis. Table 7.3 shows the profile of the means and standard deviations of each item. It can be seen that most of the means are relatively close to the scale mid-point of 3, and that most standard deviations exceed 1. However, one of the items (*"my manager can often see the reason for a problem, and is very concerned with helping the sales person correct it"*) had a relatively high mean. Nevertheless, removing this item would have reduced the scale alpha noticeably (from 0.823 to 0.788), and the standard deviation and corrected item-total correlation of the item were also acceptable. Thus the item was retained.

Next, each item was correlated with a measure of social desirability bias (SDB, see Section 7.1.1.). Here, two of the remaining eight items were found to correlate significantly with SDB. These items were *"my manager seems very sympathetic towards a problem sales person"* and *"my manager treats sales people with a lot of sensitivity"*. The former item correlated with SDB at -0.221 ($p = 0.009$), and the latter correlated with SDB at -0.17 ($p = 0.05$). Consequently, these items were both removed. Therefore, following removal of the items according to the analysis above, six of the original 10 items were retained, with a scale alpha of 0.786.

7.2.2.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Dimensionality

The dimensionality of the sales manager caring scale was assessed in the same manner as the sales manager willingness scale. Each item was entered into a principal axis factoring routine with an oblique rotation. The procedure resulted in a single factor explaining 48.7% of the total variance, with the solution displayed in Table 7.4. All the items loaded on the single factor well in excess of 0.45, the present threshold level. Furthermore, KMO and Bartlett's test both indicated the suitability of the data set for factor analysis.

Table 7.4: Factor Matrix of Sales Manager Caring

Scale Item ^a	Factor Loading
Manager can see reason for a problem, and is concerned with helping the sales person correct it	0.592
My manager deals with problem sales people in a very friendly manner	0.691
Manager has little tolerance for salespeople who create problems (R)	0.496
My manager is very empathetic when he has to deal with a problem sales person	0.533
My manager seems to be able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person who is causing problems	0.636
My sales manager is something of a counselor when dealing with problem sales people	0.759
<i>Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 6 iterations.</i>	
KMO = 0.839; Bartlett's Test = 199.346, df: 15, $p = 0.000$	
Items: 6; Mean: 3.26; Std. Dev: 0.73; Range: 1.2 – 5; Alpha: 0.79; No. of Cases: 140	

Thus, it can be seen that the measure development procedure provides initial evidence as to the quality of the sales manager caring scale. Table 7.4 also provides the relevant scale statistics for the 6-item caring scale. These statistics use an average item score in the same manner as the sales manager willingness scale statistics.

7.2.3. Sales Manager Aggressiveness

7.2.3.1. Item Analysis

Regarding the sales manager aggressiveness scale, examination of the correlation matrix of the original 13 aggressiveness items (see Appendix 3.3 for the full matrix) showed that item 3 (“*my manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems*”) was correlating poorly with many of the other items. More specifically, 11 of the 12 relevant correlations were below 0.3, five were below 0.2, and in fact five were not significant at a 5% level of significance. Moreover, the corrected item-total correlation for item 3 was 0.264, generally considered to be too low (Spector 1992). Therefore, item 3 was eliminated without regard for any other characteristics. The resulting coefficient alpha for the 12 item scale was 0.929

Further analysis of the correlation matrix and coefficient alpha did not suggest any further items for elimination. Thus, each item's mean, variance and impact on coefficient alpha was taken into account, in order to make a final decision on which items to retain for further analysis.

Table 7.5: Profile of Sales Manager Aggressiveness Items

Scale Item	Mean	SD
From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully	2.02	1.21
My manager could be described as 'fiery'	2.2	1.17
My manager often bangs the table and causes a scene when dealing with problem sales people	1.79	1.12
My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting them	2.44	1.32
My manager tends to shout a lot when dealing with a problem sales person	1.91	1.14
My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problem sales people	2.4	1.25
My sales manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'	1.89	1.1
Often, my manager will have someone up in front of other people to discipline them	1.94	1.19
Some of the things my manager says to a problem sales person can be very hurtful	2.41	1.29
Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh	2.59	1.25
Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is more destructive than constructive	2.56	1.32
Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening when dealing with problem sales people	2.3	1.24

Note: Scale runs from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"

Table 7.5 shows the profile of the means and standard deviations of each item. As can be seen, all the means of the remaining items are below the scale mid-point of 3. However, no items seemed to have means which were substantially lower than the other, and thus the decision was taken to retain all the items for future analysis.

Also, each item was correlated with a measure of social desirability bias (SDB, see Section 7.1.1.). At this point, no items were found to correlate significantly with SDB, and thus all were retained. Therefore, based on the analysis detailed above, 12 of the original 13 items were retained as the measure for the sales manager aggressiveness dimension of sales manager interpersonal style, with a coefficient alpha of 0.929.

7.2.3.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Dimensionality

In order to assess dimensionality of the sales manager aggressiveness scale, the same procedure was utilised as that used to examine the willingness and caring scales. Each item was entered into a principal axis factoring routine with an oblique rotation. KMO and Bartlett's test results were both adequate to assure one of the suitability of the data set for factor analysis. The procedure resulted in a single factor explaining 56.7% of the total variance, with the solution displayed in Table 7.6. All the items loaded on the single factor well in excess of 0.45, the threshold level used presently.

Table 7.6: Factor Matrix of Sales Manager Aggressiveness

Scale Item	Factor Loading
From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully	0.762
My manager could be described as 'fiery'	0.587
Manager often bangs the table and causes a scene when dealing with problems	0.61
My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting them	0.739
My manager tends to shout a lot when dealing with a problem sales person	0.693
My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problem sales people	0.631
My sales manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'	0.711
Often, my manager will have someone up in front of other people to discipline them	0.572
Some of the things my manager says to a problem sales person can be very hurtful	0.876
Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh	0.858
Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is more destructive than constructive	0.810
Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening when dealing with problem sales people	0.810

*Note: One factor extracted, rotation not required. Solution converged in 4 iterations.
KMO = 0.929; Bartlett's Test = 1064.893, df: 66, p = 0.000
Items: 12; Mean: 2.2; Std. Dev: 0.91; Range: 1 – 4.9; Alpha: 0.93; No. of Cases: 140*

Table 7.6 also provides the scale statistics for the 12-item aggressiveness scale. These statistics use an average item score in the same manner as the sales manager willingness and caring scales. As a result of this procedure, it seems that the sales manager aggressiveness scale demonstrates sufficient quality to be used in future analysis.

7.2.4. Simultaneous Analysis of the Problem Resolution Style Scales

Following the individual purification procedures detailed above, the remaining items from all three problem resolution style scales were entered into an EFA. The results of this are shown in Table 7.7. KMO and Bartlett's tests were both indicative of a suitable data set for factor analysis.

As can be seen in Table 7.7, four factors were extracted, which explained 62.5% of the total variance in the data set. Furthermore, a number of items did not load on any of the four factors to the required level. It can be seen that the main source of the fourth factor appears to be the sales manager aggressiveness scale, of which four items load strongly on this fourth dimension.

Table 7.7: First EFA Results for Problem Resolution Style

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading			
	Fac. 1	Fac. 2	Fac. 3	Fac. 4
When a problem needs dealing with, manager deals with it quickly		0.474		
Manager doesn't have confidence to take action (R)		0.851		
Manager doesn't take the initiative (R)		0.770		
My manager passes the buck when dealing with a problem (R)		0.693		
My manager believes that a problem will go away if ignored (R)		0.747		
Manager waits until the problem has to be dealt with (R)		0.748		
Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation (R)		0.731		
Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it (R)		0.700		
Manager can see reason for a problem	NS	NS	NS	NS
My manager deals with problem sales people in a friendly manner			0.690	
Manager has little tolerance for problems (R)	NS	NS	NS	NS
My manager is very empathetic	NS	NS	NS	NS
My manager is able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person			0.578	
My sales manager is something of a counselor			0.580	
From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully	0.546			
My manager could be described as 'fiery'	NS	NS	NS	NS
Manager often bangs the table and causes a scene				-0.687
My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting	0.477			
My manager tends to shout a lot				-0.573
My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problems	0.645			
My sales manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'				-0.532
Manager will discipline someone in front of other people	NS	NS	NS	NS
The things manager says to problem salespeople are very hurtful	0.767			
Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh	0.759			
Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is destructive	0.675			
Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening	0.851			

NS = Nonsignificant (<0.45) loading on any factor
Note: Rotation converged in 34 iterations.

KMO = 0.884; Bartlett's Test = 2054.422, df: 253, *p* = 0.000

Drawing from Table 7.7, it would seem that Factors 1, 2 and 3 represent sales manager aggressiveness, willingness and caring respectively, in a relatively clear manner. However, Factor 4 seems to tap into some kind of physically threatening behaviour from the sales manager towards salespeople, or perhaps a 'sales manager temper' factor. It can be seen that the items loading on sales manager aggressiveness (Factor 1) are more broad-based in nature, tapping into aggressiveness which is generally independent of specific behavioural outputs. The pattern of loadings between Factors 1 and 4 suggests that specific behaviours such as 'banging the table' are not necessarily a part of sales manager aggressiveness. Conversely, more universal concepts such as destructive criticism or threatening management methods, as well as general terms such as 'brutal' and 'bullying', appear to tap the concept of sales manager aggressiveness as defined presently. As a result, the items comprising Factor 4 were removed and the EFA data re-analysed. However, the items which did not load on any factor were retained at this stage. The reason for this was because it was considered that by removing the Factor 4 items, the pattern of intercorrelations

would change and thus the items with poor loadings may subsequently load on the three problem resolution style constructs, without the confounding influence of Factor 4.

The second EFA returned better results, with three constructs relating to the three problem resolution style constructs emerging. However, two items still did not load on any of the constructs at a sufficient level. These items were “*In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly*” for sales manager willingness, and “*my manager has very little tolerance for those salespeople who create problems*” for sales manager caring. Therefore, these two items were removed and the EFA re-run, and the results are displayed in Table 7.8

Table 7.8: Final EFA Results for Problem Resolution Style

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Factor Loading ^a		
	Agg.	Will.	Caring
Manager doesn't have confidence to take action (R)		0.835	
Manager doesn't take the initiative (R)		0.752	
My manager passes the buck when dealing with a problem (R)		0.665	
My manager believes that a problem will go away if ignored (R)		0.754	
Manager waits until the problem has to be dealt with (R)		0.707	
Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation (R)		0.718	
Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it (R)		0.704	
Manager can see reason for a problem			0.450
My manager deals with problem sales people in a friendly manner			0.781
My manager is very empathetic			0.472
My manager is able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person			0.615
My sales manager is something of a counselor			0.641
From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully	-0.664		
My manager could be described as 'fiery'	-0.621		
My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting	-0.573		
My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problems	-0.734		
Manager will discipline someone in front of other people	-0.493		
The things manager says to problem salespeople are very hurtful	-0.828		
Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh	-0.833		
Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is destructive	-0.705		
Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening	-0.828		

Note: Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

KMO = 0.905; Bartlett's Test = 1727.944, df: 210, $p = 0.000$

KMO and Bartlett's test results are clearly adequate for the data set to be seen as appropriate for factoring. As can be seen, simple structure is displayed amongst the three constructs, and all items load on their respective theoretical constructs. No problems were therefore evident in this analysis, and the scales were taken forward to the next stage of development, which is discussed in the following section.

7.3. The Process of Measure Development Part 2

The previous sections of the present chapter dealt with what has been termed ‘classic’ measure development techniques throughout the course of this dissertation. However, more recent research has argued that techniques such as item analysis and exploratory factor analysis are not sufficiently rigorous to assure researchers of the validity and reliability of their measures (e.g. Bollen and Lennox 1991; Gerbing and Anderson 1988). Various reasons for this are outlined in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.2.). However, in brief, it has been mathematically demonstrated that the use of item-total correlations, coefficient alpha and exploratory factor analysis does not explicitly test the unidimensionality of a multi-item scale, and that either of these three methods can return different results (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). More specifically, Gerbing and Anderson (1988) argue that the use of exploratory factor analysis in particular is primarily useful as a “*preliminary* technique for scale construction but...a subsequent confirmatory factor analysis would be needed to evaluate, and likely refine, the resulting scales” (Gerbing and Anderson 1988 p. 189, emphasis in original).

As a result, the measures developed in Section 7.2. were also subjected to confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.30 (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996). The following sections detail the procedures used for the analysis¹².

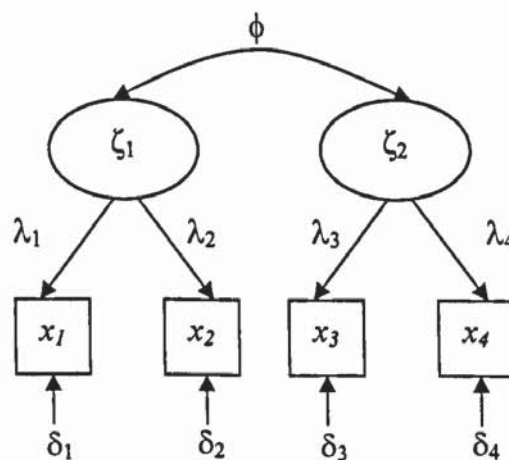
¹² Prior to the use of LISREL, a *covariance* matrix of the relevant items was created in PRELIS 2.30 (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996). Sharma (1996) suggests that, while confirmatory factor analysis is generally scale invariant (and thus the results are not dependent on use of covariances or correlations), one should generally use the covariance matrix. More compelling reasoning is given by Cudeck (1989): “applying a covariance structure to a correlation matrix *will* produce some combination of incorrect test statistics, incorrect standard errors, or incorrect parameter estimates *and may in fact alter the model being studied*” (emphasis added p. 317). Cudeck (1989) thus states that “an obvious protection against these errors is to always conduct an analysis using the sample covariance matrix, for then none of these problems can occur” (p. 324) and that “[i]n comparison with the analysis of a covariance matrix, the corresponding analysis of a correlation matrix should be viewed as a special case, one that always requires justification” (p. 326). Furthermore, Hayduk “recommend[s] that correlation matrices not be [used as matrices to be analysed] since doing so destroys the information about the real scales on which the indicators are measured and interferes with calculating χ^2 ” (Hayduk 1987 p. 179).

7.3.1. Model Specification

The first step in operationalising a CFA model is determining exactly what relationships are hypothesised in the model. While in exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the structure of the underlying model is generally not specified, in CFA, the “precise structure of the factor model, which is based on some underlying theory, is hypothesized” (Sharma 1996 p. 144). It seems tenable however, according to the work of Gerbing and Anderson (1988), that it is unnecessary to have a previously examined theory (such as previously published research say), but to utilise EFA results to hypothesize the underlying factor structure for the CFA.

Theoretically speaking, classical measure development theory suggests that the observed score for any scale item hypothesized to reflect any latent construct is caused by two things. Firstly by its correlation with the *true score* of the latent construct, and secondly by a unique error term (DeVellis 1991). These error terms are assumed to be uncorrelated across different items (DeVellis 1991). In CFA, one is able to directly examine these error terms for their intercorrelations and impact on the observed item scores, a technique impossible in EFA. Furthermore, according to the assumption of unidimensionality (cf. Churchill 1979) each observed indicator is hypothesized to reflect *one and only one* latent construct. Again, CFA is able to directly test this hypothesis.

Figure 7.1: Example Two-Factor CFA Model



Adapted from Sharma 1996

A typical two-factor CFA model is shown in Figure 7.1, with ξ representing the latent construct, x_1, \dots, x_n representing the observed items, δ representing the unique error terms, and λ representing the factor loadings of each item on its latent construct. The correlation between the latent constructs is represented by ϕ . While comprehensive proofs are beyond the scope of this dissertation (see for example Hayduk 1987, or Sharma 1996 for more information), it is sufficient to note that all of the above parameters are estimable by use of the covariance matrix between the observed item scores. Therefore, in CFA, the model is specified as consisting of a number of linear equations of the relevant parameters and item covariances.¹³

When specifying the hypothesised factor model, it is also important to devise ‘alternative’ models (Kelloway 1998). This is because, while CFA software provides a large number of indicators of how closely the hypothesised structure fits the observed covariance matrix, only the χ^2 indicator is a truly statistical test, and furthermore is substantively biased in large samples, leading to a high rejection rate of good models (cf. Browne and Cudeck 1993; Hayduk 1987). Thus, assessment of the hypothesized model is substantially helped by comparing it to other hypothetical models, whether they be nested and allowing true statistical comparisons (see Section 6.5.), or not. More specifically, competing models are generally compared on their levels of heuristic fit indices (see Section 7.3.4.) as well as the χ^2 statistic. In creating these competing models, one is advised where possible to use previous research literature that hypothesizes different factor structures (cf. Kelloway 1998). However, when developing novel constructs (such as done presently with the measures of problem resolution styles), this is less appropriate. Kelloway (1998) suggests that, when one is unable to derive plausible alternative factor structures by using the literature, one may create alternatives by constraining various parameters of the hypothesised structure. For example, a one factor structure may be created by constraining interfactor correlations to unity, or an orthogonal structure may be

¹³ While it is possible to directly specify the matrix algebraic relationships in a LISREL syntax program, more recent versions allow the researcher to either specify relationships in relatively simple natural language (a SIMPLIS program), or in a visual path diagram. For interested readers, the models for the present dissertation were all specified in SIMPLIS language.

created by constraining interfactor correlations to zero. These alternative models have the advantage of being nested, and thus able to be statistically compared.

7.3.2. Identification of the Factor Structure

As touched upon above, CFA techniques involve the estimation of *unknown* parameters (such as the factor loadings) using the *known* covariance matrix. The concept of *model identification* is concerned with whether a unique solution can be obtained for the hypothesized model (Bollen 1989). Conceptually speaking, models can be either underidentified, just-identified, or overidentified (Kelloway 1998). In an underidentified model, the number of unknown parameters exceeds the number of equations used to specify the model, and thus no unique solution can be obtained. In a just-identified model, the number of parameters *exactly equals* the number of equations, and thus one set of parameters will always be able to exactly reproduce the observed covariance matrix. In an overidentified model, the number of equations, exceeds the number of unknown parameters, and thus there are a *number* of different unique solutions (cf. Bollen 1989; Kelloway 1998).

It is generally desirable for any given model to be overidentified. If this is the case, one is able to discriminate between different solutions in an attempt to ascertain the ‘best’ fit to the data (Bollen 1989). If a model is underidentified, no solution is possible, whereas if it is just-identified, any solution will always exactly equal the observed matrix, which we know actually contains a number of sources of error (Kelloway 1998).¹⁴ However, “in an overidentified model, there are a number of possible solutions, and the task is to select the one that comes closest to explaining the observed data within some margin of error. We always, therefore, want our models to be overidentified” (Kelloway 1998 p. 15).

When evaluating the identification of any structural equation model (of which CFA models are one application), a key consideration is the causal flow. Models positing a *one-way* causal flow are considered to be *recursive*. Importantly, Bollen (1989) states that recursive models are always overidentified, since equations are not required to

¹⁴ As a consequence, the researcher is unable to determine whether the solution is in fact a good one or not, since there are no bases for evaluation.

estimate half of the parameters.¹⁵ In a CFA model, it is often the case that models are recursive by default. More specifically, if a model hypothesizes the observed indicators as *reflecting* the latent constructs, the causal flow is always one-way, from the latent constructs to the observed indicators. However, if the causal flow is *not* solely one-way, it is also possible to estimate CFA models, by for example fixing some parameters to a predetermined value, such as zero (cf. Kelloway 1998).

Mathematically speaking, it can be seen that a further necessary condition for model identification is that (assuming uncorrelated errors) each latent construct is measured using at least three items, or if the constructs are oblique (i.e. allowed to correlate freely), each construct must be measured by at least two items (cf. Bollen 1989). However, when using samples of greater than 100 cases, the use of only two indicators seems to be possible (cf. Anderson and Gerbing 1984).

7.3.3. Assessing Model Fit

The assessment of the CFA model fit is based on two main criteria. Firstly on whether the model provides a good ‘absolute fit’ with the data, and secondly whether the model fits better than rival specifications (such as those given in Section 7.4.1.). The concept of absolute fit generally refers to whether the covariance matrix produced by the CFA estimation technique reproduces the observed covariance matrix. It is common to see the χ^2 statistic used to indicate the correspondence between observed and produced matrices (cf. Kelloway 1998). The χ^2 test is (in statistical terms) successful at rejecting the null hypothesis (i.e. that the produced matrix is equivalent to the observed matrix) if it is statistically significant at a given level of significance (cf. Hu and Bentler 1995). However, in the case of CFA, one is attempting to *accept* the null hypothesis, which would mean in practical terms that the CFA model was a good representation of the observed covariance matrix. Thus one generally hopes for a *nonsignificant* χ^2 result. Nevertheless, a number of problems have been noted regarding the use of the χ^2 test. In particular, as the power of the test increases with sample size, “a trivial difference between the sample covariance matrix...and the fitted model...may result in rejection of the specified

¹⁵ Technically speaking, if the causal flow is only one-way, half of the parameters are in fact restricted to zero, meaning that equations are not required to estimate them (Kelloway 1998).

model” (Hu and Bentler 1995 p. 78). Thus, most researchers avoid sole use of the χ^2 statistic as an indicator of model fit. However, it can be argued that blanket rejection of the χ^2 statistic is potentially misleading¹⁶, and thus Hayduk (1987) advises that for moderate sample sizes such as the one used in the present study (i.e. 140), χ^2 can be a useful tool. More specifically, Hayduk states: “[m]y experience suggests that χ^2 is instructive for N 's ranging from about 50 to 500” (1987, p. 169). Thus, the χ^2 is used in the present study as one method of evaluating the model fit.

However, as a result of the bias of the χ^2 test, researchers have developed a number of other ways of assessing the fit between the observed and produced covariance matrices. In general, these can be referred to as ‘heuristic fit indices’, and Sharma (1996) reports that over 30 such indices have been proposed in the literature. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss all of these indices, or any of them at length (by for example providing mathematical definitions), the following discussion outlines in particular the indices used in the present study, and the reasons why they were used.

In addition to the χ^2 measure of absolute fit, the goodness of fit index (GFI) has been argued to be a useful measure of absolute fit (i.e. how close the observed covariance matrix is to the matrix implied by the specified model). Hoyle and Panter (1995) argue that this index is analogous to the R^2 statistic in multiple regression, and provides a useful summary of the overall fit. However, it is moderately associated with sample size, and thus its upper bound may theoretically be over 1 (Sharma 1996). The *adjusted* goodness of fit index (AGFI) is the GFI which has been adjusted for degrees of freedom, and is analogous to the adjusted R^2 in multiple regression (Sharma 1996). Again, its upper bound is said to be 1.0, but since it is affected by

¹⁶ For example, it should be clear that a significant χ^2 indicates that there is a discrepancy between the observed and hypothesised covariance matrices, no matter what the sample size. The argument for ignoring the significant χ^2 is solely concerned with whether that discrepancy is *trivial* or not. In other words, if one’s model is a ‘perfect’ representation of the observed matrix, then χ^2 will be nonsignificant no matter how large the sample. Thus, it can be argued that blanket dismissal of a significant χ^2 (which can often be advocated, especially at large sample sizes) is misleading since doing so ignores the irrefutable evidence that there *is* a misspecification in one’s model. One should instead justify why the misspecification is trivial rather than substantive, before ignoring the χ^2 .

sample size, it in fact may be over 1.0. The AGFI is the absolute index used presently, due to its consideration of degrees of freedom. While there are no statistical guidelines associated with the AGFI (since it is not a statistical test), researchers generally consider an AGFI of greater than 0.80 as indicating adequate model fit (Sharma 1996).

LISREL 8.30 also provides Steiger's (1990) *root mean square error of approximation* (RMSEA). This index is essentially based on the residual matrix, which can be thought of as a matrix of the discrepancies between the observed covariance matrix and the matrix produced by the specified model. Smaller RMSEA values indicate good fit, and 0.1 has been suggested as indicating acceptable fit, with 0.05 indicating excellent fit (Kelloway 1998). A particular advantage of the RMSEA is that it provides a confidence interval, and an explicit statistical test of whether the observed RMSEA is significantly different from the value of 0.05. Thus the RMSEA is used presently.

Incremental fit indices generally concern the improvement that the hypothesised model makes over a 'null' model, which specifies no covariances among the variables (Hoyle and Panter 1995). A number of incremental fit indices are available in the literature and in the LISREL 8.30 output. However, Hu and Bentler (1995) recommend that researchers should avoid the use of the normed fit index (NFI) due to its over-rejection of models when the sample size is low. Instead, Hoyle and Panter (1995) recommend that researchers should report one of either the non-normed fit index/Tucker Lewis fit index (NNFI) or the incremental fit index (IFI), and one of either the comparative fit index (CFI) or the relative noncentrality index (RNI). In the context of the present study, it is deemed that the NNFI is inappropriate for use since it downwardly biased at small sample sizes and particularly those under 150 (Hoyle and Panter 1995), and the RNI is not used since it is not restricted to a range of 0.0 to 1.0, and thus could be more difficult to interpret (Hoyle and Panter 1995). The IFI and CFI are thus used, with both of these indices increasing as the model fit improves, and values over 0.9 are considered to indicate good fit to the data (cf. Hu and Bentler 1995; Kelloway 1998).

While all the above fit indicators can be used in isolation, it is generally more informative to use a combination of all of them in assessing model fit (Kelloway 1998). Furthermore, it is also desirable to test the fit of the hypothesised model when compared to rival models. While in a sense all of the measures above implicitly test the specified model against some other model (e.g. the null model, or the saturated model), it is generally considered that researchers should also compare their hypothesised model with plausible alternative models (Kelloway 1998). In this sense, the researcher can then determine whether the alternative models provide substantively better fit than the specified models. If the models are *nested*, then one can use a χ^2 difference test (see Section 6.6.) to statistically test this difference. However, if the models are not nested, then one is restricted to using subjective judgement as to whether the various heuristic fit indices are substantively better in either the hypothesised or alternative model (cf. Sharma 1996).

7.3.4. Model Respecification

Poor model fit (which in the measurement model can generally be thought of as a lack of unidimensionality), most commonly occurs with model misspecification, a common occurrence in initial factor models (Anderson and Gerbing 1982). LISREL provides a large amount of information to aid the researcher in respecifying a measurement model. However, Kelloway (1998) warns of the dangers of respecifying measurement models where there is no theoretical justification, in particular the case of adding paths from latent variables to observed indicators that were not initially designed to reflect the respective latent variable. However, if the researcher is careful to avoid being purely data-driven, it seems pertinent to modify measurement models to obtain unidimensional measures, indeed this is rather the point of CFA in the present context (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988).

A key tool in model respecification is the residual matrix. Large values in the residual matrix imply that the relevant covariances are not being adequately explained by the specified model, giving the researcher a clue as to where respecification may be most appropriate (Sharma 1996). Additionally, LISREL also reports a large number of *modification indices*, which give the approximate decrease in χ^2 if a given fixed parameter is freed. High modification indices are again good indicators of respecification potential (Sharma 1996).

There are two main areas where LISREL's modification indices can be used to indicate a lack of unidimensionality, and thus violations of the assumptions of scale development. Firstly, the reader will note that measurement theory assumes that the unique/error terms are uncorrelated, thus each correlation between the error terms is fixed to zero automatically by LISREL. High modification indices will result if a substantial improvement in χ^2 is possible by freeing one or more of these correlations, consequently allowing two or more errors to correlate. Since this violates the unidimensionality assumption of measurement theory (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988), observed scale items that have correlated errors are candidates for *deletion*. Additionally, high modification indices will also result if the χ^2 statistic will be substantially improved if scale items hypothesized to reflect one latent variable are specified as also reflecting another latent variable (analogous to cross-loading in exploratory factor analysis). Again, since this violates the unidimensionality assumption (cf. Gerbing and Anderson 1988), items such as this are candidates for deletion.¹⁷

7.3.5. Assessing Scale Quality: Reliability and Validity

Given that the model in general can be demonstrated to provide adequate fit with the observed data, the next question concerns the extent to which the observed items are valid, or reliable indicators of the construct they purport to measure (cf. Sharma 1996). In particular, as Gerbing and Anderson state: “[u]nidimensionality alone is not sufficient to ensure the usefulness of a scale...the reliability of the [scale] should be assessed *after* unidimensionality has been established” (p. 190, emphasis in original). Reliability could feasibly be measured by using coefficient alpha, as was detailed in Section 7.1.1. However, coefficient alpha will tend to underestimate reliability if the items do not have equal reliabilities, or if the number of items per scale is small (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). Thus, Gerbing and Anderson (1988) recounted Jöreskog's (1971) formula, which does not assume equal reliabilities. The formula, which is used presently to assess reliability, is displayed as Equation 6.1 in Chapter

¹⁷ Considering these two types of modification index, rather than deleting the offending item, in the former case one could also free the error correlation, while in the latter case one could instead specify that the item also loaded on a second latent variable. However, while this would result in a similar improvement in model fit, it would also mean that the measures were no longer unidimensional, and thus not valid.

6. This equation, known as the composite reliability equation, has increased in use recently, and it is generally assumed that values of above 0.60 are acceptable returns from the composite reliability formula (Bagozzi and Yi 1988).

Evidence attesting to a scale's convergent validity is provided if it correlates highly with other methods (i.e. tests) designed to measure the same thing (Churchill 1999; 1979). While convergent validity is not explicitly assessed in the present study, Fornell and Larcker (1982) argued that an adequate composite reliability value is enough to conclude that a given construct exhibits sufficient convergent validity¹⁸.

In addition to using the composite reliability equation, Fornell and Larcker (1982) also advocated examining the shared variance of the scale. Essentially, this is an examination of "the amount of variance that is captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error" (Fornell and Larcker 1982 p. 303). The *average variance extracted* (AVE) formula is given in Equation 6.2 in Chapter 6. A minimum threshold of 0.50 is generally advocated for the AVE (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Theoretically speaking, if the AVE is less than 0.50, the variance due to measurement error exceeds the variance captured by the construct, therefore, the validity of the construct can be called into question (Fornell and Larcker 1982).

7.4. Constructing the Measures Part Two

7.4.1. Model Specification

Figure 7.2 provides the hypothesized model at the first stage of the CFA procedure. As can be seen, sales manager willingness to respond is hypothesized to be reflected by 8 items, sales manager aggressiveness by 8, and sales manager caring by 5. The rival model specifications are shown in Figures 7.3 and 7.4. Competing model one specifies a single first-order construct of 'problem resolution style' which all items are hypothesized to reflect, and competing model two hypothesises a single first-order variable of 'interpersonal sensitivity' (which all sales manager caring and

¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is recognised that this argument is presumably based on a classical psychometric definition of each single scale item as an individual 'test' itself (cf. e.g. Kline 2000).

aggressiveness items are hypothesised to reflect), along with a single willingness construct. It would appear that competing model one is nested within the hypothesised model (by fixing the willingness, aggressiveness, and caring correlations to unity), as well as being nested within competing model two (by fixing the willingness and interpersonal sensitivity correlation to unity). Thus, some statistical comparison is possible, using the χ^2 difference test (see Section 6.6). However it seems that competing model two is not nested within the hypothesised model and therefore can not be statistically compared, although they can be subjectively compared by using their fit indices (cf. Kelloway 1998; Sharma 1996).

Figure 7.2: Hypothesised Factor Structure

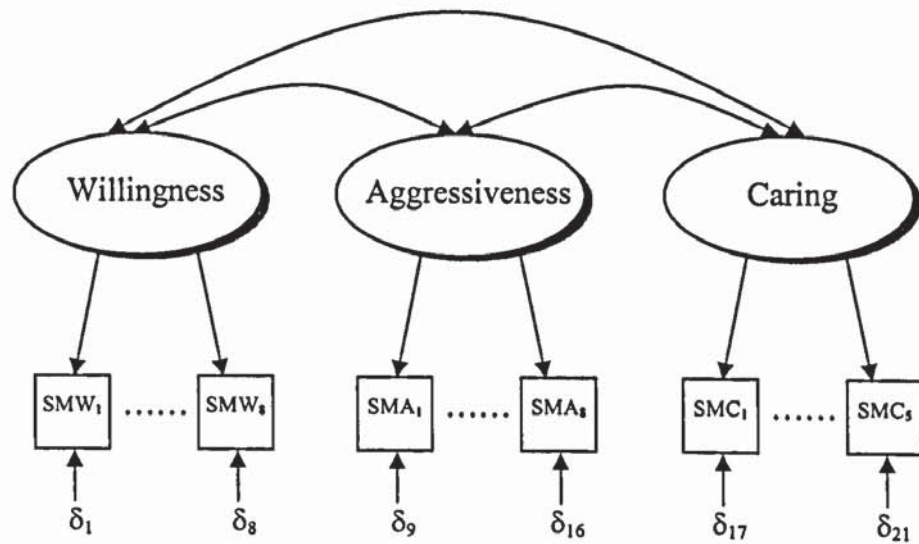


Figure 7.3: Competing Factor Model One

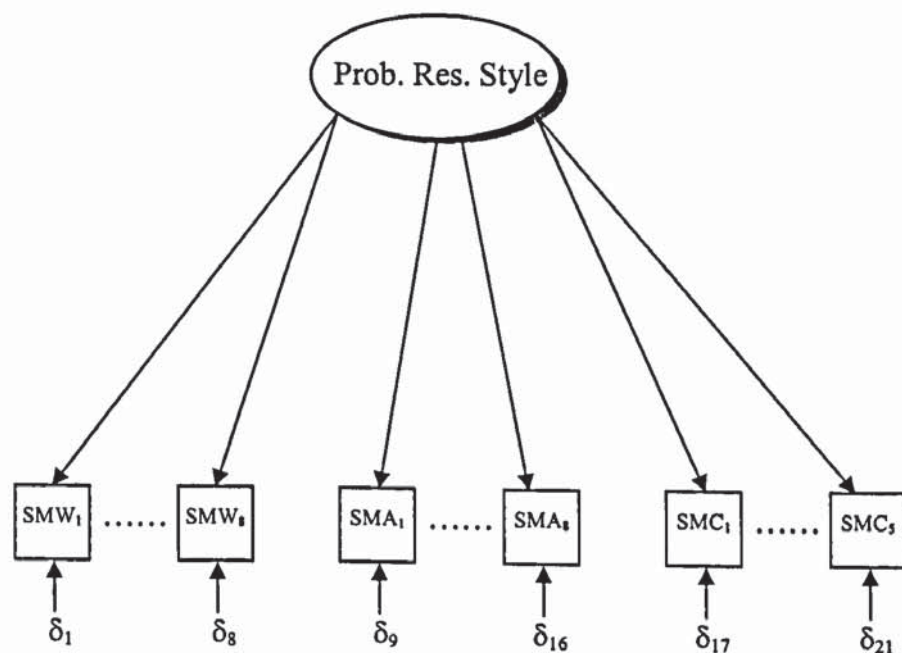
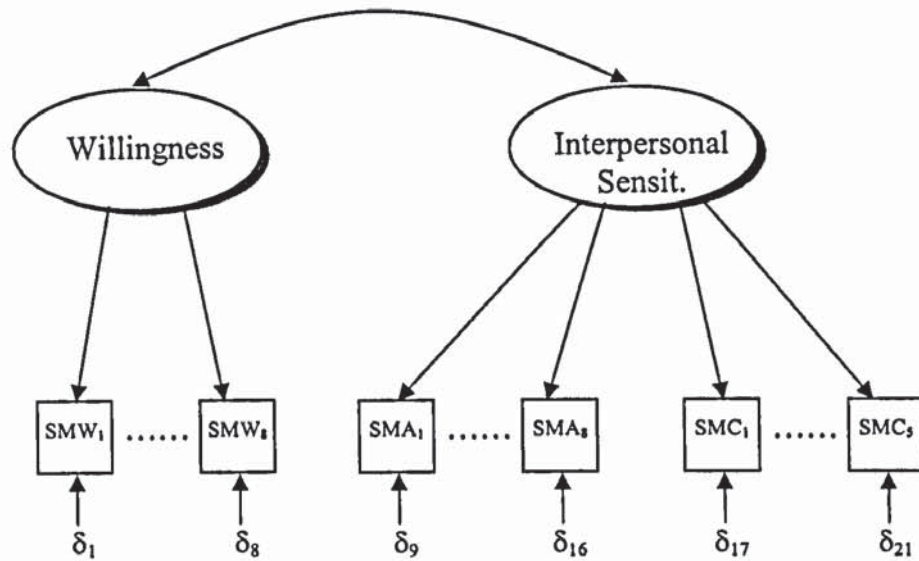


Figure 7.4: Competing Factor Model Two



7.4.2. Results and Model Respecification: Absolute Fit

The fit statistics and indices for the first CFA of the hypothesised model were reasonably good. The χ^2 was 145.36, although it was also significant. However the RMSEA returned an excellent point estimate of 0.042 with the 90% confidence interval including 0.05 ($p = 0.732$ ¹⁹). The CFI and IFI both exceeded their specified thresholds of 0.9, returning values of 0.964. However, there still appeared room for improvement in the model specification. In particular, two willingness items (“my manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored”) and (“often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so”) both appeared to have moderately correlated errors with a number of other items. Furthermore, the same was true for two aggressiveness items (“my manager could be described as ‘fiery’” and “often, my manager will have people up in front of other people to discipline them”). As a consequence, these four items were removed, and the model re-estimated with a 5-item responsiveness scale, and 4-item aggressiveness and caring scales.

¹⁹ The p value for the RMSEA test can be considered in the same way as a traditional significance test. More specifically, a p value of 0.732 can be thought of as implying a 73.2% chance that the true RMSEA is 0.05 or below, given the estimated RMSEA.

The results for the respecified model were extremely good, with the χ^2 substantially reduced to 70.06, and this time the statistic was nonsignificant, returning a p value of 0.23. This represents an excellent reproduction of the observed covariance matrix by the specified model. The RMSEA was also excellent, with a point estimate of 0.031, the 90% confidence interval including 0.05, and a p value of 0.82. The heuristic fit indices were also excellent, with IFI returning a figure of 0.99, the CFI returning 0.99, and the AGFI returning 0.894, all substantially higher than their respective thresholds. Table 7.9 provides the individual item parameter estimates, and the fit statistics, for the final measurement model.

Table 7.9: CFA Results for Hypothesised Model

Measurement Items (reduced wording)	Standardised Factor Loading (t-value)		
	Willingness	Aggressiveness	Caring
Manager lacks confidence to solve problems	0.75 (fixed ^a)		
Manager doesn't take initiative	0.76 (8.88)		
Manager passes the buck	0.82 (9.56)		
Manager waits to deal with problem	0.72 (8.34)		
Manager will avoid dealing with the situation	0.78 (9.13)		
Manager is a bully		0.76 (fixed)	
Manager demands rather than requests		0.78 (9.45)	
Manager can say hurtful things		0.87 (10.64)	
Manager gives destructive criticism		0.87 (10.71)	
Manager is friendly			0.7 (fixed)
Manager is empathetic			0.54 (5.53)
Manager can put himself in others' shoes			0.6 (6.02)
Manager is something of a counselor			0.76 (7.23)
Composite Reliability	0.89	0.88	0.75
Average Variance Extracted	0.67	0.59	0.43

Fit indices: Chi Square = 70.06, df = 62 (p = 0.23), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.031 (p = 0.82), Adjusted Goodness of fit index (AGFI) = 0.89, Incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.99, Comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.99

a: fixed items do not return a t-value

Table 7.9 also shows the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) results (see Section 7.3.5.). As can be seen, all reliabilities exceed Bagozzi and Yi's (1988) recommended cutoff value of 0.60. However, while aggressiveness and responsiveness both return good results for the AVE test, caring appears to perform less well, returning a value slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). While this does imply that the majority of the variance in the caring construct is due to error, the proportion is not especially high, and measures with AVE results of lower have been used successfully in previous literature (e.g. Netemeyer et al.1997). Furthermore, it has been suggested that AVEs

even lower than 0.4 are not severe problems (cf. Diamantopoulos and Sigauw 2000). However, it is pertinent to note the AVE result for caring, as it may influence interpretation of later results.

7.4.3. Comparing Rival Model Specifications: Relative Fit

Now that the hypothesised model has been described, and found to have a good level of ‘absolute fit’ to the observed data, it is prudent to compare the results with other rival models. As previously noted, two of these comparisons can be done statistically, since the competing model one is nested both within the hypothesised model and also within competing model two. However, competing model two is not nested within the hypothesised model, and thus subjective interpretation must be made using the different fit statistics and indices, as to the ‘comparative fit’ of the models (cf. Kelloway 1998; Sharma 1996).

Previously, in Section 7.4.1., two rival models were specified and described, along with the hypothesized model. Each one of these models was subjected to confirmatory factor analysis in the same manner. However, when dealing with the rival models, only the individual scale items which were retained from analysis of the hypothesised model (see Section 7.4.2) were used in the rival models. In particular, this was because all the items were removed due to problems with correlated error, which were unlikely to change whatever the model specification was. Thus, beginning each rival model specification with all the original items would likely a) lead to unnecessary confusion, and b) result in the same items removed anyway. Furthermore, if different items were used, the models would lack an element of comparability.

Table 7.10 shows the comparative results for the measures of interest from each model specification, i.e. degrees of freedom, χ^2 , RMSEA (and their respective p values), AGFI, IFI, and CFI. Statistical fit using the nested models testing procedure will be considered first. Concerning firstly the nested comparison between competing models one and two, competing model two has one less degree of freedom than competing model one, thus if the χ^2 for competing model two is more than 3.84 less than that of competing model one, it can be considered that competing model two is

a superior fit to the data. As Table 7.10 shows, this is clearly the case, with the change in χ^2 actually being 340. Moving focus now to the nested comparison between competing model one and the hypothesised model, here it is the case that competing model one has three degrees of freedom less than the hypothesised model. Therefore in this case the χ^2 for the hypothesised model must be 7.82 (this value can be obtained from a standard χ^2 table such as found in Sharma (1996)) less than that of competing model one for the hypothesised model to be considered to be superior. Again this is unmistakably visible, with the change in χ^2 being 408.94. This provides some statistical evidence that the hypothesised model provides significantly better fit than the first competing factor model, as does the second competing factor model. However, as yet we have no indication as to whether the hypothesised model is a better representation than the second competing model. Therefore, a more intuitive strategy must be used, utilising subjective comparison of various fit indices.

From viewing the fit indices in Table 7.10, it is clear to see that the hypothesized model provides a far better fit than either rival model one (a single first-order construct of ‘problem resolution style’), or rival model two (a single first-order variable of interpersonal style and a single resolution style construct). More specifically, for rival model one it has already been demonstrated that the χ^2 difference was statistically significant, but it can also be seen that none of the fit indices even approached their recommended minimum levels. For rival model two, the χ^2 was twice that of the hypothesised model, although the fit indices in general were around the recommended minimum values. Thus, even though we are unable to generate statistical evidence to reject competing model two, the fit indices are unable to provide any evidence to accept it over the originally hypothesised model, which returned excellent results, clearly superior to both competing models.

Table 7.10: Fit Statistics for Competing Models Test

Fit Statistic	Factor Model		
	Hypoth. Model	Comp. Model 1	Comp. Model 2
Chi-Square	70.06	479	139
Degrees of Freedom	62	65	64
Chi-Square Significance	0.23	0.00	0.00
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	0.03	0.21	0.09
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	0.89	0.52	0.81
Incremental Fit Index	0.98	0.65	0.9
Comparative Fit Index	0.99	0.715	0.93

As a result of the two stage measure development process detailed so far, it can be seen that all three of the problem resolution style scales demonstrate excellent measurement properties. Therefore, the measures were taken forward to the final measure development stage, that of validity testing.

7.5. Validity

Previously, certain aspects of validity were assessed by using measures of the composite reliability and average variance extracted of each measurement scale (see Section 7.4.2.). In brief, the former measures indicated that the scales of sales manager willingness, caring and aggressiveness displayed adequate levels of convergent validity. In the following section however, the discriminant, criterion-related, and nomological (in part) validity of the measures will be assessed. Section 7.5.1. describes the discriminant validity, while Section 7.5.2. assesses the criterion-related and nomological validity.

7.5.1. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity for the newly developed sales manager problem resolution style scales was assessed according to the procedure detailed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.6. for discussion of this procedure in depth). While it is not necessary to provide a repetition of the details, to recap, discriminant validity was assessed by testing a series of two-factor covariance structure models, alternately fixing to unity, and then freeing the phi-coefficient (i.e. the correlation between the constructs). Each of the three constructs was assessed for its discriminant validity in relation to the other two sales manager problem resolution style constructs, and also for discriminant validity in relation to the sales force consequence scales developed in Chapter 6. The results of this process are reported in Table 7.11, which also includes the results reported in Table 6.17 (see Chapter 6). For ease of reading, the results specifically pertaining to the present section are italicised in the table.

Table 7.11: Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ro. Amb. (1)		-0.47	-0.53	0.38	-0.07*	-0.12*	-0.58	-0.03*	-0.31	-0.32
Job Sat. (2)	31.43		0.71	-0.66	-0.03*	0.42	0.52	-0.29	0.48	0.44
Org. Com (3)	19.26	8.49		-0.65	-0.16*	0.34	0.59	-0.36	0.47	0.49
Turn. Int. (4)	27.34	13.9	5.95		0.20	-0.48	-0.33	0.38	-0.36	-0.40
Emo. Ex. (5)	23.77	17.80	19.02	24.01		-0.38	0.15	0.25	-0.07*	-0.05*
Sports. (6)	46.79	87.55	20.51	21.64	31.02		0.08*	-0.44	0.36*	0.53
Clv. Virt. (7)	31.85	33.50	21.16	29.41	15.73	42.62		0.02*	0.19*	0.35
Aggress. (8)	45.23	46.54	38.73	45.68	23.01	40.42	35.86		-0.67	-0.55
Caring (9)	63.95	16.29	11.26	17.64	15.08	26.92	30.00	62.80		0.57
Willing. (10)	28.32	21.10	10.42	17.28	15.71	19.93	31.65	59.7	10.89	

Above diagonal are correlations (*non-significant at flagged*)
Below diagonal are change in chi-squares (*non-significant at flagged*)

As can be seen the three constructs (willingness, caring and aggressiveness) demonstrate sufficient discriminant validity, both amongst each other, and the other constructs to be used in this study, since all the changes in χ^2 were significant. This indicates that all the constructs to be used in the model testing process are statistically distinct from one another (i.e. tapping different constructs).

7.5.2. Criterion-Related and Nomological Validity

Section 7.1.3. argued that, for the purposes of the present study, criterion-related and nomological validity for each construct could be assessed at the same time. More specifically, Chapter 4 provided theoretical evidence to suggest associations between a) sales manager willingness to respond and salesperson role ambiguity, and OCBs, b) sales manager caring and salesperson job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, role ambiguity, and organisational commitment, and c) sales manager aggressiveness and salesperson emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions. Both nomological and criterion-related validity would be implied if a good proportion of the specified relationships were uncovered. Therefore, in order to examine the evidence for nomological and criterion-related validity, the relevant correlations were examined. The results of this testing procedure are displayed in Table 7.12.

Table 7.12: Nomological Validity for Problem Resolution Styles

	Role Amb.	Job Sat.	Org. Com	Emot. Exh.	Turn. Int.	Sports.	Civ. Virt.
Aggressiveness.	NA	-0.29	-0.36	0.25	0.38	NA	NA
Caring	-0.31	0.48	0.47	-0.07*	NA	NA	NA
Willingness	-0.32	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.53	0.35

Note non-significant (at 0.05) correlations flagged

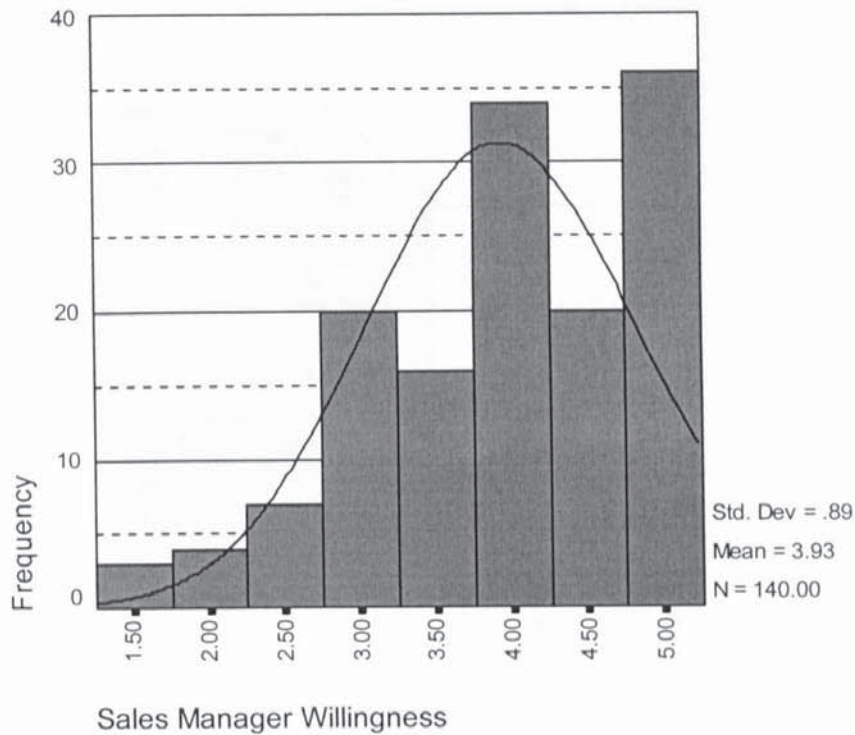
As can be seen from Table 7.12, only one of the relevant correlations is non-significant (that between sales manager caring and emotional exhaustion), meaning that 10 out of the 11 relevant correlations are significant (over 90%). This provides a good indication of the nomological and criterion-related validity of the sales manager problem resolution style measures. However, further evidence can be drawn from Chapter 8, where the results of the individual hypothesis tests are discussed.

7.6. Scaling Sales Manager Problem Resolution Style:

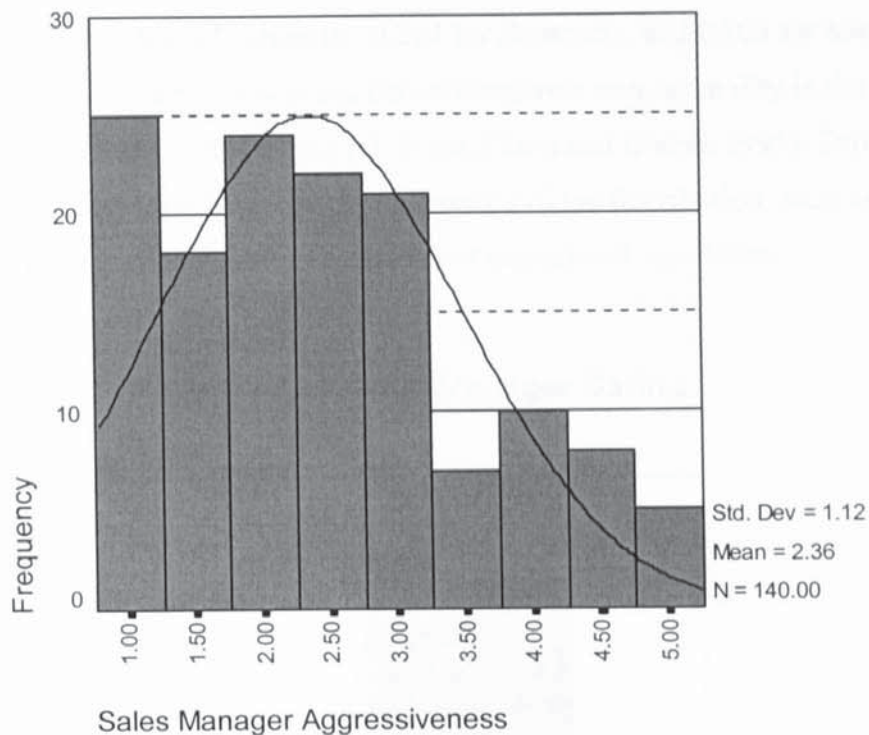
Descriptive Statistics for the Three Constructs

The previous sections in the present chapter provided sufficient evidence to accept that the three scales developed (i.e. sales manager willingness, sales manager aggressiveness, and sales manager caring) exhibit acceptable levels of unidimensionality, internal consistency, reliability and validity. Following this, each sales rep's score on each of the constructs was computed as the simple average of the sum of scores of responses to each item. Figure 7.5 provides the histogram of the frequency distribution for sales manager willingness, Figure 7.6 for sales manager aggressiveness, and Figure 7.7 for sales manager caring.

Figure 7.5: Histogram of Sales Manager Willingness



Considering sales manager willingness, as can be seen, the distribution looks rather skewed. The mean is rather larger than the scale mid-point of 3, at 3.93, and the range was wide, from 1.4 (scale minimum was 1) to the scale maximum of 5. These results suggest that sales reps in general judged the willingness to respond of their managers to be moderate or better, with few indicating rating their managers poorly (i.e. less than 3). It seems that quite a high proportion of reps rated their managers highly. However, even though the distribution looks less than normal on visual inspection, a nonsignificant Kolmogorov-Smirnoff (KS) test statistic was returned.

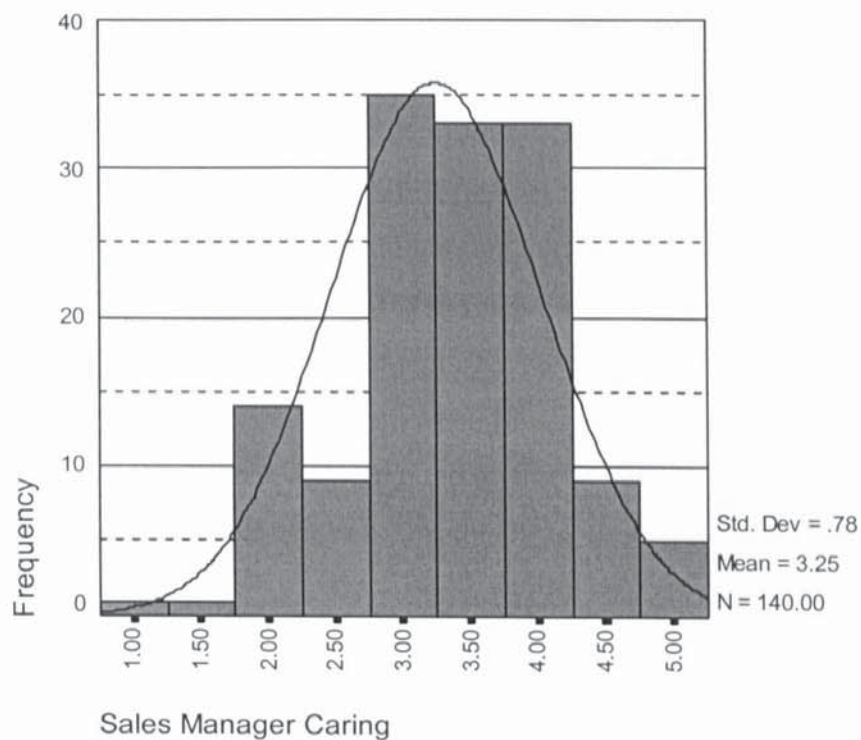
Figure 7.6: Histogram of Sales Manager Aggressiveness

Moving to sales manager aggressiveness, one can see that again the distribution looks rather skewed. However in this case the skew is towards the lower values. The mean is correspondingly low at 2.36, compared to the scale mid-point of 3, and the range is the maximum possible, from 1-5. These results imply that sales reps tended not to view their managers as highly aggressive, which is counter to some suggestions from the qualitative respondents. Few reps scored their managers above 3 on the aggressiveness scale, and a high proportion of reps gave their managers scores below 2. Again, although the distribution looks skewed, it returned a nonsignificant KS test statistic.

Finally, one can see that, while the distribution of sales manager caring (Figure 7.7) seems less skewed than the previous two, it instead seems rather leptokurtic, with a large amount of values concentrated towards the middle of the scale. The mean for sales manager caring is closer to the scale mid-point (three) than either of the two previously described scales, at 3.2, and the range is between 1 and 5. Very few reps scored their managers poorly on sales manager caring, and few scored their managers extremely highly, most values were concentrated between 3 and 4. This distribution

returned a significant KS test result, and thus further investigation was done on the properties of the distribution (cf. Sharma 1996). More specifically, the sales manager caring scale returned values of -0.214 for skewness, and 0.103 for kurtosis. Neither of these values gives any cause for concern over non-normality in the context of structural equation modelling (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995). Furthermore, there appear no other problematic characteristics of the distribution, such as bimodality. Thus the significant KS test result is not considered a problem.

Figure 7.7: Histogram of Sales Manager Caring



7.7. Summary

This chapter described the measure development process for the measures of sales manager problem resolution style (i.e. sales manager willingness to respond, aggressiveness and caring). A two stage methodology was used, consisting firstly of item analysis, exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, and secondly of confirmatory factor analysis (and the associated tests).

All of the measures were shown to be internally consistent, unidimensional, and to demonstrate sufficient levels of validity. Furthermore, the measures appeared to demonstrate adequate levels of normality, notwithstanding a slight departure by the sales manager caring scale. Therefore, the measures are deemed to be of sufficient quality to be put forward for further analysis and used in hypothesis testing applications, the focus of the following chapter.

8. THE SALES FORCE CONSEQUENCES OF SALES MANAGER PROBLEM RESOLUTION STYLES

Having described the characteristics of the respondents to the study, examined the responses to the key variables of interest, and detailed the development of psychometrically sound sales manager problem resolution style scales, the focus of the present chapter is on the multivariate analysis methods employed to examine the conceptual model explicated in Chapter 4. The first section of the chapter is concerned with detailing the method for the analysis, namely latent variable path analysis. Following this, a discussion on the operationalisation of the variables used is given. Thirdly, the results of the analysis are presented in detail. Finally, the results are briefly discussed and summarised.

8.1. Latent Variable Path Analysis

Most theories in the social sciences (including marketing research) involve the examination of relationships between constructs that cannot be directly measured, which can be called *latent* constructs or variables. For example, one cannot ‘see’ role ambiguity, one can only infer the existence of a sales person’s role ambiguity by examining their responses to several observable indicators, or questions, such as “I know exactly what is expected of me in my selling position”. The constructs in the present study, including sales manager willingness to respond, aggressiveness, and caring, are all examples of latent constructs. It was demonstrated in Chapters 6 and 7 that the observable indicators represented their respective latent constructs adequately.

In Chapter 4, it was hypothesised that a number of sales force-specific outcomes resulted from sales reps’ perceptions of their managers’ levels of willingness, aggressiveness, and caring. In this context, *latent variable path analysis* was chosen as the method to assess the hypothesised relationships. It has been argued that latent

variable path analysis and related methods are more comprehensive and flexible than any other standard statistical model in current use within social science (Hoyle 1995). Perhaps because of this, latent variable path analysis and other applications of structural equation modelling have recently become the method of choice when examining sales force-related variables within marketing (see for example Babakus et al. 1999; Boles, Johnston and Hair 1997; Johnston et al. 1990; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Netemeyer et al. 1997; Rhoads, Singh and Goodell 1994; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994).

Latent variable path analysis is an application of structural equation modelling which is able to incorporate both measurement and structural (i.e. construct interrelationships) issues (Kelloway 1998). However, within marketing literature at least, it seems that some researchers in fact consider 'structural equation modelling' as analogous to latent variable path analysis (e.g. MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). Of course, this is not the case, with the term 'structural equation modelling' in fact referring to an entire range of techniques (such as the confirmatory factor analysis used in Chapters 6 and 7) of which latent variable path analysis is merely one. In fact, some authors argue that structural equation modelling is a general linear statistical modelling approach, of which the narrower models of correlation, multiple regression, ANOVA, and factor analysis are subsets of (cf. Hoyle 1995; Tanaka et al. 1990). However, for the purposes of the present study, 'structural equation modelling' will refer to applications of confirmatory factor analysis, observed variable path analysis or latent variable path analysis (cf. Kelloway 1998).

A key issue to address at this point is the one concerning the advantages of using the structural equation modelling (SEM) approach. In particular, the use of SEM techniques can prove problematical in terms of interpreting results, and also in the stringent assumptions regarding the qualities of the data (cf. Hair et al. 1998; Hoyle 1995; Sharma 1996). Thus, one should consider whether the application of SEM can provide advantages over more traditional methods such as multiple regression, which have slightly less stringent assumptions, and can prove easier to interpret. In the present context, perhaps one of the primary advantages of SEM is that it is far more flexible than competing methods of analysis such as ANOVA or multiple regression.

For example, the multiple regression model only allows the specification of direct effects on a single outcome variable at a time (cf. Kleinbaum et al. 1998). By contrast, SEM approaches such as latent variable path analysis can examine the effects of multiple independent variables on *multiple* dependent (outcome) variables simultaneously (Hoyle 1995). As can be seen in Chapter 4, the hypothesised model has many independent variables, and many dependents, including a number of mediating variables. While it would be possible to test such a model using multiple regression, for example by using a number of separate models, the use of SEM would allow *simultaneous* testing of all relationships. Therefore, a more robust hypothesis testing approach is possible, by testing relationships within the context of the entire nomological network (for example mediating relationships).

However, for many researchers, particularly within the social sciences, the most compelling advantage of SEM (in particular latent variable path analysis) is the ability to explicitly test the relationships between *latent* variables. It was previously mentioned that many social science constructs are latent, and explicitly recognising this in a statistical test increases the likelihood of detecting association between variables, or obtaining parameter estimates close to their population levels (Hoyle 1995). In other words, latent variable path analysis is able to explicitly take measurement error and unreliability into account. By contrast, other models such as multiple regression and ANOVA are not able to take measurement error or reliability into account. Again, in the current study, all the constructs are latent, and thus the use of SEM should be preferred where possible over other techniques, which are unable to take measurement error into account.

SEM also enjoys an advantage over other statistical models in the testing of causal hypotheses. However, there appears to be something of a misperception among many researchers that SEM can actually provide sufficient evidence to actually *test* causality using cross-sectional data (Hoyle 1995). Specifically, the fact that SEM path diagrams often include directional arrows representing relationships between constructs can lead to misinterpretation that these arrows are in fact representing *causality*. In fact, SEM has previously been referred to as ‘causal modelling’ within marketing literature (cf. Boshoff and Mels 1995). However, if one considers the three necessary conditions for assuming a causal relationship (i.e. association, isolation,

and directionality (cf. Bollen 1989)), it can be seen that SEM alone cannot provide sufficient evidence to accept causal hypotheses. As Hoyle (1995) states, “in reality, SEM...cannot be used to test the hypothesis of directionality” (p. 10). In fact, when using SEM approaches, causality can only be inferred by logic or theory, exactly the same as when using ANOVA or regression. However, Hayduk (1987) suggests that there is no reason to avoid *thinking* in a causal manner, since it provides a “general and parsimonious way for our brains to grasp and summarize data whose ultimate determinential essence is beyond our current knowledge” (p. xv). Nevertheless, it should be clear that one should take care in separating this ‘causal thinking’ from the mistake of assuming that one can test true causal hypothesis by using SEM.

Notwithstanding the above, SEM does enjoy a unique *advantage* over the other statistical methods in view of causality. Considering again the three conditions necessary to demonstrate causality, SEM benefits from no particular advantage in examining the *association* (i.e. whether cause and effect are related) between variables, over many other statistical techniques. However, SEM’s advantage lies within the condition of *isolation*. More specifically, in order to demonstrate causality, the independent variable’s influence on the dependent variable must be isolated from other influences, such as moderating or confounding effects (Bollen 1989). SEM proves to be more flexible and inclusive than other methods such as partial correlation, ANOVA, and regression in this context, since the former provides “means of controlling not only for extraneous or confounding variables, but for measurement error as well” (Hoyle 1995 p. 10).

8.1.1. Assumptions of Structural Equation Modelling

While the popularity of SEM approaches has increased recently, it has been said that inappropriate usage of the technique has also increased (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995). In this context, it seems prudent to explore the assumptions of SEM techniques, to avoid uninformed and inappropriate usage. Like many parametric multivariate techniques, the use of SEM requires the researcher to make a number of assumptions about the data. Assumptions of particular note are independence, multivariate normality, linearity of relationships, and continuous data (cf. Hair et al. 1998; Hoyle 1995; Sharma 1996; West, Finch and Curran 1995).

When performing multivariate analysis such as SEM, it is critical to assess the *multivariate* normality of the data, as well as the individual univariate distributions. This is because, while multivariate normality can be disproved by a lack of univariate normality, it cannot be assumed to be present *even if all univariate distributions are normal* (cf. Hair et al. 1998, Sharma 1996). Thus, where possible, the researcher should use dedicated tests to assess the multivariate distribution of the data. Unfortunately, Sharma (1996) reports that very few statistical tests are available to examine multivariate normality, and thus the researcher is better served to examine a graph of the ordered squared Mahalanobis distance against the χ^2 statistic. Evidence of multivariate normality is provided if this plot approaches linearity. Nevertheless, it has been contended that in general, SEM approaches are relatively robust regarding modest departures from distributional normality (Chou and Bentler 1995; Hoyle 1995).

Related to the concept of normality is the assumption that the data used in SEM applications is continuous. While it can be seen that the Likert scales used in the present research are in fact not continuous, it is generally assumed, in theoretical terms, that there is a continuous variable *underlying* each Likert measurement scale (cf. Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996). Ordinal or interval scales (e.g. Likert scales) which measure theoretically continuous variables are sometimes known as ‘coarsely-categorised’ variables (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995). It is critical in SEM analysis to determine whether the coarse categorisation of these variables is likely to influence the results of the analysis. However, research has found that analysis of variables with five or more categories does not suffer from severe problems, although potential problems are accentuated with severe departures from normal distributions such as skewness and/or kurtosis (West, Finch and Curran 1995).

The assumption of linearity is a common one within marketing research. In particular, much sales force research assumes linear relationships between independent and dependent variables¹. In the absence of substantial contrary evidence, all relationships are hypothesised as linear (see Chapter 3 for further details). Finally, the research design of the study provides evidence of independence.

¹ A notable exception is Singh (1998).

That is, while multiple respondents from single firms were employed, the unit of analysis was a single salesperson for each manager, thus each salesperson's response is assumed to be essentially independent of any other, even from the same firm.

8.1.2. Model Specification and Identification

Latent variable path analysis is an SEM approach which is able to consider both measurement and structural considerations (Kelloway 1998). More specifically, it incorporates elements of multiple regression and factor analysis to examine interrelated dependent relationships among latent constructs at the same time as incorporating the effects of measurement error on the relationships (cf. Hair et al. 1998). Previously, in Chapters 6 and 7, a number of aspects of structural equation modelling were detailed thoroughly in consideration of the measurement model. Therefore, only aspects additional to those already discussed will be explored in depth, i.e. aspects specific to the *structural* model rather than the measurement model. Previously explored issues will only be briefly recapped.

There are a number of different situations when considering the testing of structural models, which have been identified either explicitly or implicitly by different authors (e.g. Hair et al. 1998; Sharma 1996). Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996) provide a useful classification of three different model testing strategies. Firstly, in a *strictly confirmatory* situation, the researcher formulates a single model for testing, and the aim is to either accept or reject the model only, using a data set collected for the purpose. Secondly, in an *alternative models* situation, a number of different models are hypothesised. The researcher then selects one model which returns the 'best' results, based on analysis of the empirical data. Finally is the *model generation* strategy. In this case, a tentative initial model is specified, and if it does not fit the empirical data well, it is modified and re-analysed *using the same data set*. It can be seen that the final two approaches have much in common with the confirmatory factor analysis strategy used in Chapter 7 in particular. Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993) contended that the model generation approach is in fact the most common in practice. They suggested that this may be because a) researchers are rarely satisfied with merely rejecting a single model without suggesting alternatives, and b) these alternatives are hardly ever specified a priori.

However, the model generation approach is a particularly controversial one amongst researchers who use SEM techniques (Hoyle 1995). Furthermore, Hair et al. (1998) cautioned researchers to make post hoc modifications to models “with care and only after obtaining theoretical justification for what is empirically deemed significant” (p. 614-615). In particular, it has been argued that modifying a model according to empirical results, and then reanalysing it using the same data set, runs a high risk of accepting spurious results, which are merely data artefacts (Hair et al. 1998). In this way, respecified models should be considered as exploratory only, and any modifications can not be considered as ‘confirmed’ (cf. James and James 1989; Kelloway 1998).

A further potential problem with adding relationships to a model post hoc, is that many of these parameters have meanings which are theoretically uninterpretable, although serve to improve the fit of the structural or measurement model (Kelloway 1998; 1996). A good example of this is freeing correlations or covariances between error terms, which may improve fit, but (as explained in Chapter 7) invalidate the model in theoretical terms. However, even if one can provide a theoretical justification for adding a new relationship, Kelloway (1998) pointed out the danger in this approach when he reiterated Steiger’s (1990) remark of “[w]hat percentage of researchers would find themselves unable to think up a ‘theoretical justification’ for freeing a parameter? In the absence of empirical information to the contrary, I assume the answer is ‘near zero’” (Kelloway 1998 p. 21).

Thus, it can be seen that post-hoc modification of specified models is an approach fraught with danger. Nevertheless, simply rejecting an ill-fitting model does not provide any insight into what the ‘actual’ theory may be, even though it conforms to a ‘classical’ hypothesis testing approach. Thus, many authors have argued that researchers are justified in respecifying their models according to post hoc rationalisations (cf. Hair et al. 1998; Kelloway 1998; Sharma 1996). However, Kelloway (1998) suggested two ways of minimising the chance of merely capitalising on data artefacts in model modifications. Firstly, one should only modify a model if the modification can be theoretically justified in some way, while taking into consideration Steiger’s (1990) comments above. Secondly, wherever possible, the model should be retested on a second data set, and post hoc modifications should

always be clearly identified to allow readers to draw their own conclusions. Thus, bearing in mind the above discussion, as well as the early stage of research into sales manager problem resolution styles, the model generation approach was used in the present study, to provide insight into possible respecification of the conceptual model.

The issue of model identification has been dealt with in depth in Chapter 7 (see Section 7.3.2.). There it was noted that, in order to effectively test a structural equation model, such models should be overidentified. Or in other words the number of equations must exceed the number of unknown parameters, meaning that there are a *number* of different unique solutions (cf. Bollen 1989; Kelloway 1998). While the identification of the measurement (i.e. CFA) model has been discussed previously, the identification of the structural model must also be considered. Essentially, even if the measurement model is overidentified, the structural model must *also* be overidentified. In general, overidentification in the structural model is achieved by setting certain parameters to zero (cf. Kelloway 1998), thus the full latent variable path analysis model is in some ways a ‘restricted’ version of the measurement model, since some of the correlations between constructs are set to zero². As a result, technically speaking, the fit of the full model (incorporating both measurement and structural models) can never improve upon the measurement model in isolation (Kelloway 1998), since some of the correlations which were previously free to be estimated are now fixed at zero (which would generally impair the fit). Similar to the measurement model, a one-way causal flow (i.e. recursive) is one condition for overidentification, since half of all the possible relationships are set to zero. A further condition for identification, as described in Chapter 7, is that each latent variable be

² These correlations are set to zero by definition when one specifies structural relationships between constructs. If one specifies a one-way relationship between two constructs, then the reverse is set to zero (unlike a simple correlation). Furthermore, unless all constructs are hypothesised to be interrelated with each other (a special case which is termed a ‘saturated’ model), then a number of constructs will not be specified as related, and thus the paths between them will also be set to zero.

measured with three or more indicators, or two if the sample size is large and/or the respective variables are hypothesised as related (Bollen 1989)³.

Moving focus now to a consideration of model fit assessment, substantial consideration was given to different measures of fit, in Chapter 7 (see Section 7.3.3.), and thus the discussion will not be repeated in any depth. However, it is important to note that none of the pertinent considerations in the choice of fit measure have changed from the measurement model to the structural model, and thus Section 7.3.3. remains relevant. To recap, the fit statistics and heuristics of interest are the χ^2 , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and the comparative fit index (CFI).

8.1.3. Further Analysis Issues

A number of other issues also play an important part in SEM analysis methods. Some of these are common to other methods (such as regression) like outliers, multicollinearity, and power. However, the issue of sample size is especially pertinent to SEM approaches, and thus will also receive consideration here.

Like multiple regression analysis, SEM analysis can also suffer due to the influence of outliers, which are “extreme data points that may affect the results of structural equation modelling, even when the remainder of the data are well distributed” (West, Finch and Curran 1995). Outliers can be a result of errors in answering questions by some respondents, or data entry errors, however if this can be ascertained reliably the deletion or modification of such items/cases can be justified. Outliers may also result due to a few respondents being outside the population of interest, and if this is the case then removal of the outlier also seems justified. However, the researcher must decide whether the outlier is in fact a valid piece of data (whether it be extreme or not), and if this is the case, then deleting the outlier seems less theoretically plausible. Overall, the question of outliers is potentially difficult, and West, Finch and Curran (1995) suggest that one may delete the outlier, redefine the population of

³ Concerning a measurement model, it was said in Chapter 7 that, if they had two indicators, the respective variables had to be *correlated*, which is essentially the same thing as related. The terms are different since the present discussion concerns the *structural* rather than the measurement model.

interest, or respecify the model. However, all of these approaches will have conceptual as well as empirical outcomes, and thus should not be entered into thoughtlessly.

Moving to a consideration of multicollinearity, the latter is concerned with whether there is significant dependence or correlation between the independent variables in a regression model (Kleinbaum et al. 1998). In essence the presence of multicollinearity in SEM has similar effects to the corresponding situation in multiple regression. More specifically, the presence of multicollinearity makes it difficult to separate the effects of each independent variable, and leads to unstable statistical results (Cohen and Cohen 1975; Kleinbaum et al. 1998). One strategy for dealing with multicollinearity is the deletion of one of the collinear variables (Cohen and Cohen 1975), however this can lead to model specification problems. Other strategies are also available, such as transforming collinear variables so that the influence of one is removed from the other (the same process as was performed in Chapter 6 to remove the influence of social desirability bias from some items). However, in general multicollinearity remains a significant problem to analysts.

Moving focus now to the issue of power, in classical statistical terms, the power of a test is the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is false (Sharma 1996). In most statistical analyses, one wishes the power to be high in order to improve the confidence of interpreting the results. However, within the context of SEM approaches, the situation is slightly more complicated. Specifically, since many tests of model fit are concerned with *accepting* a null hypothesis, i.e. that the covariance matrix implied by the specified model is equivalent to the observed covariance matrix, rather than rejecting one (cf. Kelloway 1998), increased power can possibly be a problem in some instances (cf. Saris and Satorra 1993). Moving back to classical statistical theory, it is logically correct that as power increases, the likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis (if it is incorrect) also increases *by definition*. Since, in classical statistical terms, SEM usually aims to accept a null hypothesis, this could be a problem, in that where high power exists, trivial differences between the implied and observed covariance matrices could lead to

‘incorrect’ rejection of the model (cf. Saris and Satorra 1991)⁴. Thus, it can be argued that power consideration is especially necessary in SEM contexts when one is deciding whether or not to reject a hypothesised model. In the latter case, Saris and Satorra (1991) argue that where tests have high power, the hypothesised model should not *necessarily* be rejected, even if statistics suggest so.

The issue of power within SEM is also bound up with another key issue, that of sample size. Specifically, it is accepted as a truism that for any statistical analysis, power is directly related to sample size, and larger sample sizes lead to higher power (cf. Kaplan 1995). This is particularly relevant to SEM since it is “very much a large sample technique” (Kelloway 1998 p. 20). By this it is meant that, for various reasons beyond the scope of this dissertation, the use of SEM techniques (and especially those involving latent variables) is not recommended on ‘small’ samples. However, what the terms ‘large sample’ and ‘small sample’ mean in this context is rather obscure. In particular, different SEM estimation methods require different sample sizes both to achieve adequate power levels, and to be assured of stable results (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995). In the case of the present research, Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) was the method of choice. Concerning normal theory-based estimation methods such as MLE, a number of different guidelines have been put forward as to the minimum sample size for analysis (cf. Anderson and Gerbing 1984; Bentler and Chou 1987; Kelloway 1998; Marsh, Balla and MacDonald 1988 etc.). Nevertheless, Kelloway (1998) suggests an absolute minimum of 100 cases, and a reasonable minimum of 200 cases where latent variables are concerned. However, Bentler and Chou (1987) suggest a more flexible approach, based upon the amount of estimated parameters in any model. They suggest that the ratio of sample size to parameters estimated be between 5:1 and 10:1 for acceptably stable estimates to be computed.

⁴ However, it is recognised that there is significant debate over exactly what a ‘trivial’ misspecification is, and one should be cautious to avoid using the above argument as an ‘excuse’ for accepting poor models (i.e. by ignoring statistically significant test results) simply if sample size is large.

Furthermore, the normality assumption is also an important consideration in terms of sample size. In particular, where severe departures from normality occur, even with very large sample sizes one is not necessarily assured of adequate results (cf. Anderson and Gerbing 1984; West, Finch and Curran 1995). This is notwithstanding the general necessity to employ an alternative – distribution free – estimation method with such departures from normality, which commonly also requires far larger sample sizes, such as the Asymptotic Distribution Free estimation technique (West, Finch and Curran 1995).

Moving back to the question of power, it can be seen that researchers who wish to use SEM techniques face something of a dilemma. On the one hand theory suggests that the sample size be as large as possible, to ensure stable results and reliable model convergence (cf. Kelloway 1998). However, on the other hand, it has been argued that sample sizes which are too large may in fact lead to over-rejection of acceptable models, due to increased power of the model fit tests (cf. Saris and Satorra 1991). Thus, it seems that the informed researcher should seek a middle ground between the two extremes, in particular taking the model's complexity into account when determining the size of the sample to be use. That said, it would appear to be prudent to *collect* as much data as possible, since too much data can be reduced by for example splitting the samples. This would have the advantage of enabling the use of a second sample to confirm any model modifications. By contrast, nothing can be done if too little data is available.

8.2. Operationalisation of the Variables

Before moving to the actual analysis of the hypothesised model (see Chapter 4), it is necessary to provide some discussion on the operationalisation of the latent variables in question. As previously mentioned, latent variable path analysis consists of estimation of two models, the structural model and the measurement model, which can be done simultaneously or separately (Kelloway 1998). Estimating the two together introduces complication in assessing the results, in that poor fit can be attributed to either an incorrect measurement model, or an incorrect structural model. To reduce this potential complexity, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommend assessing the measurement model first, then once it has been found to fit adequately,

assessing the structural model. Following this procedure, the measurement model was assessed throughout Chapters 6 and 7. To maintain Bentler and Chou's (1987) recommended sample size to parameter estimate ratio, the model was assessed in a series of parts.

When assessing the measurement model, each latent construct was represented by a number of observable indicators (i.e. scale items). The primary reason for this was that, in measure development activities, one is attempting to assess the qualities of the individual items and their relationships with the latent construct they are purported to measure. Thus, it is necessary by definition to use the individual indicators. However, when consideration turns to the structural model, this approach is not strictly necessary, since one is now interested in the relationships between the latent variables, assuming of course the successful prior assessment of the measurement model. In the present context, each latent construct in the structural model was represented by a *single* observed indicator, which represented the score of the multi-item scale. For example, whereas sales manager willingness was measured by five indicators in the measurement model, in the structural model it is represented by a single item created by taking the mean of the individual five items.

This method of representing constructs in structural modelling has become widely accepted within marketing literature of late, and is particularly helpful when the number of indicators (and therefore parameter estimates) is large (e.g. Babakus et al 1999; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). In the case of the present study, retaining the variable operationalisations which were described in Chapters 5 and 6 (i.e. multiple item scales) would mean that the amount of parameters to be estimated would exceed the number necessary to achieve Bentler and Chou's (1987) absolute minimum ratio of 5:1.⁵ West, Finch and Curran (1995) also allude to the former method, in their discussion of 'item parcels', which are constructed by "summing or taking the mean of several items which purportedly measure the same construct"

⁵ Specifically, the ratio of the hypothesised model, with variables operationalised as single item parcels, was approximately 7.37:1. However, if the latent variables were operationalised using all of their items, the increase in the number of parameters estimated would have decreased the ratio to a mere 2.69:1.

(West, Finch and Curran 1995 p. 70). They argue that item parcels generally more closely approximate normality than individual items, and can also be useful to reduce the number of parameters estimated. However, they caution against the use of less than three parcels per construct, since this is likely to lead to identification problems. In the present case however, it can be seen that only a *single* parcel was created for each construct, which will cause problems in identifying the model. Specifically, according to the theory discussed in more depth in Sections 7.3.2., models with less than two or three (depending on certain conditions) indicators per construct will be underidentified and impossible to estimate (Bollen 1989). Thus, some method of avoiding this problem must be sought.

There appear to be two main methods of avoiding the identification problem detailed above. Firstly, each construct could be modelled as *observed*, or in other words without error. In essence then, each item parcel would then ‘be’ the construct, rather than representing a measurement of a latent variable. Since measurement concerns would not have to be taken into account (i.e. the program would not estimate loadings of the indicators on the latent constructs, or error of the indicators) the model would then be able to be estimated. Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994) appear to suggest this approach in their concept of the ‘total aggregation’ model of variables. The total aggregation approach represents a given construct as “a single composite made up of the sum of the items hypothesized to measure it” (Bagozzi and Heatherton 1994 p. 37-38). As Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994) state: “the main advantages of the total aggregation model are its simplicity and ability to capture the essence of the...concept” (p. 39). However, the method of analysis would no longer involve latent variables, and thus could not incorporate measurement error (of which estimates have already been computed). In SEM terms, this methodology would be termed ‘observed variable path analysis’ (cf. Kelloway 1998).

However, it is indeed possible to include some indication of measurement error in a model which uses single indicators for the latent variables. In fact, Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994) allude to this even though in their study they do not explicitly model the totally aggregated model with measurement error. Specifically they imply that it is theoretically feasible with the statement “a measure of reliability might be computed...and then used to correct for attenuation in predictions of a criterion” (p.

39). If this was done, then the advantages of *latent* variable path analysis (namely the ability to account for error) would still be taken advantage of. In fact, Kelloway (1998) suggests just such a method. Specifically, if one fixes the unique component of the factor loading (i.e. the error term) to a value of $(1 - \text{reliability}) \times \text{variance of the observed score}$, then it should be possible to achieve overidentification, and thus an estimable and testable model. As Kelloway (1998) argues; “this is simply an estimate of the percentage of error variance, which is all that is represented by the unique factor loading” (Kelloway 1998, p. 136). Furthermore, since reliability was computed using the actual individual items of each scale, the estimate should at least closely approximate its ‘true’ value. Using the latter method should allow one to take advantage of the unique ability of SEM to take measurement error into account, while still using only a single indicator per construct. Thus, a single indicator for each construct in the model was created using data computed earlier. The values for reliability were computed for each construct in Chapters 6 and 7 (using the composite reliability formula). Variance for the observed score was computed in SPSS for the composite scale for each variable. The values and resulting error variance loadings are shown in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Single Item Operationalisation Statistics

Measure	Reliability	Variance	Error Variance
Sales Manager Aggressiveness	0.892	1.248	0.135
Sales Manager Caring	0.747	0.608	0.152
Sales Manager Willingness	0.879	0.791	0.095
Role Ambiguity	0.690	0.600	0.186
Emotional Exhaustion	0.772	2.18	0.497
Turnover Intentions	0.950	0.950	0.048
Organisational Commitment	0.868	0.959	0.127
Job Satisfaction	0.880	0.790	0.095
Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	0.655	1.68	0.580

For the variables of sales manager willingness, sales manager aggressiveness, sales manager caring, and most of the consequence variables, the process of creating the single indicator was simply one of averaging out the relevant scale items. In the case of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) however, the situation was slightly more complex. Specifically, organisationally-directed OCBs were conceptualised as consisting of the two dimensions of sportsmanship and civic virtue. In order to operationalise OCBs using a single indicator, the scores of each OCB construct were summed to create a single score. The reliability used to compute the error variance

for OCBs was set to the mean value of the composite reliabilities of the sportsmanship and civic virtue scales (0.655)⁶.

8.3. Testing the Structural Model

In order to test the study hypotheses, a latent variable path model was constructed, along the lines of the conceptual framework detailed in Chapter 4. The conceptual model to be tested is presented in Figure 8.1. As has previously been discussed, the covariance matrix was used, and the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) procedure was employed. Prior to testing the model however, consideration was given to the issues identified in Section 8.1.

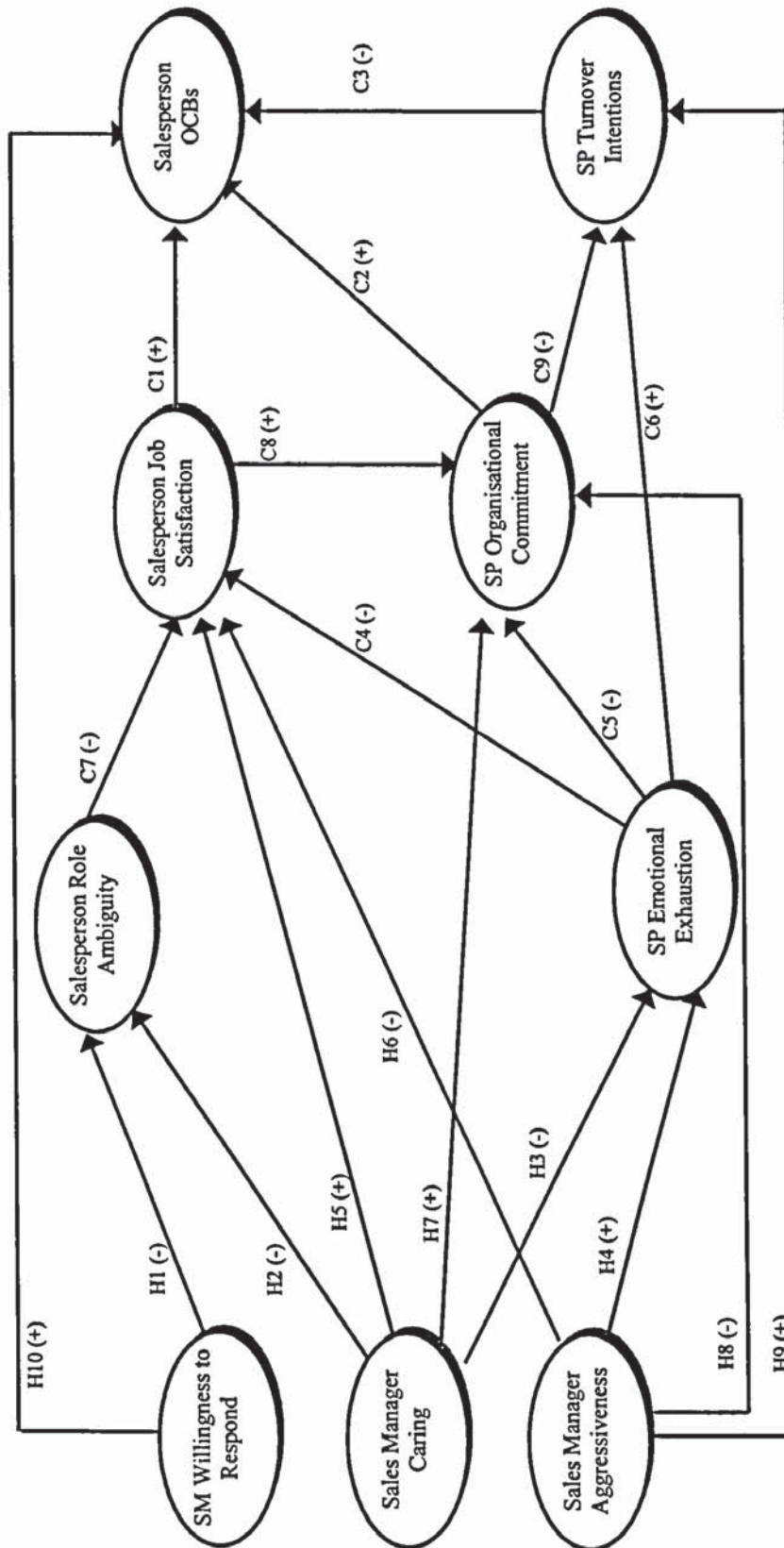
8.3.1. Multicollinearity

As previously implied, multicollinearity has primarily been considered within the context of multiple regression analysis (cf. Cohen and Cohen 1975; Hair et al. 1998; Kleinbaum et al. 1998; Sharma 1996). Standard diagnostics within this context include tolerance values, condition indices, and variance proportions (cf. Kleinbaum et al. 1998). However, latent variable path analysis differs from multiple regression in that it uses *latent* variables rather than observed variables, taking measurement error into account. Standard regression diagnostics rely upon the observed scale scores, rather than latent ones, and thus are likely to be inaccurate when applied to any latent variable analysis.

Therefore, a more pragmatic approach was taken to assess multicollinearity among the independent variables. Specifically, the correlations between the independent variables were assessed. These correlations were computed during the discriminant validity analysis, and thus are between *latent* variables, making them appropriate for use here. The full matrix can be viewed in Section 7.5. On viewing this matrix, one can determine that a number of correlations were reasonably high between variables (for example job satisfaction and organisational commitment correlated at 0.71). However, the high correlations tended to appear between variables that are

⁶ The individual reliabilities were computed using the composite reliability formula (see Equation 6.1), and were 0.61 for civic virtue, and 0.7 for sportsmanship.

Figure 8.1: Conceptual Model



hypothesised as related in the conceptual model. As a consequence, high correlations were rather expected in this case. Furthermore, within multiple regression literature, problematic collinearity has been suggested to result from correlations in the range of 0.9 (cf. Sharma 1996). Thus, the decision was made not to take any action to deal with potential multicollinearity at this stage, since it did not appear to be a major problem.

8.3.2. Violation of Assumptions

In order to test for violation of the normality assumption, results from earlier descriptive analysis of the scales was taken into account. This is appropriate in the present case since each latent variable is modelled using the scale value as a single indicator. Chapters 6 and 7 provide histograms and statistics for normality and thus will not be entered into in depth again.

The procedure identified a number of potential departures from univariate normality, by way of significant Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results. However, more detailed analysis of the potentially non-normal distributions suggested that there were no major problems with any of them. However, since not all univariate distributions were statistically normal (i.e. some statistical measures indicated possible non-normality), the achievement of statistical multivariate normality was considered highly unlikely, and therefore it was not examined.

Considering the departures from normality indicated by the KS results in Chapters 6 and 7, these were not considered to be a major problem in the later analysis. Specifically, as previously mentioned, SEM techniques (including MLE) are relatively robust to minor violations of the normality assumption (Chou and Bentler 1995; Hoyle 1995). In Chapter 6 and 7, analysis of the relevant skewness and kurtosis values for the relevant scales showed that they were not highly non-normal. Specifically, in terms of SEM literature, highly non-normal variables have been defined as having values in the range of 3 and 21 for skewness and kurtosis respectively (cf. West, Finch and Curran 1995), while none of the scales returning significant KS results even approached these values. However, it is worth noting the statistical normality violation, in future interpretation of the test results.

8.3.3. Outliers and Influential Data Points

Considering outliers and influential data points, the characteristics of the model made it unlikely that they would occur. Specifically, since all of the variables assessed had a strictly defined range of 1-5, the potential for outliers was minimised. Indeed, examination of the descriptive statistics showed few potential outliers on the variables of interest⁷.

However, it is critical to realise that the decision to eliminate an outlier is not solely based on objective criteria. Instead, it is up to the researcher to judge whether or not any potentially extreme case should be deleted. As Kleinbaum et al. state; “[s]ome observation must be the most extreme in every sample. It would be silly to delete automatically...extreme observations, based entirely on statistical testing procedures...Scientific judgement is more important here than statistical tests, once influential observations have been flagged. Of course, deleting the most deviant observations always at least slightly improves – and sometimes substantially improves – the fit of the model, but one must resist the temptation to polish the fit of the model by discarding troublesome data points” (1998 p.232-233)⁸.

In light of the above then, any case which appeared extreme was analysed more closely, rather than being eliminated immediately. For example, considering role ambiguity, one case had a rather large role ambiguity score. It is likely that removing this case would have improved the fit of the model and changed the model coefficients. However, the case was not particularly extreme (and of course it could not be on a 5-point scale), suggesting any difference would be marginal. So, although the case was clearly an ‘outlier’ within the context of the current study, the decision was taken to retain it. In particular, no conceptual argument was provided suggesting that the relationships between role ambiguity and other variables were valid only at

⁷ However, when considering the firm statistics, at least one firm was discovered to have unusually large size and profit (see Chapter 6). This is not considered an outlier since it is not a variable of interest in the analysis, and therefore will not affect the results in statistical terms.

⁸ It is recognised that this statement is specifically referring to multiple regression, however the conceptual argument is valid across different analysis strategies, including SEM.

lower levels of role ambiguity, thus removal of the outlier would raise the question of generalisability of any conclusions drawn from the analysis results.

The reasoning given above was used when analysing all potential outliers. In addition, the small influence that any outlier on a scale of 1-5 could possibly have was also taken into account. As a result, no cases were purged on the evidence purely of extremity.

8.3.4. Model Specification

A full path model can now be specified, in order to test the theory of sales manager problem resolution style explicated in Chapter 4. This model is represented in Figure 8.2 in its entirety. Furthermore, Table 8.2 restates the hypotheses from Chapter 4. However, before continuing, it is necessary to explain the terminology used in the diagram and table. To maintain consistency with SEM literature, Exogenous (independent) variables are represented by ξ , endogenous (dependent) variables are represented by η ⁹. Furthermore, each endogenous latent variable has a residual term associated with it, analogous to the error term in measure development. This term represents all other factors that influence the latent variable, other than the predictors hypothesised in the model, and is represented as ζ . Finally, each observed indicator is represented by x , and the error term associated with it by δ .

Arrows, or *paths* between constructs represent how each construct relates to the other. These paths are quantified by structural coefficients, which can be interpreted as the amount of change in the *criterion/dependent* variable, for each unit of change in the *predictor/independent* variable, if all other variables were held constant.

Relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables are represented as γ , while relationships between endogenous and endogenous variables are represented by β .

⁹ However, it is noted that some literature has argued for the removal of such terminology to aid interpretation by non-technical readers (e.g. Hoyle 1995). However, since a technical discussion of SEM is part of this dissertation, Greek notation has been preserved where appropriate, although additional discussion is provided in more conceptual terms.

Figure 8.2: Hypothesised Structural Equation Model Specification

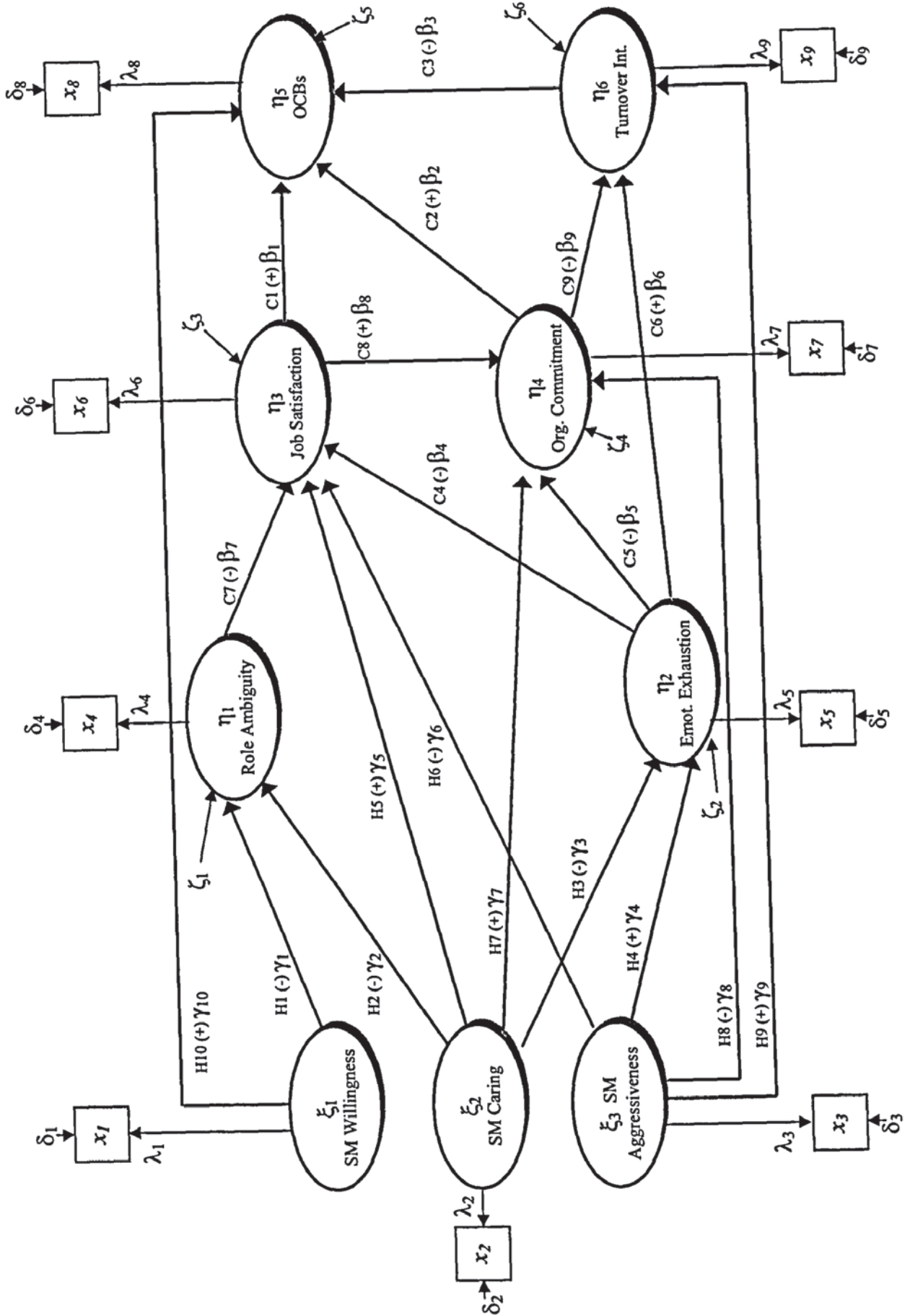


Table 8.2: Hypotheses to be Tested

Hypothesis	Path	Relationship
H ₁	γ_1	Willingness → (-) Role Ambiguity
H ₂	γ_2	Caring → (-) Role Ambiguity
H ₃	γ_3	Caring → (-) Emotional Exhaustion
H ₄	γ_4	Aggressiveness → (+) Emotional Exhaustion
H ₅	γ_5	Caring → (+) Job Satisfaction
H ₆	γ_6	Aggressiveness → (-) Job Satisfaction
H ₇	γ_7	Caring → (+) Organisational Commitment
H ₈	γ_8	Aggressiveness → (-) Organisational Commitment
H ₉	γ_9	Aggressiveness → (+) Turnover Intentions
H ₁₀	γ_{10}	Willingness → (+) OCB
C ₁	β_1	Job Satisfaction → (+) OCB
C ₂	β_2	Organisational Commitment → (+) OCB
C ₃	β_3	Turnover Intentions → (-) OCB
C ₄	β_4	Emotional Exhaustion → (-) Job Satisfaction
C ₅	β_5	Emotional Exhaustion → (-) Organisational Commitment
C ₆	β_6	Emotional Exhaustion → (+) Turnover Intentions
C ₇	β_7	Role Ambiguity → (-) Job Satisfaction
C ₈	β_8	Job Satisfaction → (+) Organisational Commitment
C ₉	β_9	Organisational Commitment → (-) Turnover Intentions

8.3.5. Results

The results from the MLE procedure for the originally hypothesised model (see Figure 8.2) were excellent. The fit statistics are given in Table 8.3. Of particular note is the χ^2 statistic, which is non-significant in the model, and all of the other heuristic indices indicate excellent fit.

Table 8.3: Model Test Results

Fit Statistic	Model Score
Chi-Square	21.22
Degrees of Freedom	14
Chi-Square Significance	0.09
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	0.061 ($p = 0.328$)
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	0.895
Incremental Fit Index	0.984
Comparative Fit Index	0.984

8.4. Individual Hypothesis Tests

While the overall model fit statistics reported in Section 8.3.5. show that, as a whole, the hypothesised structural model reproduces the observed covariance matrix very well, on their own they provide little information regarding the individual hypotheses which make up the model (which were given in Chapter 4). Fortunately, the results from the SEM procedure allow further analysis, and an appreciation of the degree of support for each individual hypothesis. The results for each hypothesis are reported in Table 8.4.

Essentially, the hypothesis testing method involves using the structural path estimates from the MLE procedure. Each path estimate has a path coefficient (noted as a γ or β in SEM terminology), and a t -value associated with it. For a path coefficient to be considered statistically significant at the 0.05 level, the t -value must exceed 1.645¹⁰, while at the 0.1 level, the t -value must exceed 1.28¹¹

8.4.1. Individual Hypotheses

Of primary interest to the objectives of this study are the hypotheses regarding the *direct* effects of sales manager willingness, caring and aggressiveness on sales force consequences, and thus these will be discussed first. It can be seen from Table 8.2, that a total of *ten* direct effects were originally hypothesised. Of the ten that were statistically tested, *five* were supported by the structural modelling process, a ratio of 50%. There were *nine* control paths originally specified between the dependent variables, of these nine, *four* were supported at the 5% significance level, a ratio of around 45%. However, one additional path was supported tentatively at the 10% level, increasing the ratio to 56%.

¹⁰ The tests are technically *one-tailed* since a direction is hypothesised. If the tests were two-tailed, then the critical t -value would instead be 1.96.

¹¹ Since the research is a) exploratory, and b) conducted with a relatively small sample size (for SEM), hypotheses were considered to be tentatively supported if they achieved a 0.1 level of significance (one tailed).

Table 8.4: individual Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Path	Relationship	Coefficient	t-value
H ₁	γ_1	Willingness → (-) Role Ambiguity	-0.412	-2.895**
H ₂	γ_2	Caring → (-) Role Ambiguity	0.123	0.629
H ₃	γ_3	Caring → (-) Emotional Exhaustion	0.163	0.719
H ₄	γ_4	Aggressiveness → (+) Emotional Exhaustion	0.420	2.053**
H ₅	γ_5	Caring → (+) Job Satisfaction	0.515	2.220**
H ₆	γ_6	Aggressiveness → (-) Job Satisfaction	0.214	1.044
H ₇	γ_7	Caring → (+) Organisational Commitment	-0.239	-1.193
H ₈	γ_8	Aggressiveness → (-) Organisational Commitment	-0.412	-2.411**
H ₉	γ_9	Aggressiveness → (+) Turnover Intentions	-0.002	-0.025
H ₁₀	γ_{10}	Willingness → (+) OCB	0.285	2.758**
C ₁	β_1	Job Satisfaction → (+) OCB	0.199	0.835
C ₂	β_2	Organisational Commitment → (+) OCB	0.321	1.046
C ₃	β_3	Turnover Intentions → (-) OCB	0.034	0.213
C ₄	β_4	Emotional Exhaustion → (-) Job Satisfaction	-0.109	-1.151
C ₅	β_5	Emotional Exhaustion → (-) Organisational Commitment	-0.126	-1.451*
C ₆	β_6	Emotional Exhaustion → (+) Turnover Intentions	0.015	0.177
C ₇	β_7	Role Ambiguity → (-) Job Satisfaction	-0.573	-4.169**
C ₈	β_8	Job Satisfaction → (+) Organisational Commitment	0.848	8.073**
C ₉	β_9	Organisational Commitment → (-) Turnover Intentions	-0.781	-7.699**

** : Relationship significant at 5% (one-tailed test).

* : Relationship significant at 10% (one-tailed test)

8.4.1.1. Hypotheses Relating to Sales Manager Willingness

Considering first sales manager willingness, two direct effects were originally hypothesised in Chapter 4, both of which were supported by the analysis results. Firstly, H₁ specified a negative association between willingness and role ambiguity. This relationship was supported in the model, with a coefficient of -0.41, and a *t*-value of -2.895. So the present results suggest that salespeople who perceive their managers as highly willing to respond to problems experience lower levels of role

ambiguity. This is unsurprising, since higher levels of willingness to respond to problems should have a major effect on letting salespeople know exactly where their responsibilities lie (whether it be to firm, customers or other stakeholders).

Sales manager willingness was also hypothesised to be associated positively with salesperson OCBs. This hypothesis (H_{10}) was also supported by the results, with a coefficient of 0.285 and a t -value of 2.758. In other words, salespeople who work for managers who are more willing to respond to problems are themselves more willing to perform discretionary OCBs directed at helping the firm. This is a significant finding, and provides considerable evidence as to the importance of sales manager problem resolution styles to salespeople's effectiveness.

8.4.1.2. Hypotheses Relating to Sales Manager Caring

Four hypotheses relating to sales manager caring were originally hypothesised in Chapter 4. However, unfortunately only a single one of these was supported by the analysis. The supported hypothesis was H_5 , that sales manager caring will be positively associated with salesperson job satisfaction. This hypothesis had a path coefficient of 0.515, with a t -value of 2.22. This result indicates that salespeople who perceive their managers as being higher in caring when resolving problems, experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This result is an important indication that managers can directly influence the psychological well-being of their salespeople simply by resolving problems in a positive (in this case caring) manner.

Moving consideration now to H_2 , this hypothesis was not supported (coefficient of 0.123, t -value of 0.629). In other words, salespeople who perceive their managers as higher in caring do not experience less role ambiguity. This result is quite interesting, and calls into question the existing theory that employees who perceive support (such as sales manager caring) as being available will perceive less role ambiguity in their jobs (e.g. Thoits 1986). However, to take a devil's advocate approach, why *should* sales manager caring reduce role ambiguity? Specifically, if salespeople perceive their manager as highly caring, this may in fact *increase* role ambiguity for a number of reasons. Firstly, salespeople who are confused as to where their main responsibilities lie can be even more confused after they perceive highly caring styles from their managers. For example, those salespeople who are very customer-focused

may become confused when their sales manager is highly caring, since they may feel increased loyalty towards the caring manager, causing extra uncertainty in their minds. Furthermore, in some cases highly caring activities by sales managers could confuse salespeople about what their roles and responsibilities actually were, since dealing with problems in a highly caring manner could confuse salespeople as to whether or not they were actually causing a problem in the first place.

H₃ did not receive support from the analysis either, with a coefficient of 0.163 (*t*-value 0.719) returned. Specifically, this means that salespeople who perceive their sales managers as higher in caring do not experience less emotional exhaustion. This runs counter to the conceptual argument presented earlier, that higher perceptions of sales manager caring will increase salespeople's perceptions of sympathy and understanding in the workplace, ultimately reducing emotional exhaustion. However, it may be that sales manager caring does not reduce the feelings of excessive emotional demands on salespeople (which ultimately lead to emotional exhaustion), and may in fact put more emotional demands on salespeople. For example, salespeople who perceive their managers as higher in caring may feel more emotionally attached to their sales manager, which may ratchet up the level of emotion in the workplace, perhaps even *increasing* emotional exhaustion in extreme cases. In other words, highly caring sales managers may inadvertently (or otherwise) create closer, more personal, relationships with their staff, which could increase the emotional content of everyday working life in the salesforce. In this case then, it might be that sales managers should exhibit less caring activities, and keep relationships purely on an objective level, concentrating on issues such as performance standards and their attainment.

Finally, H₇ did not receive support. In other words, salespeople who perceive their sales managers as dealing with problems in a highly caring manner, do not experience higher levels of organisational commitment. While this is somewhat surprising, given the conceptual argument advanced earlier (see Section 4.5.1.) there are some reasons why higher levels of sales manager caring may not positively influence organisational commitment of salespeople. Specifically, it may be that the effect of sales manager caring on organisational commitment is fully mediated by the effect of sales manager caring on job satisfaction. In other words, higher sales

manager caring can increase the enjoyment of the job (and thus job satisfaction) by salespeople, which in turn increases organisational commitment (see below).

However, sales manager caring may not have any *direct* effects on organisational commitment itself. It may be the case that sales managers' activities can primarily influence organisational commitment *negatively*, but not positively. In other words, many other variables may have more important positive influences on salespeople's organisational commitment, such as good job conditions (e.g. pay, job satisfaction, and other more general factors). Instead, sales management factors may act like 'hygiene factors' in that they must be present in order for positive organisational commitment to exist, but do not positively influence commitment themselves. However, sales management variables could still *decrease* organisational commitment, as shall be seen below.

8.4.1.3. Hypotheses Relating to Sales Manager Aggressiveness

Four hypotheses were originally put forward relating to sales manager aggressiveness. Of these, two received support and two did not. The first supported hypothesis was H₄, that higher levels of sales manager aggressiveness are associated with higher levels of salesperson emotional exhaustion. This hypothesis was supported with a coefficient of 0.420 and a *t*-value of 2.05. This is not at all surprising. However, it does provide significant evidence that sales manager aggression when resolving problems has negative effects on salespeople. In fact, sales manager aggression (which may be delivered in an attempt to help salespeople) has the same effect as Tepper's (2000) construct of 'abusive supervision', which is instead aimed at harming subordinates. This suggests that salespeople do not view the motives of aggressive behaviour as particularly important, but view the aggression itself as negative, no matter what the aim of the sales manager is.

H₈ was also supported, with a coefficient of -0.412 and a *t*-value of -2.411. This suggests that salespeople who perceive higher levels of aggressiveness from their manager will have lower levels of organisational commitment. This relates to the 'hygiene' argument above. Essentially, salespeople's commitment can be *reduced* by certain managerial styles (in this case aggressiveness) because salespeople will not want to remain in an aggressive environment, and will thus exhibit reduced commitment to the organisation. Thus, no matter what the other positive

characteristics of the job, salespeople operating within an environment of aggressive problem resolution from their sales managers will feel less committed to their jobs.

However, H_6 returned a coefficient of 0.214, but a t -value of 1.044, meaning that it did not receive support from the analysis. Thus, sales managers who are higher in aggressiveness when resolving problems do not appear to have salespeople with lower levels of job satisfaction. This seems to imply that salespeople who perceive their sales managers as aggressive when resolving problems may be able to separate out this managerial behaviour from their more general perceptions of their job. For example, salespeople may consider that aggressive sales manager problem resolution styles may be displayed for specific reasons, such as an attempt to get a point across to salespeople with more force. Thus, salespeople may in some cases ‘understand’ the reasons behind aggressive problem resolution, and thus not judge their sales manager negatively for employing such methods. Furthermore, salespeople may ‘compartmentalise’ aggressive problem resolution as only a minor part of their job situation as a whole, and thus sales manager aggressiveness would not have a major influence on the more general psychological attitude of job satisfaction¹².

Specifically, sales manager aggressiveness may not have a particular effect on building an overall ‘climate’ of dissatisfaction within an organisation, but be more important on a situational basis. This lends support to the idea that sales manager problem resolution styles may differ from more general management or leadership styles. Specifically, those managers who are aggressive when resolving problems may not be aggressive in their day-to-day management roles, thus supporting the decision to examine such specific situational styles.

The final hypothesis related to sales manager aggressiveness was that sales manager aggressiveness should be positively associated with salesperson turnover intentions (H_9). Thus hypothesis did not find support, with a coefficient of -0.002 returned (t -value of -0.025). This suggests that those salespeople who have managers who deal

¹² Nevertheless, salespeople with aggressive managers may still experience lower organisational commitment (H_8) since the aggression salespeople experience may still be unpleasant and cause them to be less committed. In other words, simply because aggressiveness is not associated with job satisfaction, does not mean it can not be associated with organisational commitment.

with problems in an aggressive manner do not appear to have salespeople with higher turnover intentions. This is quite surprising, since one would expect that salespeople would wish to extricate themselves from unpleasantly aggressive situations.

However, it would appear that perhaps this relationship is mediated by the supported relationship between sales manager aggressiveness and organisational commitment (H_8). Furthermore, it could be the case that in some cases, those salespeople working for highly aggressive managers may be less psychologically committed to the organisation (i.e. they would like to leave, or feel little loyalty), but feel that they can not leave. This situation could occur since repeated exposure to aggressiveness may leave an individual with very low self-confidence, and thus salespeople may not feel they could leave for another job. This situation is observed reasonably commonly in other situations involving aggressiveness from one party to another in relationships, such as domestic abuse (cf. Walker 1979). As a result of the latter situation, it is thus quite possible that a salesperson with a highly aggressive manager may have little psychological commitment to a job, but also feel they can not leave the situation (i.e. low turnover intentions).

8.4.1.4. Control Paths

The first control path which was hypothesised was that job satisfaction should have a positive effect on organisational commitment (C_1). This path did not find support (coefficient 0.199, t -value 0.84). This is interesting, since it seems to suggest that salespeople who are happier in their jobs do not in fact feel ‘gratitude’ towards the firm for this happiness, and therefore do not perform discretionary behaviours in order to help the firm. This may be a result of cultural changes as time goes on. More specifically, it may be the case that UK workers now *expect* some degree of satisfaction to be provided from their jobs, and when they get this satisfaction, they do not feel as grateful for it as in the past. This effect may be particularly common in ‘professional’ jobs such as sales, where employees have chosen to be in the job, rather than feel ‘forced’ to work in poor jobs which may lead to gratitude if the job did not turn out as bad as first thought.

The second control path (C_2), that salespeople high in organisational commitment will perform more organisationally-directed OCBs, was also not supported (coefficient 0.321, t -value 1.046). Again, this is rather surprising, since it disagrees

with a substantial amount of existing research (e.g. Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998). Thus, it would seem that the results of the study suggest that salespeople who are more committed to their organisations may not be more willing to go above and beyond the stated demands of their job. Conceptually speaking, it may be that salespeople are committed to the organisation for instrumental reasons in some cases. For example, it may be that the firm offers them an excellent remuneration package and career prospects, thus enhancing a salesperson's commitment to that firm. However, the commitment may be primarily 'instrumental' (in that it is only present because of the personal advantages offered to the employee), and may not extend to 'psychological' loyalty and/or identification with the firm. It is the latter which is likely to influence performance of OCBs, since OCBs are concerned with putting oneself at a disadvantage to help the firm. However, if one is committed to a firm solely because it can offer career advantages (rather than because one's value structures etc. are congruent), then one may not be necessarily willing to go above and beyond the call of duty for no obvious personal benefit (i.e. to perform OCBs). Furthermore, highly committed salespeople may be harder workers, in that they are more often out on sales calls, or otherwise engaged in work demands. As a consequence, these individuals may not have the opportunity to perform OCBs since they are so busy with their work demands. The latter situation may be particularly prevalent in the sales function, since field salespeople may have less opportunity to perform OCBs anyway. This is because they are very often away from the firm headquarters, and thus away from situations where OCBs are likely to be performed.

C₃, that those salespeople higher in turnover intentions should perform less OCBs, did not receive support (coefficient 0.034, *t*-value 0.213). While there is little empirical research available regarding this relationship, the lack of support for the hypothesis does go against a conceptually appealing argument, that those who see little future for themselves in a firm will be less willing to go beyond their stated job tasks to perform OCBs. Nevertheless, one can conceive of situations where those who have high levels of turnover intentions may perform more OCBs in some cases. More specifically, some salespeople high in turnover intentions may be very keen to perform OCBs to make a 'good impression' on their superiors. The reason for this is that those salespeople may want to leave the firm on good terms to improve their

future job prospects (for example by obtaining a good reference from their employer).

The fourth control path (C₄) did not receive support either (coefficient -0.109, *t*-value -1.151). This path contended that salespeople who are higher in emotional exhaustion are less satisfied with their jobs. The lack of support for C₄ is rather surprising, since it seems intuitively sound to expect that psychological distress such as emotional exhaustion should negatively influence the psychological welfare of salespeople which includes job satisfaction (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999). However, conflicting empirical results have been returned in existing literature, with other research finding that emotional exhaustion did not influence job satisfaction (e.g. Boles, Johnston and Hair 1997). While discussion on the lack of the latter relationship is not forthcoming in the literature, one can speculate as to why emotional exhaustion may not necessarily influence job satisfaction. In particular, it may be the case that higher emotional demands may in fact be resultant from jobs which actually provide other rewards to the employee, leading to job satisfaction. Good examples of such jobs are health care professions such as nursing, and other public service occupations such as teaching. In such positions, employees have extremely high emotional demands placed on them, and thus are likely to suffer high levels of emotional exhaustion. However, these positions also offer a number of personal rewards, such as the pleasure in saving or changing lives, which are likely to lead to high levels of positive attitudes such as job satisfaction – despite the high emotional demands. It could be the case that sales occupations are similar to the latter professions, in that positive benefits resulting from the job such as the feeling of helping others solve their business problems, and high extrinsic rewards (e.g. commission) can outweigh the high emotional demands of being a boundary spanner. Therefore, emotional exhaustion may not have as large a negative impact on salespeople as might be thought of at first.

The fifth control path did find support (coefficient -0.126, *t*-value -1.451). However, this support was only at the 10% level, rather than the 5%. Thus the path can only be considered tentatively supported. C₅ stated that salespeople who experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion will also have less organisational commitment. This result supports much prior research in sales management and organisational

behaviour (e.g. Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). Essentially, salespeople who experience high levels of emotional exhaustion withdraw from the organisation, perhaps in an attempt to reduce the emotional demands on them.

The sixth control path (C_6) did not find support however, with a coefficient of 0.015 and a t -value of 0.177 being returned. C_6 argued that salespeople with higher levels of emotional exhaustion will also have higher levels of turnover intentions. Lack of support for this relationship is surprising, and differs from other sales-based studies (e.g. Boles, Johnston and Hair 1997; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). However, it could be that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions is fully mediated by organisational commitment, rather than there being a direct effect between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions. This is particularly likely due to the strength of the relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions (see the discussion relating to C_9 below). In fact, whether or not the relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions is mediated by organisational commitment, the strength of the organisational commitment – turnover intentions relationship may have masked any direct relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions.

C_7 , which hypothesised that high role ambiguity will be associated with lower job satisfaction, did find support. The coefficient for this path was -0.57, with a t -value of -4.17. Therefore, it seems that jobs higher in role ambiguity are unable to offer pleasurable working environments to salespeople, leading to lower levels of job satisfaction. These results agree with a large amount of existing literature within sales (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999; Walker, Churchill and Ford 1977).

Furthermore, the eighth hypothesised control path (C_8) also received support (coefficient 0.85, t -value 8.07). This path hypothesised that those salespeople with higher levels of job satisfaction would also have higher levels of organisational commitment. This association concurs with a large amount of existing sales research (cf. Brown and Peterson 1993). Furthermore, the enhanced isolation available in structural equation modelling (cf. Bollen 1989) suggests that this result may provide some clarification regarding the debate on the causal ordering of the two constructs by adding weight to the argument that job satisfaction precedes organisational

commitment, rather than vice versa (cf. Brown and Peterson 1993). So, evidence supporting the idea that salespeople who are happier in their jobs are more likely to wish to continue their happiness (i.e. be committed to the organisation) is provided presently. In fact, this causal order does seem to be the more popular one within sales management (cf. Brown and Peterson 1993).

Finally C₉, which argued that those salespeople higher in organisational commitment should also have lower levels of turnover intentions, was supported. The coefficient of this path was -0.78, with an associated *t*-value of -7.7. This result supports a large amount of existing research in sales management (e.g. Brown and Peterson 1993; Johnston et al. 1990). Essentially, it appears that those salespeople who are highly committed to the organisation are highly unlikely to be intending to leave.

Table 8.5: R² Values for Structural Equations

Endogenous Variable	R ²
Role Ambiguity	0.198
Emotional Exhaustion	0.097
Job Satisfaction	0.568
Organisational Commitment	0.889
Organisationally-Directed OCBs	0.448
Turnover Intentions	0.615
<i>Total Coefficient of Determination</i>	<i>0.624</i>

The R² values for the structural equations are also encouraging (see Table 8.5). The latter values essentially correspond to how much variance in each dependent variable is being explained or accounted for by the independent variables. Thus, the R² values in SEM are in practical terms analogous to the R² values in traditional regression modelling (Sharma 1996). The values can be viewed in Table 8.5, but of particular note is the R² for organisational commitment, which is a very substantive 0.889. A number of the other R² are notable, especially those for job satisfaction (0.568) and turnover intentions (0.615). In fact, they are almost all sufficiently high to assume the relevance of the respective independent variables. However, it is somewhat concerning that the R² for emotional exhaustion is so low at 0.097. Nevertheless, it should be noted that caring and aggressiveness are the only variables modelled to

influence emotional exhaustion, and only aggressiveness was discovered to have a significant relationship. Since previous research has discovered many other variables which may influence emotional exhaustion, then one could expect that any new influences may have only a small effect. Notwithstanding this, it must still be remembered one variable (which is directly controllable by sales managers) has essentially been found to explain almost 10% of a sales person’s emotional exhaustion, a noteworthy finding in itself.

The total variance in the dependent variables explained can be measured using the *coefficient of determination*, which can be defined as “the amount of total variance of all the endogenous [dependent] variables in the system of structural equations that is explained or accounted for by the set of exogenous [independent] and/or other endogenous variables” (Sharma 1996 p. 424). However, while versions of LISREL up to version 7 provided the coefficient of determination as a matter of course, the option was removed in versions 8.0 and above, for unknown reasons. Nevertheless, with a basic knowledge of matrix algebra it is possible to calculate the coefficient of determination by hand. The formula for the coefficient of determination is given in Equation 8.1.

Equation 8.1: Coefficient of Determination

$$1 - \frac{|\Theta|}{|\Sigma|}$$

Adapted from Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996)

The top line of Equation 8.1 refers to the determinant of the LISREL *psi* matrix, while the bottom line refers to the determinant of the covariances of the LISREL *eta* matrix. As can be seen in Table 8.5, the coefficient of determination for the present model is 0.624. This means that 62.4% of the variance in all of the dependent (role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, OCBs, and turnover intentions) variables is explained by the independent (sales manager willingness to respond, caring and aggressiveness) and other dependent (role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, organisational commitment

and turnover intentions) variables. While no advice on appropriate values of the coefficient of determination is available, a value of 62.4% seems an adequate figure to assure one of the utility of the hypothesised theory.

8.5. Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to test the hypothesised consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles (i.e. sales manager willingness to respond, caring and aggressiveness). To achieve this aim, latent variable structural path analysis was employed. Thus, the first section of this chapter was concerned with discussing the salient characteristics of the technique. Following this, Section 8.2. discussed the operationalisation of the variables, and the important issues pertaining to this. Of particular relevance was the decision to use a single indicator for each latent variable, and the reasons for and impact of this decision were discussed.

Following the discussion of the specific methods employed, Section 8.3. reported the results of the overall model testing process. Here, it was found that the structural model returned excellent statistics. Finally, Section 8.4. detailed the individual hypothesis test results, and provided some preliminary discussion of these results. Of the original 19 hypotheses, nine found support. Sales manager willingness to respond was found to have significant direct associations with salesperson role ambiguity (negative), and OCBs (positive). Furthermore, willingness to respond was found to have a fully mediated association with job satisfaction (positive) through role ambiguity. Sales manager caring was found to have a significant positive association with salesperson job satisfaction, and a mediated positive association with organisational commitment through job satisfaction. Sales manager aggressiveness was found to have significant direct association with salesperson emotional exhaustion (positive) and organisational commitment (negative). The latter relationship was also partially mediated through emotional exhaustion. Additionally, sales manager caring was found to have a fully mediated positive association with sales person turnover intentions. These findings provide strong evidence as to the importance of sales manager problem resolution styles on key sales force consequences. Furthermore, role ambiguity was found to have a negative association with job satisfaction, which in turn was positively associated with organisational

commitment. Additionally, organisational commitment was found to be negatively associated with turnover intentions. Finally, job satisfaction was also found to have a positive association with organisational commitment. These findings provide general support to previous sales research.

The next chapter synthesises the major findings and contributions of this study for sales force research. Furthermore, some possible implications for other branches of organisational research are discussed. Following this, the managerial implications are examined, with major emphasis on sales management. Finally, the limitations are highlighted, and as a result of this (as well as previous discussion of the study's findings), some directions for future research are given.

9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this, the final chapter, a summary of the main conclusions to be drawn from the study's findings is provided. Furthermore, the implications of the findings are analysed, in the context of their contribution to both marketing theory and the day-to-day practice of managing a sales force. More specifically, the theoretical and methodological implications of the study are examined, accentuating the study's contribution to research on sales management. Next, the managerial implications of the research are discussed, with particular relevance to first-line managers, as well as higher level managers of sales forces. Using this information, a number of recommendations are proposed, which may be of practical use to sales organisations. Finally, the limitations of the study are outlined, and an agenda for future research is discussed.

9.1. Theoretical and Methodological Implications of the Study

There are four main areas where the present study makes a contribution to existing organisational theory. Firstly, is the development of a new theory of individual sales management, that of 'problem resolution styles'. Secondly is the development of operational definitions and psychometrically sound measures of the constructs which are part of the theory of problem resolution styles (i.e. sales manager willingness to respond, caring and aggressiveness). Third is the provision of evidence that this theory of problem resolution styles has theoretical and practical merit within the context of the body of existing sales and organisational research, by the examination of key sales force consequences to the problem resolution style constructs. Finally, the study also contributes to the evolving discourse on sales, by providing support (or otherwise) for construct interrelationships previously proposed in the literature, and additional and more robust quality assessment of the measures of such constructs. These and related issues are subsequently discussed in depth in the following sections.

9.1.1. Development of the Theory of Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

Returning to the earlier chapters of this dissertation, it was suggested, with support from existing research (e.g. Armstrong, Pecotich and Mills 1993), that scholars have not provided a substantial body of knowledge on the individual differences between effective sales managers and ineffective ones. Furthermore, it was also contended that as academics we have little explicit knowledge regarding the ways in which sales managers can resolve problem situations, or whether there are more or less 'effective' ways, in terms of key sales force consequences (such as role ambiguity, job satisfaction, or organisational citizenship behaviours). The qualitative and quantitative portions of the present study provide first insights into some answers to both the above issues.

Firstly, from the qualitative portion of the research, it was discovered that resolving problem situations is a very important part of the day-to-day process of running a sales force. It certainly seems that sales managers are required to resolve problems on a relatively regular and frequent basis. Furthermore, these problems appear to fall into a very wide range of different types, from simple performance maintenance or improvement, to more serious – even illegal – issues like embezzlement. As was seen in Chapters 1 and 2, while these issues appear to be dealt with in practitioner-oriented literature (mainly anecdotal in nature), it is rare to see academic sales research explicitly dealing with managerial response to problem situations, apart from simple decisions of whether to punish or not (seen in research on unethical selling behaviour as described in Section 2.1.5). Thus, one contribution of this research is the overt academic recognition of an area of sales management which although seemingly important on a practical level, appears to have gone relatively unnoticed throughout the evolution of scholarly sales research. While academic studies on the various reasons sales people may cause problems are occasionally seen (e.g. literature on failure such as Dubinsky 1999, or Ingram, Schwenker and Hutson 1992), managerial responses to these failures and other problem situations are relatively unexplored, apart from the implicit applications of theories such as organisational control systems, or managerial feedback. So the present study

arguably provides the first insights into how individual sales managers resolve problem situations.

Additionally, the main proportion of the qualitative research delineated three key ‘styles’ which sales managers can utilise when dealing with these problem situations, i.e. the sales manager willingness to respond, caring and aggressiveness constructs. While it was seen in Chapters 2 and 3 that a small number of sales-based studies looked at certain aspects of managerial response to some specific kinds of problem situations (i.e. salespeople’s unethical actions as described in Section 2.1.5), the present study is the first to explicitly define and delineate the different managerial styles which are of importance when dealing with these and other problem situations. More specifically, that research which does exist merely characterises sales managers’ response as a simple choice of whether to punish a problem sales representative or not, or at a different level of severity (e.g. Bellizi 1995; Bellizi and Norvell 1991; DeConinck 1992). By contrast to the latter approach, which mainly focuses on the sales manager’s decision process, the present study actually defines different ‘styles’ of behaving (independent of the actual behaviour itself) which are important in the resolution process. To take an example; in a given problem situation, existing research is focused on explaining *whether* the manager chooses to punish or not, and if so, *what* punishment or other action the manager decides to apply. However, the present research looks at whether the *style in which the manager performs the resolution action* (whether it be punishment or not) is an important issue. In this way, the present study is the first to offer insight *beyond* the sales manager’s choice of resolution behaviour itself, regarding different ‘styles’ of behaviour and their consequences on the sales force. Thus, the present research would appear to make a valuable contribution to the evolving literature on sales management and leadership.

This focus seems to follow on from recent developments in organisational behaviour research, which are also beginning to focus more on the way in which behaviours are delivered, rather than the behavioural action itself (e.g. Folger and Skarlicki 1998). In the sales management field, this may be a particularly important step, since so much of sales management research has been based around transactional concepts as

ways of controlling sales behaviour and increasing performance (Russ, McNeilley and Comer 1996). Indeed, to return to Chapter 1, the present study appears to offer evidence to support Russ, McNeilley and Comer's (1996) contention that "[h]ow sales managers make decisions and influence their subordinates appears as likely to affect their success as does the technical quality of their decisions about plans, policies and procedures" (emphasis added, p. 1). To use the latter terminology, while some existing sales research has examined the 'technical quality' of managers decisions on problem resolution actions, such as punishment (e.g. Bellizzi 1995; DeConinck 1992), the present study is the first within sales to explore the issues of 'how sales managers make decisions and influence their subordinates' when resolving problem situations.

The present three-component operationalisation of problem resolution styles is also more comprehensive in its coverage of individual managers' influence on their sales people than other theories. Essentially, most existing research within sales delineates a specific component of sales managerial influence for study, for example 'consideration' (e.g. Agarwal, DeCarlo and Vyas 1999), 'leader-member relationships' (e.g. Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993), 'control systems' (e.g. Oliver and Anderson 1994) or 'leadership style' (e.g. Dubinsky et al. 1995), and then implicitly applies the concept to all situations. However, the present research takes a different approach, delineating a much more comprehensive theory of the way in which sales managers can act, but in a contextualised way (i.e. in problem situations). This latter approach would appear to fit with both common-sense and psychological research. Specifically, while we may have certain *tendencies* to act in some way or style, individual situational influences seem much more likely to inform the way we behave in any given situation. In particular, in situations of high emotional stress (such as problem situations), it seems that we may behave very differently to how we may behave in normal day-to-day life (cf. Parkinson 1995). Thus, to take the present context, when attempting to explain how sales managers resolve problems, a sales manager's leadership style (e.g. transactional or transformational) will likely have less ability to explain the manager's styles of behaviour (and thus the corresponding sales force outcomes) than their *problem resolution style*. Conversely, problem resolution styles may be less appropriate when

trying to explain other day-to-day managerial behaviour styles. However, since the context is explicitly delineated (unlike many other sales management theories), researchers are able to more appropriately apply the theory where it is relevant, and avoid it where it is not.

9.1.2. Measurement of Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilised to develop a set of operational measures which were able to detect the presence of the latent sales manager problem resolution style constructs. More specifically, qualitative data was used to develop operational definitions and item banks relating to three key constructs (See Chapter 3 for more details) and quantitative methods were used to empirically evaluate and validate scales of the three constructs (see Chapter 7 for more details). *Sales Manager Willingness to Respond* referred to a sales manager's readiness and desire to resolve problem situations. *Sales Manager Aggressiveness* related to whether sales managers employ a highly aggressive style of dealing problem situations (e.g. bullying behaviour, shouting, disciplining reps in front of their colleagues, threatening). Finally, *Sales Manager Caring* referred to a style of problem resolution by sales managers which involves the manager being concerned for the well-being of sales reps (e.g. counselling, empathy, sympathy, and the like).

Since the previous section argued that a primary contribution of the present study was the conceptual development of the aforementioned constructs, it comes as no surprise that a further major contribution is the development and validation of psychometrically sound measures of the constructs. In terms of the measures' development, the three scales developed are completely novel, and were developed from the ground up in the current study. This is an appropriate approach (as opposed to modifying existing measures) due to the newness of the constructs to sales management and more general organisational behaviour research. While some organisational behaviour research has explored similar areas, such as 'managerial distancing' (Folger and Skarlicki 1998), 'managerial ruthlessness' (Rieple and Vyakarnam 1996), and 'abusive supervision' (Tepper 2000), the present study is arguably the first to psychometrically develop measures of this type of individual managerial behaviour style. By contrast, the research that does exist tends to take varying approaches based around more interpretive and/or qualitative research,

stopping short of explicit psychometric operationalisation of relevant constructs. However, since the present research provides psychometrically sound operationalisations, future researchers will, if they wish, be able to enhance the knowledge of the kinds of managerial issues covered here in a cumulative manner, by using the same measures. So in some ways, it can be argued that the measures presented provide an important contribution to the scientific study of sales management, by providing the means for future researchers to replicate and extend the theories presented here, and enabling comparability of future work in the same area.

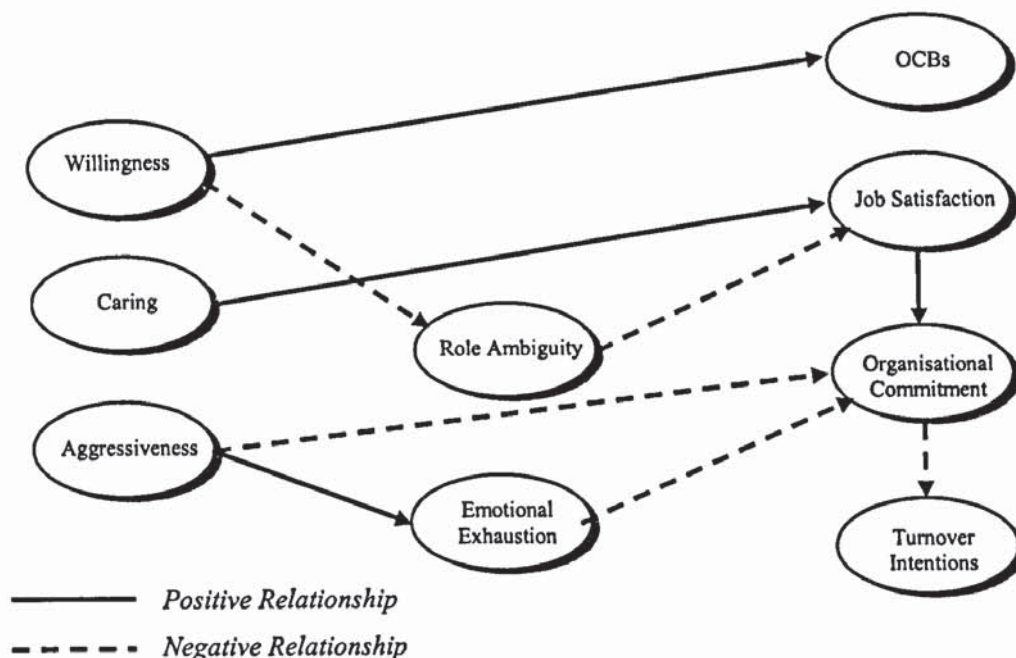
Finally, it is relevant to note that the measures developed here are not explicitly restricted to one sales population of interest. More specifically, the development from the outset was designed to survey a wide range of sales organisations of many different characteristics, albeit with a single geographic country (see Chapters 3 and 6 for population characteristics of qualitative and quantitative respondents respectively). Thus, future work within UK sales at least should be able to use the measures without fear of inappropriate application. Additionally, use of the measures in cultural contexts which are close to the UK (e.g. the USA or Australia) should also be able to proceed with few problems, with some preliminary checks for any UK-specific issues (such as vernacular and colloquialism) which could be carried out with more protocol interviews (see Chapter 5). This avoids a relatively common issue within sales research, where single firms are often utilised as population frames for measure development activities (e.g. Johnston et al. 1990; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). Indeed, in more general marketing research this is also an issue, with well-known measures being developed within single firms, such as Narver and Slater's (1990) market orientation measure.

9.1.3. Consequences of Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles

This study also provides first indications of the importance of sales manager problem resolution styles within the general sales management process. Specifically, sales manager willingness to respond was found to directly influence sales representatives' role ambiguity, and organisationally-directed OCBs, and indirectly their job satisfaction. Sales manager caring when dealing with problems were found to directly influence sales representatives' job satisfaction, and indirectly their

organisational commitment. Finally, sales manager aggressiveness was found to directly influence salespeople’s emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment, and additionally to indirectly influence salespeople’s turnover intentions. However, a number of hypothesised effects were not discovered. Figure 9.1. summarises the findings relating to the various hypotheses that were supported in this study (see Chapter 4 for more details on the theoretical basis for the hypotheses, and Chapter 8 for a full discussion of the testing process, and individual hypothesis test results).

Figure 9.1: Consequences of Sales Manager Problem Resolution Styles



A particular point to note is that the consequences do not necessarily relate only to individual sales reps who are the recipients of problem resolution actions. In fact, the consequences were hypothesised to concern any member of a sales team reporting to a given manager. In other words, the theory was developed at a ‘homogenous’, or group, level, in that managers problem resolution styles should be perceived in a similar manner by the whole sales team (see Section 3.3.5.). So the findings in reality suggest that individual styles with which managers behave in *specific* problem resolution situations, may actually influence the levels of say, job satisfaction, among the *entire sales team* reporting to that manager, and not just the specific

representative dealt with at that time. This provides some recognition that managers' actions affect not just individuals, but also members of the salesforce that are not directly involved in the manager-subordinate action. Theoretically speaking, the findings of the present study seem to confirm the theory that subordinates (in this case sales representatives) are influenced by their managers *vicariously* as well as directly. This seems to run counter to the implicit assumptions of previous sales management research. In fact, it can be argued that most existing sales research focuses on the ways managers can directly influence their subordinates, both in terms of technical/objective decisions such as territory design or compensation plans (cf. Bush and Grant 1994), more interpersonal issues like leader-member exchange relationships (Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993), and even the small amount of work on managerial punishment activities (Bellizzi 1995).

Furthermore, more general organisational behaviour research also tends to focus on direct managerial influence (Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996). However, more recent work has begun to recognise the vicarious impact of managerial actions on those not directly involved, either explicitly (cf. Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996; Folger and Skarlicki 1998; Trevino 1990), or implicitly (cf. Rieple and Vyakarnam 1996). The present research contributes to sales management by providing what could be argued as the first explicit study of *sales representatives'* vicarious reactions to managerial behaviour (whether specifically problem-related or not). However, the study also contributes to a more general organisational discourse by providing new insights into subordinates' vicarious reactions to managers' behaviour, and arguably the first quantitative statistical model of these vicarious reactions, whereas existing research appears to have taken a primarily interpretive approach (cf. Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996; Folger and Skarlicki 1998; Rieple and Vyakarnam 1996).

In a more specific context, the present study also provides the first real look at the vicarious consequences of negative behaviour such as aggressiveness. By contrast, related research into things such as punishment, bullying, managerial abuse (etc.) primarily focuses on the deleterious effects of the managerial behaviour on the subordinate who was acted upon (e.g. Tepper 2000). However, the present study

provides some evidence that even sales representatives not directly acted upon can also feel negative effects (e.g. lower organisational commitment, higher emotional exhaustion) from negative managerial behaviour (in the present case sales manager aggressiveness).

Another point worth examining is the nature of the consequences themselves. Specifically, virtually all the consequences examined here have received much attention within sales research (e.g. role ambiguity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment etc.). Thus, one could expect that academic research would have developed and explicated the major ways in which managers can influence these variables. As a result, it is interesting to discover new constructs that seem to have a substantive influence on these consequences. This is especially so since sales manager problem resolution is but a single aspect of management, and one might therefore expect it to have only a small impact on the sales force in general. That a number of reasonably strong influences *were* discovered seems to vouch for the importance of sales manager problem resolution styles to the sales management field of study.

9.1.4. Support for Existing Research

While it has been argued above that the present study makes a number of significant contributions to existing research by virtue of the creation and explication of an entirely new set of constructs and relationships, it is also true that the work done in this study contributes to existing theory due to the empirical assessment of numerous existing constructs (such as role ambiguity and job satisfaction). While these contributions do not make up the major part of the theoretical worth of this dissertation, they still bear some consideration.

First and perhaps foremost are the measurement implications of the analyses presented in Chapter 6. Specifically, a number of constructs which have been previously developed and/or assessed within sales research were subjected to re-analysis using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis techniques. Most of these constructs had previously not been subject to repeated confirmatory factor analysis in particular, and thus there was substantial contribution made by assessing their measurement properties in such a fashion as was done in Chapter 6.

Beginning with Porter et al.'s (1974) 15-item organisational commitment scale, some concerns were raised by the factor analysis results presented in Chapter 6. In particular, the original 15-item scale appeared to be multidimensional despite its high coefficient alpha, with three dimensions originally emerging from an EFA. Interestingly, two of the dimensions could be argued to tap concepts slightly different to what is commonly understood to be organisational commitment. Firstly, one factor seemed to tap some kind of 'turnover intentions' concept, while another construct appears to tap some kind of 'behavioural outcomes' of organisational commitment concept. Thus, as it originally stood, the organisational commitment measure violated the unidimensionality assumption of measurement theory (cf. Churchill 1979), an issue that Commeiras and Fournier (2001) recently noted as well. Thus, it would appear clear that this particular organisational commitment measure should not be applied without thought to sales samples. More specifically, further analysis and development work (across a number of different samples) should be carried out on the scale before it is deemed sufficiently robust for general usage in sales research.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the commonly used emotional exhaustion measure originally developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), and used in sales recently, may also be multidimensional. More specifically, after being subjected to an EFA, a separate factor which seemed to tap some kind of 'people-related strain' emerged. This concept of 'people-related strain' would appear to be more likely to be an antecedent to emotional exhaustion, rather than a component of it. Therefore, like the organisational commitment scale, the emotional exhaustion scale in its original form was not considered unidimensional. Since emotional exhaustion has become a more popular topic within sales lately, it would seem that Maslach and Jackson's (1981) measure should be subjected to closer analysis within sales to determine its applicability. This is particularly relevant since the original scale was not developed on a sales population.

A second type of contribution to existing research comes from the support found for those relationships which have been previously hypothesised and explored by other authors. Firstly, the results of this study provide some evidence as to the

interrelationships between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intentions. These interrelationships have been the source of some confusion in sales and organisational literature (Brown and Peterson 1993). In particular, the causal ordering of the three constructs has been the subject of much debate (e.g. Johnston et al. 1990). The results of the present study are not able to directly test causality, however SEM approaches can offer some additional evidence over other methods (such as multiple regression) in terms of causality (Hoyle 1995). Thus, the fact that the hypothesised path from job satisfaction to organisational commitment was supported does provide a modicum of evidence as to the causal ordering of the two constructs. Furthermore, whether job satisfaction, organisational commitment, or both, influence turnover intentions has been the source of some consternation (e.g. Brown and Peterson 1993). The present study provides some support to the idea that organisational commitment has a direct influence on turnover intentions, but that job satisfaction does not (instead having a fully-mediated effect). Thus, the present study implies that job satisfaction has an impact on organisational commitment, which in turn influences turnover intentions. This ordering has substantial theoretical appeal, and its support from the SEM analysis lends extra weight to its advocates, over and above that previously available in the literature. Secondly, support was also found for studies contending that role ambiguity is among the influences on job satisfaction (e.g. Brown and Peterson 1993). This latter relationship has been commonly discovered in the sales context (e.g. Babakus et al. 1999; Behrman and Perreault 1984). Finally, another area of existing research which received more statistical support was that of emotional exhaustion. Specifically, what little sales research which does examine this construct finds support that it may negatively influence organisational commitment (a component also of the ‘psychological job outcomes’ construct, cf. Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994). The present study also finds support for this relationship. Thus, this study adds more weight to the emerging body of knowledge within sales research that suggests that emotional exhaustion is an important factor in salespeople’s jobs, which can negatively influence their well-being (and ultimately the firm’s long-term performance).

However, interestingly, emotional exhaustion was not found to be associated with either job satisfaction or turnover intentions of salespeople. This result suggests that

emotional exhaustion may result from jobs which actually provide benefits to the salesperson (such as high rewards or the feeling of helping others solve problems), which would lead perhaps to higher job satisfaction – even though emotional exhaustion may be also high. Furthermore, the lack of support for a direct relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions suggests that any influence is completely mediated by emotional exhaustion's relationship with organisational commitment. This latter result is a good example of how it is important to determine the causal ordering of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intentions more fully. Doing such a thing would allow any potential confusion over antecedents to the latter three constructs to be cleared up. In fact, within emotional exhaustion literature, just such confusion has arisen within the sales context, particularly in relation to whether emotional exhaustion influences job satisfaction (cf. Babakus et al. 1999; Boles, Johnston and Hair 1997; Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads 1994).

Finally, it was also clear that neither job satisfaction, organisational commitment, or turnover intentions appeared to have any impact on the performance of OCBs. This runs counter to much existing theory (e.g. Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne 1998; Netemeyer et al. 1997), in that it suggests that positive psychological 'climates' within the firm do not necessarily impact on salespeople's willingness to help the firm over and above their stated job demands. Thus, perhaps sales scholars should examine more carefully the conceptual reasoning underlying such hypotheses, in light of changing cultural conditions. For example, it may be that workers now expect positive organisational conditions, and thus do not feel gratitude towards the firm and a consequent desire to perform OCBs. Furthermore, it may be that salespeople actually perform what researchers (and managers) could call OCBs out of a cynical desire to improve performance evaluations (especially if one is about to leave the firm for another job). These kinds of motivations and psychological outcomes are not dealt with in existing OCB theory, which focuses on the conceptually appealing notions of employee gratitude and loyalty as motivators for OCBs. Perhaps these notions are rather outdated on today's climate, necessitating a closer look at salespeople's motivations to perform what we call 'OCBs'.

9.2. Managerial Implications

While it is important to generate a substantive theoretical contribution in any doctoral dissertation, the marketing discipline itself makes other demands on scholarly research. Specifically, marketing could perhaps be considered at least in part as an ‘applied’, or ‘normative’ field, as well as a scientific one (cf. Hunt 1976; 1994), or in other words as a discipline which provides advice to practitioners ‘in the field’ so to speak. Therefore, it is arguable that an essential part of the contribution of any piece of marketing research should be the direct application of the research findings to marketing practice, and it is to this end that the following section is presented.

The managerial implications of the present study fall into four broad areas. Firstly, this study has a number of important implications for sales managers in the field, regarding how they behave towards their field sales representatives. Secondly, and following on from the latter, the study has important implications for those who recruit sales managers, or those who decide on sales managerial succession, i.e. strategic managers. Thirdly, the actual measures developed presently have potential use within marketing practice. Finally, academic advice is able to be provided on how sales managers should behave in certain situations, for maximum effectiveness. These issues will be discussed in the following section.

9.2.2. The Consequences of Sales Managerial Problem Resolution Styles

First, arguably the most important finding of the present study is that psychological and behavioural outcomes of individual sales representatives can be directly influenced by the style in which first-line sales managers behave when resolving problems. However, this bears further discussion and explanation. Specifically, the importance of this finding stems from a few key issues. Firstly is the notion that more than simply objective task characteristics can influence sales representatives’ feelings about their job. Secondly is the idea that managerial behaviour in *specific* situations (i.e. problem resolution situations), rather than more general managerial styles, is found to be a major influence on sales force outcomes. The final aspect is

the discovery that sales reps other than the rep involved in the manager-rep interaction may be affected by the manager's activity.

It has long been the case that sales reps have been thought of as primarily motivated by, and thus controllable by, manipulating various objective aspects of their job, and thus enabling or preventing their accruing of financial rewards (cf. Donaldson 1998). Therefore, as alluded to earlier in this dissertation, much sales force research has focussed on the most effective ways in which sales managers can make decisions on objective job characteristics. For example, textbooks on sales management tend to focus mainly on technical issues such as (among others), territory design, sales force type, sales training, compensation planning or time organisation (e.g. Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Donaldson 1998). Thus, it would appear that many sales managers in the field would also naturally focus on such aspects as those given above in the attempt to influence sales force effectiveness, courses of action which also seem to inform much of the advice meted out by academics (Armstrong, Pecotich and Mills 1993; cf. Bush and Grant 1994; Russ, McNeilley and Comer 1996). However, the present study throws a rather different light on the subject, finding evidence to suggest that the *style* in which the manager behaves towards their sales representatives in fact plays an important role in influencing their job satisfaction, organisational commitment, role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, and organisationally-directed OCBs. Thus, the objective quality of sales managers' decisions may be less important than the manner in which those decisions are implemented with the sales force. Or perhaps to look at it in a different manner, a good decision implemented in a poor way¹ may not have a positive impact on the sales force as a whole, due to negative influences on job satisfaction, role ambiguity and/or emotional exhaustion etc., although it may achieve an objective goal such as, for example, reducing cost, increasing sales calls, or dealing with a lack of performance. By contrast, a good decision implemented well may have a *more* positive effect by a) solving the objective problem, and b) increasing job satisfaction or organisational commitment, and decreasing role ambiguity or emotional

¹ For example, according to the findings of the present study, a 'poor way' would be a lack of willingness to respond, and high aggression or low caring in the way in which the decision was implemented.

exhaustion etc. Of course, a poor decision is unlikely to be salvageable merely by the manner in which it is implemented, however poor decisions implemented well are likely to at least have a minimal negative effect since they will not reduce sales people's positive psychological aspects (e.g. job satisfaction, organisational commitment), whereas poor decisions implemented poorly will likely have a doubly negative effect. Of course the specific context is likely to have an impact here, since the present research is conducted in the high-pressure context of dealing with problem situations, however the general idea appears to be an extremely important and relevant one to sales managers in the field.

Furthermore, where advice (academic or otherwise) has been offered to sales managers about *how* to behave (for example by research on leadership styles or leader-member exchange relationships) prime consideration has been given to *general* styles of behaviour, such as transformational leadership. Or in other words, sales managers are advised to behave in, say, a transactional style throughout their entire managerial process, or from another perspective to attempt to encourage 'cadre' relationships with all their sales reps in general (cf. Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993). However the present research provides strong evidence to suggest that sales managers need to focus on how they behave in *specific situations* rather than in a more general manner. To take the present example, sales managers' problem resolution styles were found to have major impacts on salespeople's psychological outcomes such as role ambiguity. The latter style is not necessarily related to, or dependent on, how sales managers may behave in a more general manner in the day-to-day process of sales management. Specifically, as previously mentioned, psychological research suggests that it is highly likely that managers will behave *differently* in specific situations than they would in a more general or abstract context, in particular when they are under increased emotional stress (cf. Parkinson 1995).² So, the present findings provide sales managers with an alternative approach to that offered by existing sales research. Specifically, that sales managers should evaluate their behavioural styles on a situational basis, in order to provide the most

² Of course, it is possible, even probable, that a manager's general, say, 'leadership style' will have some kind of influence on how they behave in a given situation, but it is not likely to explain specific situational styles completely.

effective managerial outcome in that situation. Interestingly, this approach in fact has something in common with managerial theories such as the Situational Leadership Model (SLM e.g. Butler and Reese 1991)³. However, the present research goes further to delineate the exact styles of importance when implementing actions in a specific situation, in this case problem resolution actions. Of course, it is recognised that, due to the specific context of the present study (i.e. problem resolution situations) any extrapolation to other situations is purely conjectural. However, the general idea, that managers may be better served by taking a situational rather than a general approach to behavioural styles, still holds in a conceptual sense.

Furthermore, the evidence uncovered in this study implies that sales managers' problem resolution styles can have impact on sales reps *other* than the individual salesperson who may be being interacted with. By contrast, as a general rule, academic advice to sales managers dealing with staff-related problems has focused on how the sales manager's actions can influence individual salespeople (generally those who cause problems). For example, research on sales managerial response to unethical sales reps has implicitly characterised the consequences of response actions as pertaining only to the unethical sales rep themselves (cf. Bellizzi 1995). Furthermore, academic advice on more general managerial punishment action has also only considered the impact of managers' punishment on the individual subordinates who are punished (e.g. Sims 1980; Sims and Szilagyi 1975), excluding from consideration the idea that other subordinates may also perceive the action and thus react to it in some way.⁴ However, as discussed in Section 9.1.3., sales managers' problem resolution styles can be vicariously perceived by others in the

³ It is interesting to note, as Butler and Reese (1991) do, that the SLM has found great favour in actual managerial practice, but little in academia. Although purely speculation, one could come to a conclusion that, in managerial practice, 'situational' rather than 'general' management styles are given somewhat more prominence. This could be because situational styles are likely to provide rather more 'prescriptive' recommendations to managers. However, as academics, general theories are inherently more attractive, since they promise to enable us to explain (rather than proscribe) a wider variety of managerial behaviour than situational models.

⁴ However, it is noted that a small amount of general management literature has begun to address these issues in some way, particularly in the field of justice perceptions (e.g. Butterfield, Trevino and Ball 1996; Folger and Skarlicki 1998; Trevino 1990).

sales team than the salesperson who is being interacted with (whether or not they be 'causing' a problem). Thus, the findings provide compelling reasons for sales managers to try to anticipate or evaluate the consequences of their actions with a far wider scope than previously may have been the case. For example if a manager perceives a problem with a particular sales representative, the potential negative consequences of performing say, punishment action, on the problem salesperson (such as increasing their resentment etc.) need to be balanced out by the potential for positive influences on the entire sales team (such as decreased role ambiguity or increased job satisfaction) that will accrue through the resolving of the problem.

Taking some directions from the qualitative research presented in Chapter 3, potential reasons for this vicarious influence include the fact that many so-called interpersonal actions are in fact carried out in the presence of other sales reps as well. For example many aspects of aggressiveness were related to belittling or humiliating sales reps in front of their colleagues (according to the qualitative research). Other aspects could include the idea that sales reps often talk to one another in regular meetings, or even outside of work-related contexts, particularly when they may feel the need for support. In this context then, it is easy to see how ostensibly one-on-one interpersonal interactions, such as some problem resolution situations, can in fact have ramifications for the entire sales team's level of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intrinsic motivation, role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, and organisationally directed OCBs.

9.2.3. The Succession, Recruitment and Evaluation of Sales Managers

The present study also provides some important advice for those executives who manage sales managers themselves, in particular regarding the choice of candidates suitable for the sales management role. The selection of sales managers has long been recognised as a problem by academics, although little advice has been offered (Armstrong, Pecotich and Mills 1993). In particular, researchers have noted that in the main, those sales reps who perform extremely well, are generally the ones who are promoted to sales management positions (Dubinsky and Ingram 1987). However, it has also been discovered that this may not be the most effective strategy, in that the attitudes and skills required to be an effective sales manager may be substantively different from those required to be a high-performing representative (Futrell 1998).

For example, a highly competitive attitude, which may enhance sales performance, could be disastrous when applied to sales management situations.⁵

The current study provides some much-needed advice to managers in this area. Specifically, prospective sales managers need to be evaluated on the basis of whether they are willing to respond to problem situations, and also exhibit low levels of aggressiveness, and high levels of caring when responding to those problems. This may provide a major departure from the automatic succession of high-performing salespeople to managerial positions. Furthermore, it could be of particular importance since it may be exactly the latter people who exhibit higher levels of aggressiveness, and lower levels of caring, as they are likely to be positive characteristics for the highly competitive sales function.⁶

Related to this is the aspect of recruitment. Recruitment is a separate process to succession, in that it involves the evaluation of a number of applicants for a job (not necessarily from within the company, as succession relates to), and thus has certain unique characteristics. In general, research has tended to find the recruitment process as rather unreliable (cf. Donaldson 1998), in that it is very difficult to adequately 'screen' applicants for those characteristics which are seen as desirable. As a result it is likely to be the case, at least in some situations, that those who are inherently unsuited to the sales management job, end up in the position. The present research provides some potential to enhance the recruitment process for sales managers. Specifically, it seems likely to be relatively straightforward to apply this study's findings to the recruitment process, to help screen for suitable applicants. One

⁵ It is interesting, although admittedly conjectural, to consider the possibility that ineffective succession strategies (e.g. unthinkingly promoting high-performing sales reps to management) could result in enhanced levels of aggressiveness or reduced caring exhibited by sales managers. In fact a number of qualitative interviewees alluded to this very fact, allied with the additional problem that sales managers could earn less than high-performing reps, which could lead to resentment towards high-performing salespeople.

⁶ Of course, this is likely to be industry specific, in that some industries are likely to require higher levels of aggressiveness and lower levels of caring to be successful. In fact, some of the qualitative interviewees alluded to this, suggesting that certain industries (often those with faster-moving products or more competitive market conditions) were likely to have more aggressive sales reps.

example of doing this would be to use a ‘scenario’ approach, where applicants were given a set of problem-resolution situations and asked to either select different actions from a list (designed to measure their willingness, aggressiveness and caring characteristics), or to write in their own words how they would resolve the situation. Also, applicants could be placed in a physical situation and evaluated on how they resolved problem situations. While using the findings of the present study is unlikely to solve all recruitment problems, it is possible that some kind of improvement in the recruitment process can be achieved.

It also seems likely that the results of the present study can help those who supervise sales managers to *evaluate* their current sales management staff. More specifically, the measures developed here seem directly applicable to the evaluation process. Specifically, notwithstanding the potential for more effective succession and recruitment practices, executives wishing to evaluate and improve the sales management practices of their firm according to the recommendations made in this particular Chapter, need to have some method of monitoring the behaviour of their sales managers. In this context it seems that the sales manager willingness, caring and aggressiveness measuring instruments can be used as diagnostic tools to identify potential areas for improvement. Following this, the results of administering the instruments could be of use in designing training programmes for sales managers in order to enhance their problem resolution skills. For example a firm may find its managers are highly willing to respond to problems, but have a tendency to be overly aggressive in the delivery of their responses. Training could then be designed to focus on non-threatening ways of interacting with sales reps. However, it is necessary for the measures to have some kind of benchmark for comparison with, in order for any analysis to be meaningful. The benchmarks given in Chapter 7 (i.e. the descriptive statistics of the measures) are useful in part for this purpose, however it seems that for many firms, an industry-specific benchmark would be of greater use than a general one. Thus it would be necessary to generate results in a wide variety of specific industries.

9.2.4. Recommendations for Field Sales Managers

Finally, drawing from all of the findings offered in the present study, a number of recommendations can be advanced to sales managers seeking advice on how to resolve problem situations in the most effective manner.

First of all, it seems of particular importance that sales managers are actually willing to respond to problem situations. While this may appear self-explanatory, it was abundantly clear from the qualitative research (and indeed the range of the quantitative sales manager willingness scale) that some sales managers are *not* willing to resolve problems as quickly as they could be. This research shows that, quite apart from the fact that the problem will remain unsolved, being unwilling to respond to problems is related directly to higher levels of role ambiguity, and lower levels of organisationally-directed OCBs within the sales force in its entirety. In other words, being perceived as unwilling to resolve problems confuses sales reps, and causes them to question whether their behaviour is appropriate for their role as a sales rep, and to be unwilling to perform discretionary behaviours to help the firm. In turn, this increased role ambiguity has a direct association with reduced job satisfaction of the sales force in general. Thus, it appears that a high level of willingness to respond to problem situations is crucial for effective sales management practices, no matter whether it is an unpleasant process (as was alluded to by sales managers in the qualitative research) or not.

Secondly, it is also critical that, when sales managers are resolving problems, that they do so in a non-aggressive manner, and also demonstrate that they care about their sales reps as human beings as well as 'profit centres'. High levels of sales manager aggressiveness are directly associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion and lower levels of organisational commitment among salespeople. In turn, higher levels of emotional exhaustion are directly related to reduced levels of job satisfaction among salespeople, while less committed salespeople are more likely to wish to leave the firm (thus causing the firm to incur substantial costs and reducing overall salesforce performance). Furthermore, a higher level of sales manager caring is directly related to increased job satisfaction of salespeople, which in turn is related to increased organisational commitment of salespeople. Thus, the

exhibition of higher caring and/or lower aggressiveness would seem to have major benefits for sales managers when dealing with problems, enabling managers to enhance the psychological characteristics of their entire sales force, while still resolving a problem situation.

Some ways in which sales managers may go about engendering either a higher caring or lower aggressiveness style can also be drawn from the research, and more particularly the qualitative portion. To reduce perceptions of aggressiveness, firstly, it is vital that sales managers never bully salespeople, not only does this harm the rep themselves, but also causes harm to their colleagues, and ultimately to the perception of the sales manager him/herself. Secondly, sales managers should try to avoid verbally abusive problem resolution, such as threatening, saying hurtful things, and giving destructive criticism. Also, it is likely that sales managers should wherever possible steer clear of physically intimidating methods of dealing with sales reps. These methods could include shouting, offensive language, throwing things, banging hands on the table, and other related actions. Of course it is recognised that on rare occasions such methods may enhance ‘getting the message across’, but as a rule they are best avoided. In order to enhance caring perceptions, sales managers should make it clear to sales reps that the manager will try hard to help the sales rep improve, rather than just let them ‘sink or swim’. Also, sales managers should try their best to be empathetic, understanding and friendly towards salespeople they are dealing with in problem situations. Furthermore, managers should also appear keen to discover the underlying reasons for any problem situation, rather than simply focussing on the problem itself. As well as this, it would seem that sales managers who spend significant amounts of time with problem salespeople – for example attending sales calls with them, will enhance their caring perceptions amongst the sales force.

In light of the findings of this study, it is strongly recommended that managers evaluate their own methods of dealing with their sales reps, and their own philosophies of management. Of course it is perfectly reasonable to expect that some sales managers will consider the findings of the present study unimportant, in particular if they feel that psychological variables such as job satisfaction are not necessary for sales reps to perform well. However, consideration of the present

findings will be helpful to all sales managers in evaluating how they do, and how they should, deal with their sales representatives, both in general, and in problem-resolution situations.

9.3. Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present study represents the first attempt to discover whether there are different styles with which sales managers resolve problem situations, and whether different resolution styles can influence behavioural and psychological outcomes within the sales force in general. Theoretically speaking, given that the study was concerned with sales managers in general (rather than in specific industries), the study's findings have a relatively high degree of generalisability. Notwithstanding this, it seems necessary in the first instance to replicate the findings in particular as they relate to the newly-developed scales of sales manager willingness, aggressiveness and caring in order to provide additional evidence of reliability, validity and stability (cf. DeVellis 1991). Replicating in this manner would also help in providing 'norms' for the scales for use as benchmarks, as was discussed in Section 9.2.3.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to replicate the *relationships* uncovered in this study, in particular the direct effects of the sales manager problem resolution style constructs on sales person outcomes. For example, the relationship between sales manager caring and organisational commitment (which was not found to be significant) may bear re-examination with a different data set, as may the other non-significant relationships. Related to this is the need for replication of the other relationships, in order to provide more compelling evidence of causality as well as existence of correlation between variables. Replication of these relationships (and examination of the ones found here to be non-significant) would go some way towards assuring one of the generalisability of the findings presented here.

Similarly, as alluded to previously, the relationships discovered in this study may differ in diverse industry contexts (for example FMCG versus healthcare manufacturers), or different sales force contexts (e.g. commission-based versus salary-based). As an additional note, it is necessary to point out that the type of sales force studied was explicitly *field-based*. No conclusions are or can be drawn about

other types of sales forces, such as telesales forces. It is certainly likely that the findings of the present study may be substantively different in telesales environments, and this may also be an interesting avenue for future analysis.

Related to this is the fact that little assessment of the problem resolution style measures' convergent validity was undertaken (see Chapter 7 for more details), due to lack of additional methods of measuring the constructs. More complete assessment of convergent validity will be possible if *different* methods of measuring sales manager willingness, aggressiveness and caring are developed, and this is one area where additional research could focus on.⁷ More specifically, and also to provide some kind of 'triangulation' benefit to the findings of the present study (cf. Silverman 2000), additional research methods such as case studies, interviews, observations and field/laboratory experiments could prove to be extremely useful in this respect. Furthermore, it should be abundantly clear that the findings of the present study are purely based on a cross-sectional study methodology, and in order to both comment on the temporal continuity of the observed relationships, and also provide true evidence of causality, longitudinal research should be conducted. It seems that a particularly effective way of carrying such research out would be to elicit the participation of a large organisation in such a longitudinal study.

Additionally, the findings of the present study are completely based on data obtained from sales reps working in the United Kingdom. It would appear necessary to examine the degree to which the study's findings are generalisable to other cultural contexts. For example, in the US sales force culture, will sales manager aggressiveness be seen as a positive or negative by sales reps? Furthermore, it would appear important to examine both the constructs themselves, and also the relationships uncovered, in cultural contexts that are substantively different to the UK, for example India, the Netherlands, or South East Asian countries such as Malaysia or Japan. Of particular interest may be whether the actual constructs of say, aggressiveness or caring are actually relevant in more feminine cultures such as the

⁷ As a minimum, future research on the problem resolution styles model should include validation items in the measurement scales, in order to provide a modicum of scope for using a multi-trait multi-method matrix to assess convergent validity (cf. Campbell and Fiske 1959).

Netherlands, or in very collective cultures such as Japan. However, future research focusing on these aspects should take care to avoid ethnocentrism, and blind application of concepts into cultures to which they may not be appropriate (cf. Craig and Douglas 2000).

The interactions between the problem resolution styles constructs could also be investigated in future research. Here, the focus could also be on what specific activities enhance or detract from the quality of sales manager willingness to respond in particular. For example, sales managers could indeed be seen as willing to respond to problem situations, but it is quite conceivable that their responses may be poor, in that the problems are not resolved at all. It would be interesting to add such depth to the willingness concept, which currently is solely focused on the willingness to respond, and ignores the quality of the response. Interestingly, this area of response is alluded to in the existing punishment research, both within and without the sales management context (e.g. Bellizi 1995). It would also be appealing to investigate the potential *moderating* effects of caring and aggressiveness on various managerial behaviours. For example, does a highly caring style increase the positive effects of other manager-rep interactions as well as problem resolution behaviours? Furthermore, the actual effects of sales manager willingness to respond on the solving of problems needs to be investigated, and whether caring and/or aggressive styles can increase or decrease the effectiveness of response. For example, do high levels of willingness to respond to a poor performer *actually increase the performance* of that sales rep, and is this effect moderated by caring or aggressiveness? Most research on response to problems (e.g. punishment) *does* find that solving or reduction in the occurrence of the actual problem tends to be a result of responses such as punishment, but it would be intriguing to examine whether more effective resolution is provided by managers with high-caring or low aggressiveness styles, or vice versa.⁸

⁸ The effects discussed here are conceptually distinct from the positive ones which were discovered in the present study. The latter effects are mainly to do with the psychological outcomes of problem resolution styles on the sales team in general, rather than the behavioural impact on any individual representative, such as reducing the problem behaviour.

Another avenue for future research is the explication of antecedents to sales manager problem resolution styles. In other words, what influences sales managers to be more willing to respond to problems, or do so in a more caring or less aggressive manner? For example, much existing research has discovered that managers tend to differ in their overall 'leadership style', and it may be the case that those managers who are more transformational may be more aggressive and more caring, or those who are more transactional may be less caring and more willing to respond. There are a number of other constructs and theories existing within sales management research that also seem likely to help in the delineation of antecedents. These include in particular the organisational control system (e.g. Oliver and Anderson 1994), or the sales manager-salesperson exchange relationship (e.g. Lagace, Castleberry and Ridnour 1993). Furthermore, it appears very likely that the characteristics of individual salespeople who are involved in the problem situation, and the specific problem situation, will elicit different types of response to the problem. For example sales representatives with high performance in the past may receive more lenient (i.e. more caring, less aggressive and perhaps less willingness to respond) behaviour from their sales managers when they cause problems.⁹ Findings similar to this are discussed in that research which explores sales management reactions to unethical behaviour. In particular, the latter research finds that gender of the rep, problem seriousness and prior performance of the rep can all influence the sales manager's reactions to the problem caused by the sales rep (e.g. Bellizi 1995; DeConinck 1992; Sayre, Joyce and Lambert 1991). Furthermore, aspects which have remained relatively unexplored within sales management may be important influences on the problem resolution styles of the sales manager. One particular example is the 'personality' of the manager, a point emphasised by many of the qualitative interviewees (see Chapter 3). Another aspect may be the gender relationship between the manager and the rep, or even the gender of the manager themselves, which has received little interest from sales scholars. Finally, it is also likely that the organisational, industry or environmental context that the sales force operates in will also influence the manner in which the manager behaves, and consequently the

⁹ Interestingly, many of the respondents to the qualitative portion of the research alluded to the idea that different characteristics of the sales rep would influence the sales manager's reaction to problems involving individual sales reps.

problem resolution styles. For instance, qualitative respondents suggested that managers who were under high pressure from their superiors were more likely to be aggressive, as were those in particularly competitive markets or industries.

While a number of consequences of sales manager problem resolution styles were identified as significant in the present study, it would appear pertinent to examine the possible effects of sales manager problem resolution styles on other consequences. For example higher 'job stress' of sales representatives would appear to be a likely consequence of higher aggressiveness. Thus, fruitful avenues for research will include the examination of the effects of sales manager problem resolution styles on other consequences which sales scholars have deemed as important to sales effectiveness. Another aspect may also be the inclusion of measures of outcome and behavioural sales performance in future research, to determine whether discovered relationships still hold in the presence of performance outcomes. In this way, it would be interesting to examine whether problem resolution styles are mediating influences between antecedents such as leadership style or organisational control systems, and performance/effectiveness of the sales force. Related to this is the potential for moderating effects on the problem resolution styles – consequence relationships. For example, it has been found that job mobility moderates some influences on turnover (Tepper 2000). Other potential moderating effects between problem resolution styles and its consequences are the structure of the sales force, and whether reps are rewarded for individual or team performance. For example, if sales reps' income depends on the entire team reaching targets, then reps may be far keener to see colleagues disciplined for poor performance, than if sales reps' income is solely dependent on their own performance.

Another issue that requires some consideration in the future concerns the measures of organisational commitment and emotional exhaustion used in this study. Specifically, neither of these measures displayed unidimensionality in the first instance, and therefore required some modifications. It would seem necessary for future research within sales to address the issue of the applicability of these measures to sales populations at least. Perhaps more importantly, the construction of the individual item banks may need to be addressed. For example, both measures were seen to

contain items which appeared to relate to other related issues rather than core aspects of their respective constructs. More specifically, the organisational commitment scale contained items which appeared to relate to consequences of organisational commitment, and the emotional exhaustion scale seemed to contain items which tapped into antecedents of emotional exhaustion. Detailed and rigorous psychometric and conceptual evaluation would appear to be in order for both these measures, in order to assure future sales scholars of their robustness for subsequent usage.

In summary, the present study provides a first insight into the styles with which sales managers resolve problem situations, and also provides indications of how sales managers may most effectively resolve problems in terms of positively influencing their sales force. However, even though a number of hypotheses regarding sales manager problem resolution styles were supported by the structural equation modelling results, the findings should still be regarded as primarily exploratory and preliminary. Additional research is needed to gain a more complete understanding of the effects of sales manager problem resolution styles on the sales force, and also the antecedents to different problem resolution styles. The author hopes that the findings of the present study will stimulate other researchers to examine the ideas and concepts presented here, and conduct further research in the area. To this end, the suggestions presented above should provide future researchers with some preliminary directions.

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APPENDIX 1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RELATED MATERIALS

APPENDIX 1.2. MATRIX EXAMPLE

Matrix of Action Style Comments: Respondent SM1

	Personal Comments	'Other Managers'
General		
Fast	<p>23-29: 'if they don't suit then they're out, you with me?...we cant afford to have people...linger on'</p> <p>63-64: 'I can tell within a week whether they're going to be any good'</p> <p>165-167: 'if I'm going to get rid of someone [then I do it], but I prefer to try and coax them to do a better job, but you can only go so far'</p> <p>237-238: 'if they don't pull their weight they're gone, its that simple, no matter how well they get on with the others'</p> <p>242: 'if I notice I put my foot on it straight away, you cant be everywhere'</p> <p>286-288: poor firm profit makes him do it.</p> <p>327-328: 'give me a week and I'll sort him out and he's gone if he's no good'</p> <p>352-357: 'I asked them for all the help I could...[and]...they couldn't care that much so I closed it down'</p> <p>489-490: 'I got rid of him, I didn't want to but I had to'</p>	<p>138-140: 'other people wouldn't give the lad the chances I gave him, they'd have had him out quicker'</p> <p>167: 'a lot of managers...have got no mercy'</p> <p>190-191: 'if they don't pull their weight they're gone'</p> <p>301-302: 'if they don't pull their weight then they have to go'</p> <p>467-469: 'are [managers] sympathetic today, no...my son is nothing like me, if he's got to get rid of someone he does it'.</p>
Slow	<p>40-41: we give him about 4 chances and in the end...I just kicked him out, we were wasting our time'</p> <p>72-76: will give them a while to settle down to factory life if they are young.</p> <p>111: 'I give him that many chances, he'd upset a few of the personel'.</p> <p>128-130: potential makes him take longer.</p> <p>177-178: 'I'm a softie if you like'</p> <p>212-214: legislation</p> <p>271-272: 'I said you come back in 6 months and [if] you're alright I'll give you your job back'</p> <p>289-290: the guy who had been there longer got more chance</p> <p>330-331: 'if I think he's got potential I'll extend his...trial'</p> <p>371-374: 'I'd do anything to keep these [employees], put my own house up for mortgage...these blokes are good blokes, they've worked for me a long time'.</p> <p>387-389: 'I wouldn't sack him I'd try to help him'</p>	

Note: Matrix refers to an interview conducted with a sales manager

APPENDIX 1.3. META-MATRIX EXAMPLE

Meta-Matrix of Action Style Comments

		Personal Comments	'Other Managers'
General	<i>Mgr</i>	BB 273-277: many things affect how 'careful' you are with an employee – i.e. how quick you are to deal with them	NW 91-99: talks about how different managers have different approaches, some will ignore a poor performer, while some will sack, while some will try to help him.
	<i>Rep</i>	JH 395-399: got to perform, but nobody likes to admit they made a mistake hiring you.	SP2 203-207: 'managers are human and they have different ways of doing things'
Fast	<i>Mgr</i>	LP 23-29: 'if they don't suit then they're out, you with me?...we cant afford to have people...linger on'.	LP 138-140: 'other people wouldn't give the lad the chances I gave him, they'd have had him out quicker'
	<i>Rep</i>	JH 25-27: 'stamped on abruptly'	JW 139-141: 'if it isn't sorted out rapidly...motivation of the sales person can go down' AR 59-62: Staff do not see quick resolution as bad, its helpful, and they see it as positive
Slow	<i>Mgr</i>	LP 371-374: 'I'd do anything to keep these [employees], put my own house up for mortgage...these blokes are good blokes, they've worked for me a long time'. KD 46-56: Need to have an objective process, but also to be 'on top' of things. Need to determine reasons and then act. Get buy-in from the staff.	NW 207-209: some managers can be 'initially more lenient, until it builds up to a head and their bosses tell them [to act]'
	<i>Rep</i>	JH 160-172: you have to give them time to find another job, the company also allows less-profitable people to stay on, 'shows the compassion that this company displays'	KE 321-325: it 'reduces morale...so its in your interests not to let it linger'

Note: 'Mgr' designates comments made by a sales manager

'Rep' designates comments made by a sales representative

Not all comments shown, matrix for illustration purposes only.

**APPENDIX 2. QUANTITATIVE DATA
COLLECTION RELATED MATERIALS**

APPENDIX 2.1. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: Questionnaire shown reduced in size, actual size is A4

**SALES MANAGER BEHAVIOUR
AND INTERACTION STYLES**
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SALES PEOPLE

Nicholas J. Lee
Doctoral Candidate

and

Dr. John W. Cadogan
Lecturer in Marketing

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Aston Business School: Marketing Group
Aston Street
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ASTON BUSINESS SCHOOL

Code: _____

SECTION 1: YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION AND YOUR JOB

1. Please use the following scale to indicate the extent to which the statements below describe how you feel (place the appropriate number in the relevant box). Please remember there are no right or wrong answers, and all data is confidential.

Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Your Role within the Firm

- I feel certain about how much authority I have in my selling position.....
- I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my selling position.....
- I know that I have divided my time properly while performing the tasks connected with my selling.....
- I know what my responsibilities are in my selling position.....
- I know exactly what is expected of me in my selling position.....
- I receive clear explanations of what has to be done in my selling position.....

Feelings about your job

- When I perform well, I know it's because of my own desire to achieve.....
- I don't need a reason to sell; I sell because I want to.....
- Becoming successful in sales is something that I want to do for me.....
- If I were independently wealthy, I would still sell for the challenge of it.....
- I wish I didn't have to retire someday so I could always continue selling for the pleasure of it.....
- I sell because I cherish the feeling of performing a useful service.....
- If it weren't for the money, I would not be in a selling job.....
- I sell because I get paid to sell.....
- After a long, hard day, I realize that if it weren't for the money, I wouldn't put up with this job.....

Feelings about your firm

- I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful.....
- I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for.....
- I feel very little loyalty to this organisation.....
- I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation.....
- I find that my values and the organisation's values are very similar.....

I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.....

I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work was similar.....

This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.....

It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation.....

I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.....

There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organisation indefinitely.....

Often I find it difficult to agree with this organisation's policies on important matters relating to its employees.....

I really care about the fate of this organisation.....

For me, this is the best of all possible organisations for which to work.....

Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part.....

It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year.....

I often think of quitting.....

I will probably look for a new job next year.....

My work gives me a sense of accomplishment.....

My job is exciting.....

My work is satisfying.....

I'm really doing something worthwhile in my job.....

If I were to quit this job, I could find another job just as good.....

I would have no problem finding an acceptable job if I quit.....

I generally...

"Keep up" with developments in the company.....

Attend functions that are not required, but help the company image.....

Am willing to risk disapproval in order to express my beliefs about what's best for the company.....

Consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters.....

Tend to make "mountains out of molehills" (make problems bigger than they are).....

- Always focus on what's wrong with my situation, rather than the positive side of it.....
- Help orient new employees even though it is not required.....
- Am always ready to help or lend a helping hand to those around me.....
- Willingly give of my time to help others.....

SECTION 2: YOUR IMMEDIATE SALES MANAGER'S BEHAVIOUR

2. The following statements refer to sales managers' behaviours and feelings when dealing with problem sales people. A problem sales person is one who is not meeting required performance standards, not meeting conduct expectations or is behaving inappropriately within the organisation. Please use the following scale to indicate how closely you think each statement describes how your sales manager deals with problem sales people (place the appropriate number in the relevant box).

- | | <small>Strongly
Disagree</small> | | <small>Neither Agree
nor Disagree</small> | | <small>Strongly
Agree</small> |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Problem resolution. | | | | | |
| From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I only approach my manager as a last resort..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager can often see the reason for a problem, and is very concerned with helping the sales person correct it..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager could be described as 'fiery' | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager deals with problem sales people in a very friendly manner..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager doesn't seem to have the confidence to take the necessary action to solve a problem..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager doesn't seem to take the initiative when dealing with a problem..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager doesn't waste any time when dealing with a problem..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager has very little tolerance for those sales people who create problems..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager is very empathetic when he has to deal with a problem sales person..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager often bangs the table and causes a scene when dealing with problem sales people..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting them..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager often needs to be forced to deal with problems..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My manager often passes the buck when dealing with a problem..... | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

My manager seems to be able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person who is causing problems.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager seems very sympathetic towards a problem sales person.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager tends to shout a lot when dealing with a problem sales person.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager treats problem sales people with a lot of sensitivity.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager waits until the problem absolutely has to be dealt with before acting.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problem sales people.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager is something of a counselor when dealing with problem sales people.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager is very considerate to those sales people who cause problems.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often, my manager will have someone up in front of other people to discipline them.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some of the things my manager says to a problem sales person can be very hurtful.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is more destructive than constructive.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening when dealing with problem sales people.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
If my manager notices a problem, then he/she will act on it immediately.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
All the sales people are a little afraid of our sales manager.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a sales person is not performing, my sales manager doesn't care why.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's always a long, drawn out affair trying to implement a decision on a problem sales person.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often, my sales manager will reprimand a sales person in front of other members of the sales team.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager always spends a lot of time with the sales person trying to rectify a problem while considering how to deal with.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sales people who cause problems make my sales manager extremely angry with them.....

My sales manager considers that his/her job is to manage sales people, not be their friend.....

My manager seems to make a decision on how to deal with a problem quickly, on gut instinct.....

Sometimes my sales manager can be a bit like a 'bull in a china shop' when dealing with problems.....

My sales manager seems to realise that sometimes a problem may not be entirely a sales person's fault.....

My manager seems to spend time analysing all of the angles when he/she makes a decision on what action to take...

Sometimes my sales manager will threaten a sales person to get them to stop causing a problem.....

My sales manager takes a very gentle and understanding approach to dealing with a sales person who is causing problems.....

Sometimes the only way my sales manager can solve a problem is to put someone down and make them feel bad....

Things can often get acrimonious when my sales manager is dealing with a problem sales person.....

Reward Structure

Please use the following scale to indicate the relative extent to which you feel that your remuneration on the various rewards listed below depends on *team based performance* (e.g. hitting team sales targets) as opposed to *individual performance* (please place the appropriate number in each box).

To no extent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Completely
My salary.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My bonuses.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What are the criteria on which your manager evaluates you (tick all that apply).					What kind of information do you provide for your manager (tick all that apply).			
number of sales calls.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer service and the like.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
sales (e.g. volume etc.).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
qualitative aspects (e.g. customer satisfaction).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
								competitors' activities..... <input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 3: YOUR WELL-BEING AND EMOTIONS

The following questions ask you about your general well-being and feelings towards your job. Please answer all questions as honestly as possible, and remember, no answers will be attributed to you, and all data is confidential.

It is possible that completing some questions may draw your attention to problems you experience. If you are worried that these are serious we would advise you to contact your GP.

3. Below are some questions which deal with your emotions towards your work. Please use the scales to give your answer, and tick the appropriate box. Remember to answer both the how often and how strong sections of each question. If you do not experience these emotions at all, please tick the never box for each question.

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day
	Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often: 1	2	3	4	5	6
	How strong: 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Very mild, barely noticeable		Moderate			Very strong, major

2. I feel used up at the end of the workday:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day	
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Very mild, barely noticeable				Moderate		Very strong, major
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day	
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Very mild, barely noticeable				Moderate		Very strong, major
4. Working with people all day is really a strain for me:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day	
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Very mild, barely noticeable				Moderate		Very strong, major
5. I feel burned out from my work:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day	
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Very mild, barely noticeable				Moderate		Very strong, major
6. I feel frustrated by my job:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day	
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Very mild, barely noticeable				Moderate		Very strong, major
7. I feel I'm working too hard on my job:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day	
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Very mild, barely noticeable				Moderate		Very strong, major
8. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day	
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Very mild, barely noticeable				Moderate		Very strong, major

9. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope:		A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Every week	A few times a week	Every day
Never: <input type="checkbox"/>	How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6
	How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6
		Very mild, barely noticeable			Moderate		Very strong, major

4. Below are some questions which deal with your health in general over the past month. Please refer to the following scale, and then circle the most appropriate answer for each question. Remember to concentrate on present and recent complaints, not those that you have had in the distant past.

Have you recently:

	More than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?...	1	2	3	4
Lost much sleep over worry?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt capable of making decisions about things?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt constantly under strain?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt that you couldn't overcome your difficulties?.....	1	2	3	4
Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?..	1	2	3	4
Been able to face up to your problems?.....	1	2	3	4
Been feeling unhappy or depressed?.....	1	2	3	4
Been losing confidence in yourself?.....	1	2	3	4
Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?.....	1	2	3	4
Been feeling reasonably contented, all things considered?.....	1	2	3	4

5. Below are some items describing people and their feelings, please tick the relevant box (either true or false) according to whether you feel the item is a true or false description of you.

	True	False
I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have never intensely disliked anyone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like gossip at times.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm always willing to admit it when I've made mistake.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I always try to practice what I preach.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At times, I have really insisted in having things my way.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrong-doings.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I never resent being asked to return a favour.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 4: YOU AND YOUR FIRM

9. The final few questions ask you details about you and your firm. It is important that you answer them honestly, remember this data is confidential.

How old are you? _____ years	Are you? _____ Male _____ Female
How long have you worked in sales? _____ Years	Is your sales manager? _____ Male _____ Female
How long have you worked for this organisation? _____ Years	What is your highest educational qualification? (please tick) <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate degree <input type="checkbox"/> University degree <input type="checkbox"/> Some university courses <input type="checkbox"/> Trade qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> 'O' or 'A' levels <input type="checkbox"/> GCSE or equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> High school <input type="checkbox"/> Other
How long have you worked in your current job? _____ Years	
Approximately, what is your company's annual TOTAL sales turnover?..	£ _____
Approximately, how many sales people would a first level sales manager supervise in your company?.....	_____ people
Approximately, how many people are employed by your company?.....	_____ people

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

APPENDIX 2.2. ORIGINAL ITEM BANK

Note: Items in bold were ultimately retained.

2.2.1 Sales Manager Willingness

1. Deciding what to do in a problem situation is a collective process between the manager and the sales person (Rev)
2. If my manager has to take unpleasant action on a problem, then she/he just does it
3. If my manager notices a problem, then he/she will act on it immediately
4. If sales people cause problems, they always get a second chance to improve, before the manager decides to take action (Rev)
5. **In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly**
6. Its always a long, drawn out affair trying to implement a decision on a problem sales person (Rev)
7. My manager always spends a lot of time with the sales person trying to rectify a problem while considering how to deal with (Rev)
8. **My manager doesn't seem to have the confidence to take the necessary action to solve a problem (Rev)**
9. **My manager doesn't seem to take the initiative when dealing with a problem (Rev)**
10. **My manager doesn't waste any time when dealing with a problem**
11. **My manager often needs to be forced to deal with problems (Rev)**
12. **My manager often passes the buck when dealing with a problem (Rev)**
13. **My manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored (Rev)**
14. My manager seems to make a decision on how to deal with a problem quickly, on gut instinct
15. My manager seems to spend time analysing all of the angles when he/she makes a decision on what action to take (Rev)
16. **My manager waits until the problem absolutely has to be dealt with before acting (Rev)**
17. My manager will only use formal measures such as written warnings when he/she has exhausted all my other options (Rev)
18. **Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation (Rev)**
19. **Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so (Rev)**
20. Once the manager has made a decision, he/she sometimes seems to have trouble implementing it because of his/her emotions (Rev)
21. Sales people who cause problems get given all the chances possible to improve before the manager decides to act (Rev)

2.2.2.Sales Manager Aggressiveness

1. All the sales people are a little afraid of our sales manager
2. **From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully**
3. **My sales manager is prone to ‘flying off the handle’**
4. **My manager could be described as ‘fiery’**
5. **My manager doesn’t accept excuses for causing problems**
6. **My manager often bangs the table and causes a scene when dealing with problem sales people**
7. **My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting them**
8. **My manager tends to shout a lot when dealing with a problem sales person**
9. My manager treats problem sales people with ‘kid gloves’ when dealing with them (Rev)
10. **My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problem sales people**
11. My sales manager has very little tolerance for those sales people that create problems
12. My sales manager really gets on a sales person’s back when they’re causing problems
13. Often my sales manager has to have a bit of a rant at a sales person who is causing problems
14. Often my sales manager reacts very strongly when dealing with a problem sales person
15. **Often, my manager will have someone up in front of other people to discipline them**
16. Often, my sales manager will reprimand a sales person in front of other members of the sales team
17. Sales people who cause problems make my sales manager extremely angry with them
18. **Some of the things my manager says to a problem sales person can be very hurtful**
19. **Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh**
20. Sometimes my sales manager can be a bit like a ‘bull in a china shop’ when dealing with problems
21. Sometimes my sales manager is quite antagonistic when dealing with a problem sales person
22. Sometimes my sales manager will have to bang his/her hands on the table and make a scene to get people to stop causing problems
23. Sometimes my sales manager will threaten a sales person to get them to stop causing a problem
24. **Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is more destructive than constructive**
25. Sometimes the only way my sales manager can solve a problem is to put someone down and make them feel bad
26. **Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening when dealing with problem sales people**
27. Things can often get acrimonious when my sales manager is dealing with a problem sales person

28. When my manager gives out criticism, its always mixed in with a little teaching (Rev)

2.2.3. Sales Manager Caring

1. **I only approach my manager as a last resort (Rev)**
2. If a sales person is not performing, my sales manager doesn't care why (Rev)
3. If we sales people don't perform, then we wont last too long with our manager, whatever the reason (Rev)
4. Its not important what we sales people think of company policies and rules, we simply have to adhere to them (Rev)
5. **My manager can often see the reason for a problem, and is very concerned with helping the sales person correct it**
6. **My manager deals with a problem sales person in a very friendly manner**
7. My manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems (Rev)
8. **My manager has very little tolerance for those sales people who create problems (Rev)**
9. **My manager is very empathetic when he has to deal with a problem sales person**
10. **My manager seems to be able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person who is causing problems**
11. **My manager seems very sympathetic towards a problem sales person**
12. My manager thinks that things should be done one way only, by his rules (Rev)
13. **My manager treats problem sales people with a lot of sensitivity**
14. My sales manager considers that his/her job is to manage sales people, not be their friend (Rev)
15. My sales manager is not really interested in why someone causes a problem (Rev)
16. **My sales manager is something of a counselor when dealing with problem sales people**
17. **My sales manager is very considerate to those sales people who cause problems**
18. My sales manager seems to realise that sometimes a problem may not be entirely a sales person's fault
19. My sales manager takes a very gentle and understanding approach to dealing with a sales person who is causing problems

APPENDIX 2.3. EXPERT ANALYSIS FORM

Introduction

Thanks for agreeing to help me out in my research, as I'm sure you'll appreciate, expert item analysis is a critical phase in measure development, and without your participation it would be far harder to complete. The research is essentially concerned with the behaviour of sales managers in situations relating to problem sales people. That is, *when a sales person is causing a problem within the sales force (for whatever reason), how do sales managers resolve that problem?* Qualitative research has uncovered a number of key constructs relating to these issues, and now I am attempting to generate psychometrically sound measures of these constructs.

The following document contains construct descriptions from qualitative sales manager and sales person data. Following the descriptions is a section containing tabulated measure items for the constructs. The object of the expert analysis is to sort the items into groups, which you feel reflect the descriptions of the constructs given. To help you, the items and constructs are tabulated in a matrix format. I would like you think of two things, a) which construct an item reflects, if any, and b) how well you feel the item reflects that construct (i.e. face validity). Part B requires you to rate each item (on a 1-5 scale) on the relevant constructs. If you feel a particular item does not reflect a construct at all, then do not place any value in the relevant column, while if you feel it does in any way, please rate it by placing a number (from 1 for very little to 5 for very strongly) in the relevant column. You may pick more than one construct for each item if you so wish.

Thanks for your help here, if you need any further information, you can contact me on extension 5019, or nj_lee@hotmail.com

Cheers, Nick Lee: Marketing Group

SECTION 1: CONSTRUCT DESCRIPTIONS

This section contains constructs and items generated from both sales people and sales managers. However the items are written from the perspective of a sales person. This is because they are intended to be answered by sales people. However, they refer to the sales manager.

Sales Manager Willingness to Respond (SM Will)

Sales manager willingness to respond (SMW) is defined as referring to a sales manager's readiness and desire to resolve problem situations among their sales representatives (e.g. taking responsibility for dealing with problems, using time effectively etc.). Essentially, SMW items should only tap concepts of willingness, such as issues likely to increase/decrease the perceived speed of response. SMW is not concerned with subjective motivations or reasons for certain speeds, merely the level of willingness itself. Reverse-scored items should focus on attitudes, actions or procedures likely to *decrease* the exhibition of willingness to either make or implement a decision.

Sales Manager Aggressiveness (SM AGGR)

Aggressiveness is defined as a construct which concerns the style which the manager exhibits towards salespeople when taking action on various problem situations (for example when delivering sanctions). This can be both in formal situations – i.e. an appraisal meeting, and in informal situations such as normal office interaction. The highly aggressive sales manager is one who, when performing some kind of problem resolution behaviour, is seen to be physically demonstrative and/or intimidating towards the sales person they are dealing with. Essentially, do salespeople feel threatened when they are being dealt with, do other salespeople observe this threatening behaviour? AGGR does not tap reasons or motivations, but management styles which cause the sales person to feel threatened. Reverse-scored AGGR items should focus on passivity, professionalism, or concepts of removing emotions from situations.

Sales Manager Caring (SM CARE)

The highly caring sales manager can be characterized as one who exhibits concern for the salespeople as human beings, rather than simply as numbers on a sales performance assessment. Furthermore, the highly caring sales manager is seen as being sympathetic to the various external factors which can cause problems for the sales person, (e.g. family problems), and highly empathic towards the sales person they are dealing with. This can be compared with the ruthless manager – at the opposite extreme of the construct – who is primarily concerned with rule adherence and profit maximization. CARE is concerned with motivations for actions, as well as more general management styles, thus an item tapping CARE should include an obvious motivational, or empathic, component. Reverse-scored CARE items should focus on the *lack* of empathy or caring, and suggest *ruthlessness, rule adherence, and profit maximisation* without concern for the sales people.

SECTION 2: ITEM BANK

Item	SM. Will.	SM Aggr.	SM Care.
<p>All the sales people are a little afraid of our sales manager</p> <p>Deciding what to do in a problem situation is a collective process between the manager and the sales person (Rev)</p> <p>From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully</p> <p>I only approach my manager as a last resort (Rev)</p> <p>If a sales person is not performing, my sales manager doesn't care why (Rev)</p> <p>If my manager has to take unpleasant action on a problem, then she/he just does it</p> <p>If my manager notices a problem, then he/she will act on it immediately</p> <p>If sales people cause problems, they always get a second chance to improve, before the manager decides to take action (Rev)</p> <p>If we sales people don't perform, then we wont last too long with our manager, whatever the reason (Rev)</p> <p>In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly</p> <p>Its always a long, drawn out affair trying to implement a decision on a problem sales person (Rev)</p> <p>Its not important what we sales people think of company policies and rules, we simply have to adhere to them (Rev)</p>			

	SM. Will	SM Aggr	SM Care
<p>My manager always spends a lot of time with the sales person trying to rectify a problem while considering how to deal with (Rev)</p> <p>My manager can often see the reason for a problem, and is very concerned with helping the sales person correct it</p> <p>My manager could be described as 'fiery'</p> <p>My manager deals with a problem sales person in a very friendly manner</p> <p>My manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems</p> <p>My manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems (Rev)</p> <p>My manager doesn't seem to have the confidence to take the necessary action to solve a problem (Rev)</p> <p>My manager doesn't seem to take the initiative when dealing with a problem (Rev)</p> <p>My manager doesn't waste any time when dealing with a problem</p> <p>My manager has very little tolerance for those sales people who create problems (Rev)</p> <p>My manager is very empathetic when he has to deal with a problem sales person</p> <p>My manager often bangs the table and causes a scene when dealing with problem sales people</p> <p>My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting them</p> <p>My manager often needs to be forced to deal with problems (Rev)</p> <p>My manager often passes the buck when dealing with a problem (Rev)</p>			

	SM. Will	SM Aggr.	SM Care.
<p>My manager seems to be able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person who is causing problems</p> <p>My manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored (Rev)</p> <p>My manager seems to make a decision on how to deal with a problem quickly, on gut instinct</p> <p>My manager seems to spend time analysing all of the angles when he/she makes a decision on what action to take (Rev)</p> <p>My manager seems very sympathetic towards a problem sales person</p> <p>My manager tends to shout a lot when dealing with a problem sales person</p> <p>My manager thinks that things should be done one way only, by his rules (Rev)</p> <p>My manager treats problem sales people with 'kid gloves' when dealing with them (Rev)</p> <p>My manager treats problem sales people with a lot of sensitivity</p> <p>My manager waits until the problem absolutely has to be dealt with before acting (Rev)</p> <p>My manager will only use formal measures such as written warnings when he/she has exhausted all the other options (Rev)</p> <p>My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problem sales people</p> <p>My sales manager considers that his/her job is to manage sales people, not be their friend (Rev)</p> <p>My sales manager has very little tolerance for those sales people that create problems</p>			

	SM. Will	SM Aggr	SM Care
<p>My sales manager is not really interested in why someone causes a problem (Rev)</p>			
<p>My sales manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'</p>			
<p>My sales manager is something of a counselor when dealing with problem sales people</p>			
<p>My sales manager is very considerate to those sales people who cause problems</p>			
<p>My sales manager really gets on a sales person's back when they're causing problems</p>			
<p>My sales manager seems to realise that sometimes a problem may not be entirely a sales person's fault</p>			
<p>My sales manager takes a very gentle and understanding approach to dealing with a sales person who is causing problems</p>			
<p>Often my sales manager has to have a bit of a rant at a sales person who is causing problems</p>			
<p>Often my sales manager reacts very strongly when dealing with a problem sales person</p>			
<p>Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation (Rev)</p>			
<p>Often, my manager will have someone up in front of other people to discipline them</p>			
<p>Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so (Rev)</p>			
<p>Often, my sales manager will reprimand a sales person in front of other members of the sales team</p>			
<p>Once the manager has made a decision, he/she sometimes seems to have trouble implementing it because of his/her emotions (Rev)</p>			

	SM. Will	SM Aggr	SM Care
<p>Sales people who cause problems get given all the chances possible to improve before the manager decides to act (Rev)</p> <p>Sales people who cause problems make my sales manager extremely angry with them</p> <p>Some of the things my manager says to a problem sales person can be very hurtful</p> <p>Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh</p> <p>Sometimes my sales manager can be a bit like a 'bull in a china shop' when dealing with problems</p> <p>Sometimes my sales manager is quite antagonistic when dealing with a problem sales person</p> <p>Sometimes my sales manager will have to bang his/her hands on the table and make a scene to get people to stop causing problems</p> <p>Sometimes my sales manager will threaten a sales person to get them to stop causing a problem</p> <p>Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is more destructive than constructive</p> <p>Sometimes the only way my sales manager can solve a problem is to put someone down and make them feel bad</p> <p>Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening when dealing with problem sales people</p> <p>Things can often get acrimonious when my sales manager is dealing with a problem sales person</p> <p>When my manager gives out criticism, its always mixed in with a little teaching (Rev)</p>			

APPENDIX 2.4. ITEM BANKS FOR CONSEQUENCE SCALES

2.4.1. Role Ambiguity

1. I feel certain about how much authority I have in my selling position.
2. I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my selling position.
3. I know that I have divided my time properly while performing the tasks connected with my selling.
4. I know what my responsibilities are in my selling position.
5. I know exactly what is expected of me in my selling position.
6. I receive clear explanations of what has to be done in my selling position.

2.4.2. Emotional Exhaustion

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job
4. Working with people all day is really a strain for me
5. I feel burned out from my work
6. I feel frustrated by my job
7. I feel I'm working too hard on my job
8. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me
9. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope

2.4.3. Job Satisfaction

1. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.
2. I frequently think of quitting this job. r
3. I am generally satisfied with this kind of work I do in this job.

4. Most people on this job are very satisfied with the job.
5. People on this job often think of quitting. r

2.4.4. Organisational Commitment

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.
3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization. r
4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.
5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. r
8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. r
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.
11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. r
12. Often I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. r
13. I really care about the fate of this organization.
14. For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. r

2.4.5. Turnover Intentions

1. It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year
2. I often think of quitting

3. I will probably look for a new job next year

2.4.6. Sportsmanship

1. Consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters. **r**
2. Tend to make “mountains out of molehills” (make problems bigger than they are. **r**
3. Always focus on what's wrong with my situation rather than the positive side of it. **r**

2.4.7. Civic Virtue

1. “Keeps up” with developments in the company.
2. Attends functions that are not required, but help the company image.
3. Is willing to risk disapproval in order to express his/her beliefs about what's best for the company.

Note: Bold ‘r’ indicates reverse coded items.

APPENDIX 2.5. FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: Questionnaire shown reduced in size, actual size A4

SALES MANAGER BEHAVIOUR AND INTERACTION STYLES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SALES PEOPLE

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and

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ASTON BUSINESS SCHOOL

Code: _____

SECTION 1: YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION AND YOUR JOB

1. Please use the following scale to indicate the extent to which the statements below describe how you feel (place the appropriate number in the relevant box). Please remember there are no right or wrong answers, and all data is confidential.

Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Your Role within the Firm

- I feel certain about how much authority I have in my selling position.....
- I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my selling position.....
- I know that I have divided my time properly while performing the tasks connected with my selling.....
- I know what my responsibilities are in my selling position.....
- I know exactly what is expected of me in my selling position.....
- I receive clear explanations of what has to be done in my selling position.....

Feelings about your job

- When I perform well, I know it's because of my own desire to achieve.....
- I don't need a reason to sell; I sell because I want to.....
- Becoming successful in sales is something that I want to do for me.....
- If I were independently wealthy, I would still sell for the challenge of it.....
- I wish I didn't have to retire someday so I could always continue selling for the pleasure of it.....
- I sell because I cherish the feeling of performing a useful service.....
- If it weren't for the money, I would not be in a selling job.....
- I sell because I get paid to sell.....
- After a long, hard day, I realize that if it weren't for the money, I wouldn't put up with this job.....

Feelings about your firm

- I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful.....
- I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for.....
- I feel very little loyalty to this organisation.....
- I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation.....
- I find that my values and the organisation's values are very similar.....

Strongly Disagree	2	Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work was similar.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organisation indefinitely.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
Often I find it difficult to agree with this organisation's policies on important matters relating to its employees.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I really care about the fate of this organisation.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
For me, this is the best of all possible organisations for which to work.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I often think of quitting.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I will probably look for a new job next year.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
My work gives me a sense of accomplishment.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
My job is exciting.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
My work is satisfying.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm really doing something worthwhile in my job.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
If I were to quit this job, I could find another job just as good.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I would have no problem finding an acceptable job if I quit.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
I generally...					
"Keep up" with developments in the company.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend functions that are not required, but help the company image.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
Am willing to risk disapproval in order to express my beliefs about what's best for the company.....					<input type="checkbox"/>
Consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters.....					<input type="checkbox"/>

Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Tend to make "mountains out of molehills" (make problems bigger than they are).....

Always focus on what's wrong with my situation, rather than the positive side of it.....

Help orient new employees even though it is not required.....

Am always ready to help or lend a helping hand to those around me.....

Willingly give of my time to help others.....

SECTION 2: YOUR IMMEDIATE SALES MANAGER'S BEHAVIOUR

2. The following statements refer to sales managers' behaviours and feelings when dealing with problem sales people. A problem sales person is one who is not meeting required performance standards, not meeting conduct expectations or is behaving inappropriately within the organisation. Please use the following scale to indicate how closely you think each statement describes how your sales manager deals with problem sales people (place the appropriate number in the relevant box).

Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Problem resolution.

From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully.....

I only approach my manager as a last resort.....

In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly.....

My manager can often see the reason for a problem, and is very concerned with helping the sales person correct it.....

My manager could be described as 'fiery'.....

My manager deals with problem sales people in a very friendly manner.....

My manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems.....

My manager doesn't seem to have the confidence to take the necessary action to solve a problem.....

My manager doesn't seem to take the initiative when dealing with a problem.....

My manager doesn't waste any time when dealing with a problem.....

My manager has very little tolerance for those sales people who create problems.....

My manager is very empathetic when he has to deal with a problem sales person.....

My manager often bangs the table and causes a scene when dealing with problem sales people.....

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	
My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting them.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager often needs to be forced to deal with problems.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager often passes the buck when dealing with a problem.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager seems to be able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person who is causing problems.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager seems very sympathetic towards a problem sales person.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager tends to shout a lot when dealing with a problem sales person.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager treats problem sales people with a lot of sensitivity.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My manager waits until the problem absolutely has to be dealt with before acting.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problem sales people.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager is something of a counselor when dealing with problem sales people.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
My sales manager is very considerate to those sales people who cause problems.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
Often, my manager will have someone up in front of other people to discipline them.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
Some of the things my manager says to a problem sales person can be very hurtful.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is more destructive than constructive.....						<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening when dealing with problem sales people.....						<input type="checkbox"/>

Reward Structure

Please use the following scale to indicate the relative extent to which you feel that your remuneration on the various rewards listed below depends on *team based performance* (e.g. hitting team sales targets) as opposed to individual performance (please place the appropriate number in each box).

	To no extent						Completely	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
My salary.....			My commission.....					
My bonuses.....			My sales competition prizes.....					

What are the criteria on which your manager evaluates you (*tick all that apply*).

- number of sales calls.....
- Customer service and the like.....
- sales (e.g. volume etc.).....
- qualitative aspects (e.g. customer satisfaction).....

What kind of information do you provide for your manager (*tick all that apply*).

- number of sales calls.....
- sales in units and volume.....
- sales promotion activities.....
- non-selling activities.....
- competitors' activities.....

SECTION 3: YOUR WELL-BEING AND EMOTIONS

The following questions ask you about your general well-being and feelings towards your job. Please answer all questions as honestly as possible, and remember, no answers will be attributed to you, and all data is confidential.

It is possible that completing some questions may draw your attention to problems you experience. If you are worried that these are serious we would advise you to contact your GP.

3. Below are some questions which deal with your emotions towards your work. Please use the following scales to give your answer for each question. Remember to answer both the how often and how strong sections of each question. If you do not experience these emotions at all, please tick the never box for each question.

	A few times a year.	Monthly.	A few times a month.	Every week.	A few times a week.	Every Day.	
How often:	1	2	3	4	5	6	
How strong:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Very mild, barely noticeable.			Moderate.			Very strong, major.

	Never		How often		How strong
I feel emotionally drained from my work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel used up at the end of the workday.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with people all day is really a strain for me.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel burned out from my work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel frustrated by my job.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I'm working too hard on my job.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Below are some questions which deal with your health in general over the past month. Please refer to the following scale, and then circle the most appropriate answer for each question. Remember to concentrate on present and recent complaints, not those that you have had in the distant past.

Have you recently:

	More than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?...	1	2	3	4
Lost much sleep over worry?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt capable of making decisions about things?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt constantly under strain?.....	1	2	3	4
Felt that you couldn't overcome your difficulties?.....	1	2	3	4
Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?..	1	2	3	4
Been able to face up to your problems?.....	1	2	3	4
Been feeling unhappy or depressed?.....	1	2	3	4
Been losing confidence in yourself?.....	1	2	3	4
Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?.....	1	2	3	4
Been feeling reasonably contented, all things considered?.....	1	2	3	4

5. Below are some items describing people and their feelings, please tick the relevant box (either true or false) according to whether you feel the item is a true or false description of you.

	True	False
I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have never intensely disliked anyone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like gossip at times.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm always willing to admit it when I've made mistake.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I always try to practice what I preach.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE TURN OVER

	True	False
I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At times, I have really insisted in having things my way.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrong-doings.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I never resent being asked to return a favour.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your Performance

Please use the following scale to indicate how well you feel you are performing each activity listed below (please place the appropriate number in each box).

	Needs Improvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Outstanding
Building effective relationships with customers.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making effective presentations to customers and prospects.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping expenses at acceptable levels.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Achieving annual sales targets and other objectives.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding our products/services and their applications.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing feedback to management.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding customer needs and work processes.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing territory market share.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contributing to my sales units' profits.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE FINAL PAGE

SECTION 4: YOU AND YOUR FIRM

9. The final few questions ask you details about you and your firm. It is important that you answer them honestly, remember this data is confidential.

How old are you? _____ years	Are you? _____ Male _____ Female Is your sales manager? _____ Male _____ Female
How long have you worked in sales? _____ Years How long have you worked for this organisation? _____ Years How long have you worked in your current job? _____ Years	What is your highest educational qualification? (please tick) <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate degree <input type="checkbox"/> University degree <input type="checkbox"/> Some university courses <input type="checkbox"/> Trade qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> 'O' or 'A' levels <input type="checkbox"/> GCSE or equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> High school <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Approximately, what is your company's annual TOTAL sales turnover?.. _____ £	
Approximately, how many sales people would a first level sales manager supervise in your company?..... _____ people	
Approximately, how many people are employed by your company?..... _____ people	

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this study, please enclose your business card along with this questionnaire in the reply envelope.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED, THANKS!!!

APPENDIX 2.6. FINAL ITEM BANK

2.6.1 Sales Manager Willingness

1. In general, when a problem needs dealing with, my manager deals with it quickly
2. My manager doesn't seem to have the confidence to take the necessary action to solve a problem (Rev)
3. My manager doesn't seem to take the initiative when dealing with a problem (Rev)
4. My manager doesn't waste any time when dealing with a problem
5. My manager often needs to be forced to deal with problems (Rev)
6. My manager often passes the buck when dealing with a problem (Rev)
7. My manager seems to believe that a problem will go away if it is ignored (Rev)
8. My manager waits until the problem absolutely has to be dealt with before acting (Rev)
9. Often, my manager will avoid dealing with the situation (Rev)
10. Often, my manager will sit on a problem, and leave it for a month or so (Rev)

2.6.2. Sales Manager Aggressiveness

1. From my perspective, my sales manager is a bit of a bully
2. My sales manager is prone to 'flying off the handle'
3. My manager could be described as 'fiery'
4. My manager doesn't accept excuses for causing problems
5. My manager often bangs the table and causes a scene when dealing with problem sales people
6. My manager often demands things from us rather than requesting them
7. My manager tends to shout a lot when dealing with a problem sales person
8. My sales manager can be quite brutal when dealing with problem sales people
9. Often, my manager will have someone up in front of other people to discipline them
10. Some of the things my manager says to a problem sales person can be very hurtful
11. Sometimes my manager can be quite harsh
12. Sometimes the criticism my manager gives out is more destructive than constructive
13. Sometimes, my manager can be quite threatening when dealing with problem sales people

2.6.3. Sales Manager Caring

1. I only approach my manager as a last resort (Rev)

2. My manager can often see the reason for a problem, and is very concerned with helping the sales person correct it
3. My manager deals with a problem sales person in a very friendly manner
4. My manager has very little tolerance for those sales people who create problems (Rev)
5. My manager is very empathetic when he has to deal with a problem sales person
6. My manager seems to be able to put himself in the shoes of a sales person who is causing problems
7. My manager seems very sympathetic towards a problem sales person
8. My manager treats problem sales people with a lot of sensitivity
9. My sales manager is something of a counselor when dealing with problem sales people
10. My sales manager is very considerate to those sales people who cause problems

APPENDIX 2.7. SALES MANAGER LETTER

DATE

E-mail: nj_lee@hotmail.com

Tel: +44 (0)121-359-3011 ext. 5019

Mob: +44 (0)7977-582-629

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your and your firm's assistance in distributing questionnaires to your sales representatives. As a first-line sales manager, enclosed with this package you should find a sealed individual pack to give to one of your sales representatives containing: one questionnaire, one covering letter, and one post paid return envelope.

Please give this pack to one of your salespeople. I would like to assure you that all the data collected will remain confidential, and no person or firm will be identified by name. The code numbers on the material are simply there for my own benefit, enabling me to determine which questionnaires have been returned.

An important point to note for my benefit is that if you do not distribute this questionnaire (for any reason) could you please notify me. This is important so I can remove it from my calculations. However, I do hope you will be able to distribute the questionnaire.

If you could take the short time required to help me out I would be extremely grateful, although I realize that you must be very busy. However, your help will make a major contribution to the completion of this study, and I thank you for your time in advance.

Yours sincerely

Nick Lee
Centre for Sales Organisational Research
Marketing Group
Aston Business School
Aston Triangle
Birmingham B4 7ET

APPENDIX 2.8. SALES PERSON LETTER

DATE

E-mail: nj_lee@hotmail.com
Tel: +44 (0)121-359-3011 ext. 5019
Mob: +44 (0)7977-582-629

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Nick Lee and I am a researcher at Aston Business School in Birmingham. I am currently conducting my doctoral research project and would be very appreciative if you could assist me by completing one of my questionnaires.

The research is concerned with how sales managers relate to their front line sales people, and the behaviours and interpersonal styles involved in this interaction. Enclosed with this letter, you should have received a questionnaire marked '*questionnaire for sales people*', along with a *post-paid* return envelope. Please answer the questionnaire in regard to your immediate sales manager – although please try not to discuss your answers with this person until it is complete and returned. The questionnaire is relatively short, and should not place too much of a demand on your time.

I would like to assure you that all the data collected will remain confidential, and no person or firm will be identified by name. The code numbers on the cover page of each questionnaire are simply there for my own benefit, enabling me to determine which questionnaires have been returned.

I realise that you have many other demands on your time, but if you could take the short time required to help me out I would be most grateful. Your help will make a major contribution to the completion of this study (and as a consequence, my Ph.D!), and I thank you for your time in advance.

Yours sincerely

Nick Lee
Centre for Sales Organisational Research
Marketing Group
Aston Business School
Aston Triangle
Birmingham B4 7ET

APPENDIX 3. PROBLEM RESOLUTION STYLE CORRELATION MATRICES

APPENDIX 3.1. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SALES MANAGER WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND ITEMS

Item No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.									
2.	.375								
3.	.468	.650							
4.	.289	.418	.331						
5.	.399	.626	.575	.375					
6.	.461	.569	.648	.378	.642				
7.	.398	.582	.587	.273	.541	.529			
8.	.524	.569	.518	.212	.595	.569	.628		
9.	.364	.599	.555	.417	.640	.652	.545	.581	
10.	.367	.588	.468	.274	.688	.521	.491	.554	.495

See Appendix 2.6 for item descriptions.

APPENDIX 3.2. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SALES MANAGER CARING ITEMS

Item No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.									
2.	.201								
3.	.273	.348							
4.	.170	.271	.360						
5.	.109	.367	.421	.214					
6.	.308	.403	.437	.347	.291				
7.	.225	.280	.363	.445	.324	.417			
8.	.129	.286	.340	.275	.196	.250	.493		
9.	.300	.460	.525	.388	.389	.476	.480	.448	
10.	.097	.091	.301	.320	.098	.202	.405	.479	.283

See Appendix 2.6 for item descriptions.

APPENDIX 3.3. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SALES MANAGER AGGRESSIVENESS ITEMS

Item No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.												
2.	.480											
3.	.318	.202										
4.	.414	.396	.175									
5.	.618	.332	.258	.461								
6.	.548	.390	.148	.616	.511							
7.	.434	.423	.115	.376	.362	.425						
8.	.522	.521	.256	.502	.518	.626	.491					
9.	.444	.339	.248	.427	.390	.433	.346	.454				
10.	.663	.469	.203	.493	.667	.547	.547	.545	.479			
11.	.638	.474	.220	.469	.692	.515	.564	.540	.473	.839		
12.	.649	.478	.096	.414	.672	.470	.450	.492	.449	.770	.741	
13.	.601	.464	.151	.415	.571	.517	.644	.537	.421	.746	.702	.712

See Appendix 2.6 for item descriptions.