



Impact of Salesmen Personality on Customer Perception and Sales

By Fariha Tabasum, Muhammad Ibrahim, Mehboob Rabbani
& Muhammad Asif

Bahauddin Zakriya University University Multan, Pakistan

Abstract- The objective of our study is to know the impact of the salesmen personality on customer perception and sales. The study considers various personality traits that influence the customer thinking's regarding product and increase its sales. The study was based on primary data which was collected from 172 respondents by means of a questionnaire. Random Sampling Technique was applied and Statistical tool like SPSS software was used to first check the reliability of questionnaire and then correlation analysis in order to reveal the results of the research. The results indicate that the personality traits of salespeople influence both customer perception and sales. As the customer attraction is main focus of every business, the findings and recommendation of this research will help the managers to develop a deeper insight of research factors into salesmen personality development and restructure their strategies to capture maximum potential customers.

Keywords: *salesperson personality, personality traits, customer's relation, customer perception and sales.*

GJMBR - E Classification : *JEL Code : M30*



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



RESEARCH | DIVERSITY | ETHICS

Impact of Salesmen Personality on Customer Perception and Sales

Fariha Tabasum^α, Muhammad Ibrahim^σ, Mehboob Rabbani^ρ & Muhammad Asif^ω

Abstract- The objective of our study is to know the impact of the salesmen personality on customer perception and sales. The study considers various personality traits that influence the customer thinking's regarding product and increase its sales. The study was based on primary data which was collected from 172 respondents by means of a questionnaire. Random Sampling Technique was applied and Statistical tool like SPSS software was used to first check the reliability of questionnaire and then correlation analysis in order to reveal the results of the research. The results indicate that the personality traits of salespeople influence both customer perception and sales. As the customer attraction is main focus of every business, the findings and recommendation of this research will help the managers to develop a deeper insight of research factors into salesmen personality development and restructure their strategies to capture maximum potential customers.

Keywords: salesperson personality, personality traits, customer's relation, customer perception and sales.

I. INTRODUCTION

Today is the age of technology almost everything can be sold and purchased at home via internet, but in this age of technology the direct selling has its own importance, in which the personality of salesmen has very critical role, especially in order to get market competitive advantages. Sales person is an individual who sells goods and services to other entities. The successfulness of a salesperson is usually measured by the amount of sales he or she is able to make during a given period and how good that person is in persuading individuals to make a purchase. If a salesperson is employed by a company, in some cases compensation can be decreased or increased based on the amount of goods or services sold (Martin, 3013). As there is main influence on the individual behavior, personality and as the complex set of unique psychological qualities influences an individual's behavior across situations and over the time (Morris 1996; Zimbardo and Weber 1994). Personality is a psychological construct, it has been defined "a set of responses that individuals perform in their environments" (Dion, et al. 1995; Kassarian 1971; Lamont 1977). These types form a model of personality traits by using a self-measured scale that represents personality of individual at a broadest level of the

abstraction. Each factor encompasses different other specific, which contain a large number of more specific traits (Gosling et al. 2003).

There is some personality characteristics related to the top sales personalities: *Modest* sales individuals are more proud and aggressive about their work and also more humble. It has been seen medium humble and modesty in 91% of the top sales personalities, which leads towards team orientation. The Second main attribute is *Conscientiousness*, that's salespersons take their job very seriously and feel high responsible for the outcomes. It has been seen very high conscientiousness in 85% of top sales personalities. They have a strong sense of duty, responsibility and reliability. The very conscious sales persons operate at direction of customers but as their account set by them. Third one is *achievement orientation*, in which sales persons focus deeply on achieving goals and measure continuous performance as compared to their goals. In this trait 84% salesmen are very highly achiever and their selling impact works as political orientation, because the goal orientation drives them to meet with key decision-makers.

The fourth one is *curiosity* in which the individuals have hunger for information. They ask frequent questions to gain more and more business information and want to know customer perceptions. Fifth level is *gregariousness* which means preference of being with people and friendliness. The results indicated that friendly salespeople always are too much close to their customers. The 30% top sales persons are much gregarious as compared to the sales people scoring low (Steve W, 2011).

The intentions mean to know how the salespeople's personality influences the buyer-seller relationship, how quality differs between the seller's customers and friends. While one may naturally expect there a difference, it is believed that the research will identify the some similarities and some differences between the friends and the customers. Where there are similarities, it follows that salespeople can treat good customers as friends. Where the differences exist, salespersons might want to more careful about the simple incorporation of the friendship image into their selling strategies.

Author ^α ^σ ^ρ : Bahauddin Zakriya University University Multan, Sub-Campus Layyah, Pakistan.

Author ^ω : Bahauddin Zakriya University, Multan, Pakistan
e-mail: ibrahimkhanleghari@yahoo.com

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

The personality of sales persons always has greater impacts in such countries where people are not highly educated such as Pakistan, because the local languages are used to influence the customers. But in order to increase sales in huge volume and build customer strong relationships, the personality of sales persons is always very much important. That's the main reason to find out personality appearance and personality traits that are the causes of to build customer perception, trust, and also to increase sales. From this concern, the following question has been shaped:

1. Which type of salesmen personalities and personality traits effects on customer perception and sales?
2. Why customer relation is too much important?

III. IMPLICATIONS

These research findings are very important for several reasons, first, in line with literature, the individual personality traits should be considered as important components in trade relationships; therefore, the managers should give more attention to the personalities of their sales force. Second, the research results also suggest that instructing salespeople to treat customers as friends may not be worthwhile. The customers may detect over familiarity and insincerity in the relationship, which might cause to withdraw from the commercial interactions. Finally, the managers, when they are guiding salespersons in their interaction with customers, it is helpful to tell them that, unlike a friendship, in the relationship of business, salespersons will have to play their most important role by contributing more and prepared for the other party to contribute less. It will happen in the environment in which the spending of in the interactions will be less enjoyable than spent the time with friends.

IV. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of our research are to know about the relationship among our research factors like Salesperson Personality, Personality Traits and Customer's Relation, which have very strong impact on our research topic, the Impact of salesmen personality on customer perception and sales. This research is carried out specifically with the following objectives.

1. To develop the theoretical frame work from literature reviewed
2. To find out the impact of customer relationship towards the customer perception and sales.
3. To find out the impact personality traits on the customer perception and sales.

4. To identify personality traits which improve the salesmen personalities?

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

From the past two decades, it has been seen a reappearing of interests among practitioners and academics in the development of long-term relationship between sellers and buyers (Foster and Cadogan 2000; Grönroos 1994; Parsons 2002). The relationship quality is a key subject of research. The researchers have started to investigate the different types of factors of the failure or success in relationship between the exchanges partners both seller characteristics and the quality of interactions between buyers and sellers (Crosby et al. 1990; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Parsons 2002), these determinants have not considered as jointly. The role of salespeople in service organizations, mainly long-term relational nature, has expected very limited attention.

The salespeople who are involved in relationship marketing are relationship managers. The quality of relationships between the customers and sales persons that calculates the probability of continued interchange (Crosby et al. 1990). The customer-oriented behaviors by salespersons help to create the good-quality buyer-seller relationship (Williams and Atta way 1996). Therefore, appointing the right sales person for the management of specific business relationships is very critical for the businesses.

The individual personality traits are very important factors of buyer-seller relationship (Dion et al. 1995). Since the buyer-seller relationships mostly are required frequent negotiations on price, quantity, delivery, other terms, and product specifications, this process may require cooperation among needs and conflicting interests. So, the personality of a salesperson affects in managing the relationship, thus influencing a customer's perceptions about the quality of service provided by salesperson. The literature about the personality shows that purchasing behavior is linked with individual personality traits and those results in the shape of a better and longer-term relationship (Barrick and Mount 1991; Dion et al. 1995; Lamont 1977). The first objective of the research is to investigate the quality of buyer-seller relationships from the seller's perspective and to address the question — what personality traits of a sales person influence the quality of buyer-seller relationships?

Furthermore, from a personal selling, the literature proposes the good customer relationships, in which clients and salespeople interact frequently, and they exchange information, which helps to develop close friendships (e.g., Grayson 2007; Price and Arnould 1999; Swan et al. 2001). The good and friendly relationships between sales persons and clients are frequently unquestioned phenomena, following the thoughts that "overall, frequency of interactions and

outcomes dependency, whatever the setting, promotes the friendships” (Price and Arnould, 1999). Salespersons are encouraged to treat the customers like their best friends. There are several approaches for study of personality; the most commonly employed is the trait theory (Pederson et al. 1988). According to this theory, there are many identifiable characteristics to define a person (Dion et al. 1995; Solomon 1992). The most famous examples of such traits are whether a person is an extrovert or an introvert, whether he or she initially uses thoughts or emotions in solving the problem.

The studies of trait theory to explore the salespersons’ personalities have argued that a salesperson’s performance can be considered as a functional trait, which means that “sales success may be a result of degree to which an individual possessed certain personality traits” (Dion et al. 1995). Accordingly to (Barrick and Mount, 1991) that different personality types may expect variations in the performance of job among different occupations. There is a classification which is widely accepted known as five-factor personality classification (Barrick and Mount 1991 and 1993; Digman 1990). This Big Five framework argues that many individual differences in human personality are classified in terms of five domains (Gosling et al. 2003; John and Srivastava 1999; McCrae et al. 1998). It has been used in theoretical frameworks, with a variety of samples and instruments (including samples from diverse cultures) with ratings, obtained from several different sources (Barrick and Mount 1993; Barrick et al. 2002; Digman 1990; McCrae and Costa 1985; Norman 1963).

The Big Five factors keep different meanings. Extraversion is known by being sociable, assertive, talkative, and active (McCrae and Costa 1985; Norman

1963). Agreeableness is can be defined as flexible, trusting, forgiving, soft-hearted, good-natured, cooperative and tolerant (Guilford and Zimmerman 1949; McCrae and Costa 1985). Conscientiousness is described by trustworthiness, as well as being careful, thorough, responsible, organized, resourceful, hardworking, achievement-oriented and persistent (Norman 1963). Openness to experience can be characterized as curious, original, broad-minded, imaginative, cultured, intelligent, and artistically sensitive (Digman 1990; Norman 1963). Emotional (in) stability (viewed from the negative pole) is known as being tense, angry, embarrassed, worried, anxious insecure, depressed, and nervous (Barrick and Mount 1991).

Salespersons’ personality traits are considered as important factors in buyer-seller relationships. These findings have been based on following assumptions: 1-certain personality traits have been seen as more suited to a sales process than to others (Barrick and Mount 1991; Dion et al. 1995; Lamont and Lundstrom 1977). 2-similarities in seller/buyer personalities lead to positive outcome in sales (Barrick and Mount 1991; Crosby et al. 1990; Dion et al. 1995; Gosling et al. 2003). Our research, therefore, includes measure of Big Five personality domains, used to examine the effect of personality on the quality of salespeople’s relationships with their friends and customers.

All salespeople are not successful, given the same sales tools, level of education, and propensity to work. Why do some salespersons succeed where others fail? Is one much better suited to sell the product because of one’s background? Is one charming or luckier? The evidence suggested that the personalities of these truly great salespeople play a critical role in determining their success.

VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

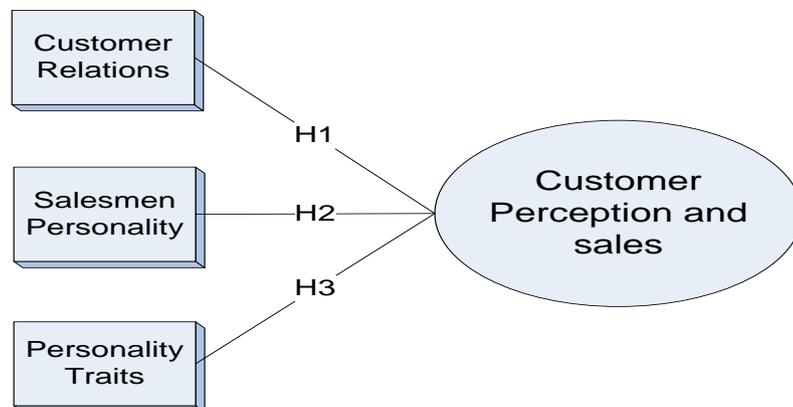


Figure 1: the conceptual model

Theoretical frame work shows the relationship between dependent and independent variables which have been used in this research. These are Customer relations, Salesmen personality and Personal traits are considered as the independent variables while the customer perception and sales work as dependent variable. This model also suggests the hypothesis formulation as well.

Hypothesis Development

Fallowing Hypothesis are developed from literature

H1: *Customer relationship has positive impact on consumer perception and sales.*

H2: *Salesmen personality has positive impact on consumer perception and sales.*

H3: *Personality traits have positive impact on consumer perception and sales.*

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a) Measures

The research is based on primary data. To fulfill this need a questionnaire was developed having at least 5 questions on each variable. It was ensured to all respondents that their information would be kept confidential. In this questionnaire Likert Scale is used with choices of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

b) Sample

The samples were drawn the population of district Layyah and Dera Ghazi Khan. This research is consisting of hypotheses testing to investigate the relationships among variables like Salesperson Personality, Personality Traits, Customer’s Relation, Customer Perception and Sales. An introduction session was carried out regarding to research before providing questionnaire to each respondent. The collected data was assumed to be bias free from side of respondents to avoid any deviation in findings. The questionnaire was filled by 200 respondents for both sexes and profession groups. After imputing missing values, the final sample was composed of 172 useable responses. A simple random sampling technique was used in this research in order to ensure that equal opportunity was given to all potential respondents.

c) Validity and reliability

The questionnaire is checked for validity and reliability if it is valid then can be used for further research. In case of our research the value of chron batch alpha was 0.88 which is exceeded than thresholds. We evaluated total 30 questions of five independent and one dependent variable by using SPSS software. Hence gender wise responses received are as follow in table No.01 and Profession wise distribution in table No. 02.

Table 1: Gender wise Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	140	81	81
Female	32	19	19
Total	172	100.00	100.00

Table 2: Profession wise Distribution

Profession	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
University students	72	41.8	41.8
Business people	30	17.4	17.4
Private sector	30	17.4	17.4
Public sector	20	11.6	11.6
House wife	20	11.6	11.6
Total	172	100.00	100.00

VIII. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

a) Analysis

A technology acceptance model was developed to assess the proposed relationship among factors like Salesperson Personality, Personality Traits, Customer’s Relation, Customer Perception and Sales. For this purpose to check the relationship among above said factors we draw the correlation analysis which is shown in table 5 and details are given below.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis among the variables

	CR	SP	PT	CPS
Pearson Correlation	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
Pearson Correlation	0.667(**)	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
Pearson Correlation	0.410(**)	0.567(**)	0.495(**)	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

a) Correlation Analysis

The above given table 3 shows the correlation analysis among variables like Salesperson Personality, Personality Traits, Customer’s Relation, Customer Perception and Sales. The value of significance ranges from 0.05 to 0.01. Following table also shows formulation of hypothesis.

H1: Customer relationship has positive impact on consumer perception and sales.

The relationship between customer relationship and customer perception and sales is positive and significant with values of (.410(**), P=.000). So there exists significant positive relationship between customer relationship and customer perception and sales. This result clearly indicates that a strong customer relationship have a positive impact on customer perception as well as sales.

H2: Salesmen personality has positive impact on consumer perception and sales.

The value (.567(**), P=.000) shows the positive and significant relationship between salesmen personality and consumer perception and sales. This result shows that customer perception and sales of specific product or service can be enhanced with the attractive personality of salesmen.

H3: Personality traits have positive impact on consumer perception and sales.

Personality traits are connected with the values of (.495(**), P=.000) with the customer perception and sales. Hence there exists significant positive relationship between them.

IX. LIMITATIONS

Like all the researches, this study has many limitations; the first limitation may be the psychometric cost of short measures. A brief measure is the limitation of being unable to properly measure the individual aspect of multi-faceted construct (Gosling et al. 2003). There search is based on convenience sample of only 172 male and female respondents living at Layyah and Dera Ghazi Khan having different profession groups and

gender. The generalizability of results would depend on future research including age groups, income level, culture and geographic wise research.

X. CONCLUSION

This research has described the relationships among salesperson personality traits, Salesperson Personality and Customer’s Relation with Customer Perception and Sales. Managers can take lots of benefits from this correlation among these variables, which is positively significant. The personality tests may be beneficial in the selection of salespeople, in order to, if management desires to make distinctions among individuals. While, the less represented personality dimensions may be effective in a sales and other variables can be help full in understanding sales performance, especially this research, concentrated on Impact of salesmen personality on customer perception and sales. Moreover, the research found that the salesperson’s agreeableness is the most significant and has the great effect on all other dimensions of the quality of relationship with customers. These findings suggest that managers can stress the importance of agreeableness during recruiting the salespersons. The research results also reveal that these traits do not affect the relationship quality with friends in the same way as they do relationships with customers.

XI. FUTURE RESEARCH

For the purpose of future, this research would suggest that many personality attributes of salesmen personality are necessary. The research suggests that similar researches will find many more traits of personalities and other factors those are important for a sale person. Furthermore, the research population is only Layyah and D.G khan based. Future researchers expand the research to find other personality factors helpful for sales.

REFERENCES RÉFÉRENCES REFERENCIAS

1. Barrick, Murray R., Stewart, Greg L., and Piotrowski, Mike (2002), "Personality and job performance: Test

- of the mediating effects of motivation among sales representatives", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 43-51.
2. Crosby, Lawrence A., Evans, Kenneth R., and Cowles, Deborah (1990), "Relationship Quality in Services Selling: An Interpersonal Influence Perspective", *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (3), 68-81.
 3. Dion, Paul, Easterling, Debbie, and Miller, Shirley Jo (1995), "What Is Really Necessary in Successful Buyer/Seller Relationships?" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 24, 1-9.
 4. Foster, Brian D. and Cadogan, John W. (2000), "Relationship selling and customer loyalty: An empirical investigation", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 18 (4), 185-99.
 5. Gosling, Samuel D., Rentfrow, Peter J., and Swann, William B. (2003), "A very brief measure of the Big-Five personality domains", *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37, 504-28.
 6. Grönroos, Christian (1994), "From Marketing Mix to Relationship Marketing: Towards a Paradigm Shift in Marketing", *Management Decision*, 32 (2), 4-20.
 7. John, Oliver P. and Srivastava, Sanjay (1999), "The Big Five trait taxonomie", in *Handbook of personality: Theory and research*, L. A. Pervin and O. P. John, eds. New York: Guilford.
 8. Kassarian, Harold H. (1971), "Personality and Consumer Behavior: A Review", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 8 (4), 409-18.
 9. Lamont, Lawrence M. and Lundstrom, William J. (1977), "Identifying Successful Industrial Salesmen by Personality and Personal Characteristics", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14, 517- 29.
 10. Pederson, Carlton A., Wright, Milburn D., and Weitz, Barton A. (1988), *Selling: Principles and Methods*. Homewood: Irwin.
 11. Price, Linda L. and Arnould, Eric J. (1999), "Commercial Friendships: Service Provider-Client Relationships in Context", *Journal of Marketing*, 63 (4), 38-56.
 12. McCrae, Robert R. and Costa, Paul T. (1985), "Updating Norman's adequate taxonomy: Intelligence and personality dimensions in natural language and in questionnaires", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 710-21.
 13. Morgan, Robert M. and Hunt, Shelby D. (1994), "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (3), 20-38.
 14. Morris, Charles G. (1996), *Psychology - An Introduction*, 9th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.
 15. Martin, Steve W. (n.d.). the seven personality traits. Retrieved November05, 2013, from <http://blogs.hbr.org/2011/06/the-seven-personality-traits-o/>
 16. Solomon, Michael R. (1992), *Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having, and Being*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
 17. Steve W, M. (2011, june 27). *seven personality traits for salespeople*. Retrieved November 8, 2013, from Harvard Business Review: <http://blogs.hbr.org/2011/06/the-seven-personality-traits-o/>
 18. Swan, John E., Goodwin, Cathy, Mayo, Michael A., and Richardsson, Lynne D. (2001), "Customer Identities: Customers as Commercial Friends, Customer Coworkers or Business Acquaintances", *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 21 (1), 29-37.
 19. Williams, Michael R. and Attaway, Jill S. (1996), "Exploring salesperson's customer orientation as a mediator organizational culture's influence on buyer-seller relationships", *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 16 (4), 33-52.
 20. Zimbardo, Philip G. and Weber, Ann L. (1994), *Psychology*. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

GLOBAL JOURNALS INC. (US) GUIDELINES HANDBOOK 2014

WWW.GLOBALJOURNALS.ORG