TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER? UNPACKING PERSISTENCE AND EXAMINING ITS IMPACT ON SALESPERSON PERFORMANCE

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Nawar Naim Chaker
August 2016

Copyright © 2016 by Nawar Naim Chaker

All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

For my beloved parents, Mohammed Naim Chaker and Kouther Aldaieh, who raised me when I was young and instilled in me the value of education early on. I am extremely grateful for all of their love and support, for without them I would not be here. My accomplishments are also my parents' accomplishments. There will always be a special place in my heart for them.

Also, for my lovely wife, Marwa. You have always believed in me and been extremely patient, caring, and supportive. You have been, and continue to be, by my side providing me with love, joy, and happiness. Lastly, for my beautiful daughters, Kouther and Rayanne (and a third one on the way). You are the cornerstones of my inspiration and motivation. I love you all from the bottom of my heart.

ACKNOWLDGEMENTS

Going through a Ph.D. program is not possible without the support and encouragement of others. Thus, I would like to thank and express my sincere gratitude to many people for all of their help along the way. First and foremost, I want to thank God for everything and for blessing me with the opportunity to embark on such a journey. Verily, without God nothing is possible and only with His will am I able to accomplish anything in life.

I must begin by expressing my utmost gratitude to my dissertation co-chairs, Dr. Charles Noble and Dr. Alex Zablah, for their direction and support. A special heartfelt thanks goes to Dr. Alex Zablah, who provided me with endless guidance and mentoring. He has been a wonderful role model, colleague, and friend. I am very happy that he decided to come to the University of Tennessee and that I had the privilege to work with him. He is truly a remarkable person. I will forever be in your debt. I would also like to deeply thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Mark Moon and Dr. Timothy Munyon. I really appreciate all of your input, expertise, and encouragement.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the other faculty in the Marketing and Supply Chain Department. Thank you for believing and investing in me. I especially want to thank Dr. David Schumann for his mentoring, guidance, and wisdom. He has always been there to encourage me, as he has truly been selfless. I also want to thank Dr. Ernest Cadotte, who was really encouraging during my first year and went “above and beyond” in an attempt to support me during some personal issues I was dealing with at that time. In fact, the entire department was exemplary in their support during this really difficult time. I will forever be grateful for everything they did for me. I have truly been blessed to be part of the UT family and I thoroughly enjoyed my time here. This is certainly a wonderful department.

I would be remiss if I did not also recognize the support and help from my fellow students. Whether it was going to class, or just asking them for general advice, they were always there to contribute to my educational development. While I did not have anyone in my particular cohort, the other students always made it a point to include me as part of their "cohorts." It was truly a wonderful experience to go through the program with such a remarkable group of individuals. I want to especially thank LaDonna Thornton for her support and unwavering encouragement during my first year in the program. She really took a personal interest in guiding me, and was there to aid me during a difficult time. I also want to thank Jason Strickling, who was my "unofficial" cohort. Despite being in a different department, he was always available to be a sounding board and was always willing to give a lending hand.

I want to also acknowledge my family. My brother (Salem) and sisters (Zakeih, Isra, Dua, Ala'a, and Roudah) were always there to make me laugh and smile. They provided me with wonderful encouragement and always made a deliberate attempt to check in on me. They truly believed in me and provided me with steadfast support. Also, watching them succeed only provided me with inspiration and dedication. I am very proud to have such amazing siblings.

Lastly, I want to thank the sponsoring firm for providing me with the data to conduct this research. They have been a "true partner" the entire time, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such a great company.

ABSTRACT

Common wisdom suggests that persistence is a critical determinant of sales performance and, consequently, salespeople are often advised "don't take no for an answer." While the importance of persistence to sales success is seemingly unquestioned (albeit unexamined in the literature), anecdotal evidence suggests that the incremental business generated through salesperson persistence may be tempered – if not overshadowed – by its accompanying costs (e.g., time spent pursuing hesitant prospects). The goal of this research is thus to explore the impact of persistence on salesperson performance. Grounded in social influence theory, this study views sales persistence as a combination of influence tactics salespeople employ in order to shape the thoughts, feelings, and actions of prospects who are hesitant to commit to the firm. To offer insight into the sales performance implications of persistence, this dissertation builds on a mixed methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative insight. Study one builds on a grounded theory approach and in-depth interviews with professional salespeople to explore the nature of salesperson persistence behaviors. Study two leverages the insights gleaned from the qualitative work, survey data provided by salespeople and sales managers, and archival performance data to quantify the impact of persistence on sales performance and to elucidate the process through which persistence exerts its effects. Results show that only nurture-focused persistence has a positive effect on both prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency. Furthermore, prospecting efficiency is found to directly contribute to sales performance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - DEFINING THE PROBLEM 1
Introduction 1
Research Purpose 5
Research Objectives 5
Research Questions 5
Theory 6
Persistence 6
Social Influence Theory 9
Political Skill 12
Overview of Research Approach 14
Study One: Grounded Theory Using Individual Interviews 15
Study Two: Field Survey with Archival Performance Metrics 16
Contributions of this Research 17
Organization of this Dissertation 18

CHAPTER TWO – QUALITATIVE STUDY 20
Study Overview 20
The Role of Extant Literature 22
Data Collection 23
Data Analyses 28
Research Trustworthiness 31
Findings 32
Persistence as a Social Influence Process 34
Nurture-Focused Persistence 36
Maintain Contact 38
Value-Adding Follow-Up 39
Give Them Space 41
Closure-Focused Persistence 42
Probe Resistance 44
Reframe the Offer 45
Attempt Close 46
Threaten Break-Up 47
Salesperson Specific Skill 49
Social Astuteness 50
Interpersonal Influence 52
Networking Ability 53
Apparent Sincerity 54
Salesperson Persistence Conditions 55
Goal Attainment 55
Expected Pay-Off 56
Salesperson Persistence Consequences 57
Salesperson Productivity 57
Salesperson Performance 58
Summary of Qualitative Findings 60

CHAPTER THREE - LITERATURE REVIEW 61
Part One: Literature Review and Theoretical Background 61
Persistence 61
Significance of Persistence 61
What is Persistence? 64
Behavioral Persistence 65
Persistence Process 101
Persistence as a Trait 102
Macro-level Persistence 103
Measuring Persistence 104
Persistence is Not Always Positive 106
Related Constructs 107
Grit 107
Hardiness 110
Perseverance 112
Resilience 114
Tenacity 117
Conclusions Based on the Persistence Literature 118
A Socio-Political Influence Perspective 120
Social Influence Theory 120
Social Influence in Sales 126
Political Skill 128
Dimensions of Political Skill 131
Political Skill as a Distinct Social Effectiveness Construct 133
Extant Political Skill Research 134
Political Skill in Sales 136
Adaptive Selling 137
Influence Tactics 145
Influence Tactics in Sales and Marketing 148
Sales-specific Influence Tactics 152
Part Two: Conceptual Model and Hypothesis Development 156
The Effect of Persistence on Prospecting Productivity 156
Sales Performance 156
Sales Productivity – Prospecting Effectiveness and Prospecting Efficiency 160
The Influence of Nurture-Focused Persistence on Prospecting Effectiveness and Efficiency 161
The Influence of Closure-Focused Persistence on Prospecting Effectiveness and Efficiency 164
The Moderating Effect of Political Skill 167
CHAPTER FOUR – STUDY TWO RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 170
Study Overview 170
Sampling Plan 172
Survey Administration 174
Exploratory Pre-Test 175
Pre-Test 1 176
Pre-Test 2 176

Main Field Survey 176
Survey Biases 177
Measures and Measure Development 179
Sales Performance 180
Nurture-focused Persistence 181
Maintain Contact 181
Value-Adding Follow-Up 182
Give Them Space 182
Closure-focused Persistence 182
Probe Resistance 183
Reframe Offer 183
Attempt Close 183
Threaten-Break Up 184
Prospecting Effectiveness 184
Prospecting Efficiency 184
Political Skill 185
Controls 185
Data Analysis 186
Commentary on CB-SEM and PLS-SEM 187

CHAPTER FIVE – STUDY TWO RESULTS 190
Measure Development Pre-Tests 190
Pre-Test 1 190
Stage 1: Validation of the Reflective Measures using the Churchill (1979) Approach .. 195
Stage 2: Validation of the Formative Persistence Constructs using PLS 202
Pre-Test 2 209
Main Study 221
Sample Characteristics 221
Note on Main Study Measurement Items 224
Measurement Model 227
Assessment of Common Method Bias 235
Assessment of Nonresponse Bias 236
Structural Model 237
Dimensions of Persistence Strategies 237
Control Variables 239
Hypothesis Testing 239
Post-Hoc Analyses 243
Direct Effects Model 244
Alternate Interaction: Political Skill x Salesperson Productivity 246
Political Skill Dimensions 246

CHAPTER SIX – DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS 253
Discussion 253
Behavioral Manifestations of Salesperson Persistence 254
Nurture-Focused Persistence and Prospecting Productivity 255
Closure-Focused Persistence and Prospecting Productivity 258
Prospecting Productivity and Sales Performance 262
Moderating Effect of Political Skill 264

Implications 267
Theoretical 267
Managerial 269
Limitations and Future Research 272
Conclusion 275
REFERENCES 277
APPENDICES 334
Appendix A – Salesperson Persistence Interview Guide 335
Appendix B – Measurement Items 337
VITA 343

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - List of Qualitative Study Participants 25
Table 2 - Select Research on Persistence 66
Table 3 - Persistence Related Constructs 108
Table 4 - Social Influence Strategies in the Face of Resistance 124
Table 5 - Construct Definitions 158
Table 6 - Summary of Hypotheses 171
Table 7 - Pre-Test 1 Correlation Matrix (N = 100) 192
Table 8 - Pre-Test 1 Assessment of Measurement Quality 196
Table 9 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis Loadings 198
Table 10 - Assessment of Multicollinearity of Formative Constructs 206
Table 11 - Pre-Test 1 Measures of Quality Using PLS 208
Table 12 - Pre-Test 1 Construct Loadings using PLS-SEM 210
Table 13 - Pre-Test 2 Correlation Matrix (N = 43) 216
Table 14 - Pre-Test 2 Assessment of Measurement Quality 218
Table 15 - Measurement Items Retained on Pre-Test 2 Analysis 219
Table 16 - List of Final Measurement Items 222
Table 17 - Main Study Correlation Matrix (N = 172) 225
Table 18 - Main Study Measurement Model Fit 228
Table 19 - Main Study Confirmatory Factor Analysis Factor Loadings 229
Table 20 - Main Study Assessment of Measurement Quality 234
Table 21 - Results of Structural Equation Analyses 241
Table 22 - Results of Post-Hoc Analyses 245
Table 23 - Results of Post-Hoc Analyses (Political Skill Dimensions) 248

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Conceptual Model 7
Figure 2 - Sample Open Coding Process for Probe Resistance 30
Figure 3 - Salesperson Persistence Model 33
Figure 4 - Salesperson Persistence Tactics 35
Figure 5 - Sales Persistence Approaches 154
Figure 6 - Full Model 157
Figure 7 - First Order Reflective, Second Order Formative Persistence Constructs 193
Figure 8 - Higher Order Formative Validation for Nurture-Focused Persistence 203
Figure 9 - Higher Order Formative Validation for Closure-Focused Persistence 204
Figure 10 - Structural Model Hypotheses Results 238

CHAPTER ONE - DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Persistence is deeply sewn into the fabric of Western society. In fact, America was founded and built on the principle that hard work and persistent pursuit of goals leads to success, happiness, and privilege (Miller and Wrosch 2007). The admiration of persistence in society is further stressed by the virtue, glorification, and rewards given to those who persist. Moreover, within organizations, persistence is highly desirable (Goltz 1999; Sandelands, Brockner, and Glynn 1988). Broadly speaking, persistence is the extent of continued goal pursuit in the face of discrepancies. More specifically, persistence involves achieving goals when "smooth action toward goal attainment is impeded in some manner" (Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999). One particular setting in which persistence is especially relevant is sales.

Persistence plays a vital role in the sales process. Common wisdom among managers and salespeople is that persistence leads to success. Many popular press books, publications, and corporate training programs stress the necessity of persistence in sales. For instance, Marvin Montgomery of the *Smart Business* magazine stresses: "in selling, it's the pleasantly persistent salesperson who succeeds" (Montgomery 2012). As another example, the *Fearless Selling* training program by Kelley Robertson emphasizes, "if you want to achieve long-term success in sales you MUST be persistent… persistence means not allowing the first few no's to prevent you from pursuing high-value, legitimate sales opportunities" (http://fearless-selling.ca/9-essential-skills/). Indeed, managers have long considered persistence an important characteristic for salespeople. A survey of 215 sales managers across diverse industries revealed that persistence was the fourth-highest rated factor related to salesperson success, after listening skills, follow-up skills, and the ability to adapt sales style from situation to situation (Marshall, Goebel, and

Moncrief 2003). Likewise, Keck, Leigh, and Lollar (1995) conducted a survey that showed that persistence was the third-highest ranked critical success factor associated with sales performance in multi-line insurance agency sales.

The relevance of persistence in a sales setting is further evident when taking into consideration the inherent nature of the sales function. Specifically, salespeople are tasked with and compensated for acquiring new business. As such, it can be inferred that the primary goal for salespeople is to generate business (Brown, Cron, and Slocum Jr. 1997; Fang, Palmatier, and Evans 2004). Hence, salespeople may develop plans to pursue sales goals, where constant persistence in implementing those plans is a requirement for successful goal attainment (Zhang, Chan, and Guan 2013). However, it is seldom that salespeople are automatically given new business, and, as such, have to rely on persuading prospects and customers. Accordingly, the process of prospecting involves the search for new and potential customers (Jolson and Wotruba 1992). As such, prospecting is at the core of personal selling, as it is the first step in the selling process (Dubinsky 1981; Moncrief and Marshall 2005). Given its importance to sales success, salespeople are often advised, "if at first you don't succeed, try try again," and "don't take no for an answer." In fact, the implicit understanding among salespeople is that it will take several "no's" before hearing a "yes." This is further exacerbated when prospects are hesitant. Thus, the role of persistence is more noteworthy in instances (e.g., sales) where the path to goal attainment is "paved with snags and barriers" (Fox and Hoffman 2002).

Notwithstanding, the challenge for salespeople is that they have to wisely choose which prospects to heavily pursue, and which ones to abandon. As a result, a sense of inherent tension arises for salespeople with regards to persistence. First, salespeople have limited time and resources in which they can pursue prospects (Ahearne, Srinivasan, and Weinstein 2004; Wilson

and Hunt 2011). Here, incremental business that may be generated by salesperson persistence may be tempered or overshadowed by its accompanying costs (e.g., time spent pursuing hesitant prospects). Second, salespeople have to be cognizant of their persistence behavior in order to not annoy or irritate prospects, which may be a sure way to deter future business. Taken together, these issues can have serious repercussions on salesperson performance, ultimately impacting firm success.

Salespeople are typically empowered to determine whether to persist or desist in their pursuit of a particular prospect. Correctly determining whether to pursue or abandon a prospect is particularly challenging for salespeople because prospective customers enact resistance or object to sales offers when they (1) truly want a seller to "go away," (2) as a negotiating tactic aimed at achieving a better deal from a seller, or (3) when they want to encourage continued conversations with a particular seller while keeping their sourcing options open (Giunipero and Handfield 2004). In addition to the time allocation issue associated with persistence and given potential differences in the motivation underlying a prospective customer's resistance, striking the right balance between being persistent or over-persistent is a difficult proposition for most salespeople.

In reviewing the sales literature and the persistence literature, it is surprising that marketing scholars have remained rather silent about this crucial phenomenon. Given the prevalence and significance of persistence for individuals, society, and business, persistence and persistent behaviors remain rather underexplored (Fischer, Otnes, and Tuncay 2007). This is especially striking in sales, where there is an implicit prima facie linkage between persistence and sales outcomes (e.g., salesperson performance). Thus, within a sales context, it is astonishing that the phenomenon of persistence has been relatively neglected. In fact, an extensive review of

the literature revealed that, within the sales domain, only three articles have considered the role of persistence, all of which employ the label of tenacity (Avila and Fern 1986; Keck et al. 1995; Marshall et al. 2003). Of these articles, only Avila and Fern (1986) empirically examine tenacity. In a study of 197 salespeople in the computer manufacturing industry, these authors find that tenacity was only positively and significantly related to the quota criterion for salespeople that worked for organizations that offered small-scale systems.

It is possible that the reason why persistence has not received more attention in the marketing and sales literature is that its effects on performance outcomes are expected to be highly intuitive. To the extent this is the case, such an assumption ignores the key trade-offs salespeople face when deciding whether and how to persist. This dissertation suggests that there is more than one way for a salesperson to persist – namely, nurture-focused persistence (the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at establishing foundation for future exchange) and closure-focused persistence (the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at bringing the sales process to a conclusion). Moreover, the dissertation posits that these persistence behaviors have different and countervailing effects on salesperson productivity, and, ultimately, salesperson performance. Furthermore, this research proposes that certain salespeople possess skills (e.g., political skill) that allow them to more appropriately and successfully persist with hesitant prospects.

Given that persistence is a critical factor thought to contribute to salesperson performance and is part of the standard indoctrination of salespeople, there remains much to be learned about the nuances and implications of salesperson persistence. Moreover, it is especially important to explore given the tension that salespeople face with regards to effectively balancing their

resources (e.g., time) and gauging their persistence efforts. Hence, it would seem that it is of critical importance and noteworthy for scholars to turn their attention to persistence and the role it plays in the sales world.

Research Purpose

Research Objectives

This dissertation explores the phenomenon of salesperson persistence in a business-to-business setting. The main purpose of this study is to examine and discover insights on the nature of persistence and persistent behaviors in a sales context. Additionally, this research aims to offer insight regarding the net impact of persistence on salesperson performance. Furthermore, it aims to establish a link between different persistence behaviors salespeople enact when faced with resistance from prospective customers, and salesperson productivity (i.e., prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency). Finally, the research explores the role of salesperson political skill (the ability to influence others by effectively understanding them and using this knowledge in such a way to enrich personal and organizational goals) as a critical moderator of the effects of salesperson persistence behaviors on salesperson productivity. The ultimate goal of this research is thus to provide scholars with a deeper understanding of persistence in a sales setting, while also providing managers with prescriptive guidelines in the selection, coaching, and training of salespeople with regards to persistence.

Research Questions

The over-arching question that drives this research is “what is the role of persistence in sales, and what are its effects on performance?” More specifically, this dissertation is guided by the following research questions:

1) How does salesperson persistence manifest behaviorally?
2) Do persistence behaviors differ in their effects on salesperson effectiveness and efficiency, and, by extension, sales performance?
3) To what extent are the effects of persistence contingent on salesperson abilities?

Theory

In order to address the research questions, this dissertation builds on research on persistence, social influence theory, and political skill. Taken together, research and theory within these three literature streams (which are previewed next) provide the impetus for the development of the conceptual model and study hypotheses. The proposed conceptual model of this study is depicted in Figure 1.

Persistence

Persistence is a global phenomenon that has been studied in numerous disciplines, including education (Witkow, Huynh, and Fuligni 2015; Zhang et al. 2013), psychology (Cupach et al. 2011; Walton et al. 2012), marketing (Fischer et al. 2007; Gal and McShane 2012), management (Bowles and Flynn 2010; Patel and Thatcher 2014), sport science (Le Foll, Rascle, and Higgins 2006; Martin-Krumm et al. 2003), and economics (Barañano and Moral 2013; Benhabib, Perli, and Sakellaris 2006). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines persistence as "firm or obstinate continuance in a course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition." Meanwhile, in the literature, persistence has been viewed in different ways. One particular view is that persistence encompasses behavior directed towards achieving a goal (Cheema and Bagchi 2011; Koo and Fishbach 2012; Seo, Barrett, and Bartunek 2004). Others have described persistence as a process (Conlon 1980; Meier and Albrecht 2003). Conversely, some researchers

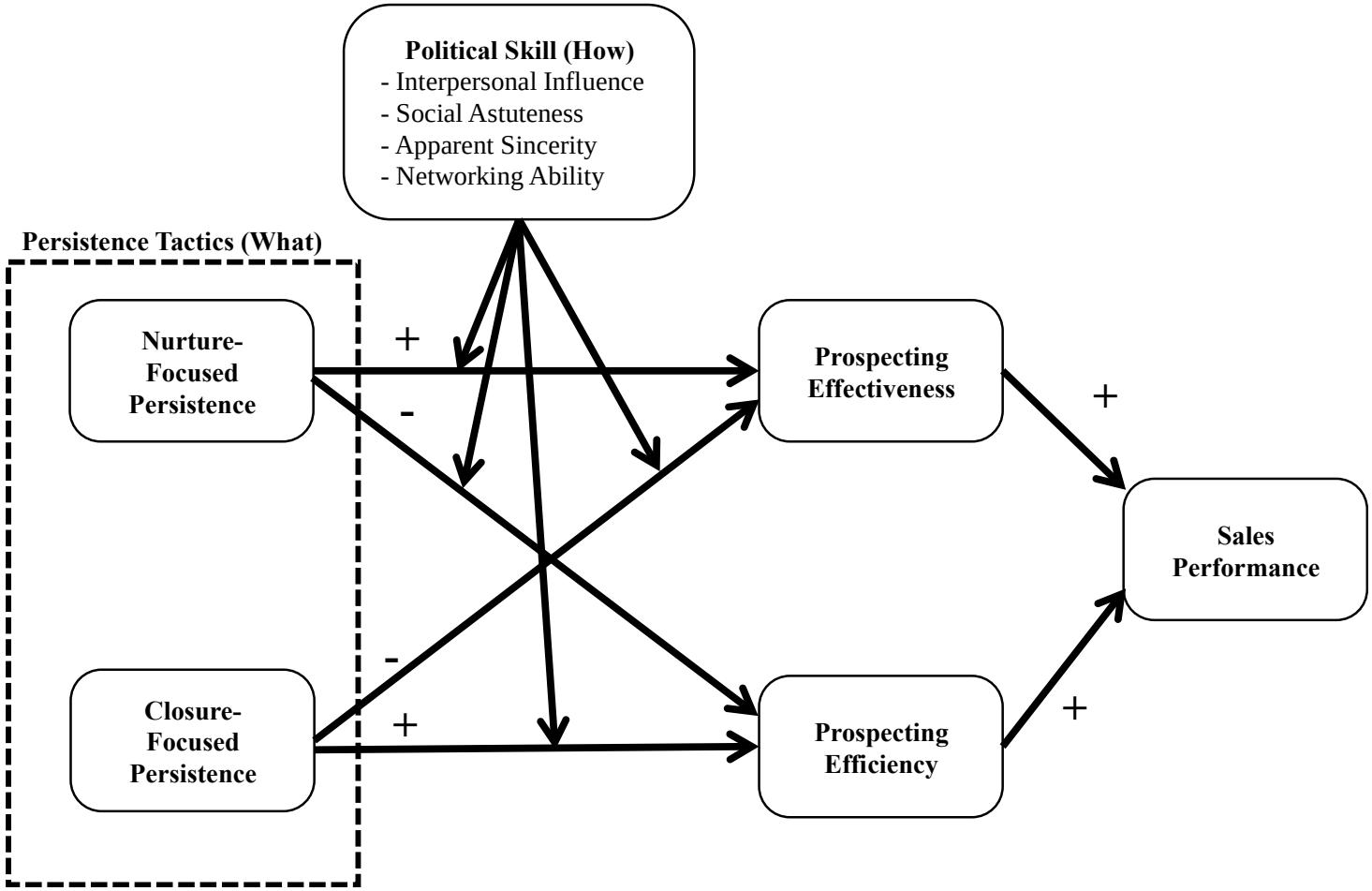


Figure 1 - Conceptual Model

treat persistence as a human trait, which is part of the temperament of an individual (Cloninger et al. 2011; Garcia, Kerekes, and Archer 2012; Gusnard et al. 2003). Collectively, researchers have conceptualized persistence as a behavior, trait, or process.

In a sales context, most salespeople are assumed to naturally possess some level of persistence in their genetic make-up, and, as such, it may not be an adequate and easily isolated indicator of salesperson performance. Instead, for salespeople, it is persistence behavior in response to prospect hesitation that may be more meaningful and predictive of salesperson performance. In the literature, persistence is construed as a behavior and is defined as the extent of pursuing goals when "smooth action toward goal attainment is impeded in some manner" (Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999). For the purposes of this dissertation, persistence is defined as the extent to which salespeople continue pursuit of a prospect in the face of passive or active resistance from the prospect. A behavioral conceptualization of persistence is perhaps the most applicable in a sales context because it is likely that most salespeople are inherently persistent. Additionally, it is expected that salespeople more likely differ in their persistence behaviors, especially since salespeople are often advised to persist but not necessarily told how to do so. As such, persistence is conceptualized herein as a behavior in response to challenges encountered in the salesperson's environment.

This study explores the different persistence behaviors salespeople enact in the face of prospective customers' resistance and, ultimately, their effect on sales performance. Specifically, this study posits that salespeople engage in two basic types of persistence behaviors when pursuing prospects: 1) nurture-focused and 2) closure-focused. Nurture-focused persistence is defined as the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at establishing a foundation for future exchange with the

prospect. Meanwhile, closure-focused persistence is defined as the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at bringing the sales process to a conclusion. It is important to emphasize that this study does not suggest that these behaviors are at opposite sides of the spectrum, nor are they mutually exclusive. Instead, salespeople may enact either of these types of behaviors and, in some cases, may enact both of them at the same time.

While most of the literature has highlighted persistence in a positive light, there are several scholars who have acknowledged a "dark-side" to persistence (Cloninger et al. 2011; Garcia et al. 2012; Heckhausen and Schulz 1995; Holland and Shepherd 2013; Klinger 1975; McFarlin, Baumeister, and Blascovich 1984; McGrath 1999; Sandelands et al. 1988; Wrosch et al. 2003). These scholars have realized that the admirable "press on" aspect of persistence may have counterbalancing effects on desired outcomes, especially in scenarios where there are serious obstacles to goal attainment (Miller and Wrosch 2007; Wrosch et al. 2003). It can be inferred from this line of research that persistence is a "double-edged" sword. Accordingly, this dissertation takes the stance that persistence should be viewed as neither good nor bad, and, instead, its significance is a function of the complex set of both internal and external processes that the individual faces in his or her environment (Cloninger et al. 2011). In other words, this dissertation takes more of a balanced approach in examining persistence, as it is anticipated that there are both positive and negative consequences that, in tandem, counteract to a desired net effect.

Social Influence Theory

Broadly speaking, social influence is the "process whereby people directly or indirectly influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others" (Turner 1991, p. 1). Specifically, the

study of social influence includes the methods, context, and characteristics of the influence attempt and the influencer (Ferris et al. 2002a; Rashotte 2009). At the root of social influence is the notion that an influencer attempts to use appropriate tactics in order to influence a target in a desired direction (Barrick, Shaffer, and DeGrassi 2009). Accordingly, one of the primary reasons individuals employ social influence is so that they may obtain an immediate social or material gain (Brouer et al. 2015; Geen 1991). Specifically, an individual may exercise social influence to persuade or force another individual to change their attitude and behavior. This is highly pertinent in the context of sales, where a salesperson is tasked with the responsibility of having to persuade customers to buy their products and services. Appropriately, social influence takes place in a dynamic interpersonal setting that takes into consideration the interpersonal processes involved in an influence attempt (Whitaker and Dahling 2013).

Social influence theory has its roots in social psychology (Forgas and Williams 2003; Higgins, Judge, and Ferris 2003; Jones 1990; Leary 1995; Levy, Collins, and Nail 1998; Tedeschi 1981). This theory has been widely applied in the fields of communication, education, psychology, sociology, marketing, and management information science (Goldsmith and Goldsmith 2011). The theory is predicated on the idea that all interpersonal relationships contain some type of social influence, where people seek to influence each other in an "infinite cycle" of communication and exchange of information (Barrick et al. 2009; Cialdini and Trost 1998). Hence, the central objective of social influence theory is to better describe the process by which individuals can be persuaded to change their perceptions and decisions (Harris et al. 2007; Levy et al. 1998). Specifically, the essence of social influence theory describes what enables an individual to influence others, how social influence is manifested, and the consequences of social influence on others (Levy et al. 1998).

Social influence theory suggests that there are three main strategies behind influencing behavior (Goldsmith and Goldsmith 2011). The first strategy incorporates "punishment," where the influence attempt is deliberately aimed at emphasizing the negative consequences of a behavior – hopefully discouraging people from engaging in that behavior. Another strategy is centered on "rewarding," where individuals have an incentive to change their behavior. The third, and perhaps the most pertinent strategy in this study, involves "persuasion." Here, the assumption is that individuals will change their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors in response to information that they are presented with. In a sales context, salespeople are responsible for providing information to prospects and customers in hopes of persuading them to purchase their products and services. Therefore, selling is considered to be a type of influence (Borders 2006; Spiro and Perreault 1979). According to social influence theory, salespeople employ influence attempts in order to sway hesitant prospects and customers. Salespeople use influence behaviors in order to achieve goals and positive outcomes (Todd et al. 2009). In this dissertation, it is theorized that persistence behaviors are a type of influence behaviors, where salespeople persist in an effort to persuade and influence customers. Thus, this dissertation takes the stance that persistence with customers should be considered a form of influence that salespeople enact in order to achieve personal and organizational goals. That is, persistence behaviors (e.g., nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence) are treated as distinct types of influence tactics that salespeople employ in the face of customer and prospect resistance.

With regards to sales prospecting, the use of social influence by salespeople is especially crucial. Considering that an influence attempt will either be successful (i.e., convert the prospect) or unsuccessful (i.e., unable to convert the prospect), salespeople must be very careful in how they persist. They must be wise in their selection of persistence tactics, while also ensuring that

they are not annoying customers and possibly damaging the potential for any long-term relationships. However, the challenge is intensified when considering that salespeople are constrained by resources and time. Consequently, the theory suggests that salespeople who are skilled at influence attempts are more successful than their counterparts. That is, salespeople who are good at using social influence are better able to improve their performance and avoid the negative consequences of persistence (Cullen, Fan, and Liu 2014). Accordingly, in this study, social influence theory is a good foundational lens that can be used to understand the consequences of salesperson behavior, as it pertains to customer relationships (Cullen et al. 2014).

Political Skill

Social influence theory has been used to describe, explain, predict, and understand the "what" of influence attempts. However, what has been neglected in this body of literature is a better understanding of the characteristics and mechanisms of influence attempts (Higgins et al. 2003; Jones 1990). As such, political skill has been suggested as the missing link in social influence theory, which explains the "how" of influence attempts (Ferris et al. 2005b; Ferris et al. 2007). The notion of political skill is predicated on the fact that the success of an influence attempt is contingent on the situational context, as well as the social astuteness, interpersonal style, networking ability, and apparent sincerity of the influencer. In other words, the use of influence tactics alone is not sufficient, and individuals have to do so in a socially appropriate manner. Consequently, it has been suggested that, in compliance with social influence theory, political skill may behave as a moderator in the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes for employees within a firm (Harris et al. 2007).

Political skill is defined as "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use

such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (Ferris et al. 2005b, p.127). It is viewed as a distinct social effectiveness construct (Munyon et al. 2015; Treadway et al. 2013). According to this line of research, those who are highly politically skilled know which behaviors are appropriate and needed in order to execute successful influence attempts. This is because politically skilled individuals have the ability to accurately assess and make sense of the environment around them. They are able to gather information, by being able to read both people and situations, to make knowledgeable decisions regarding which influence, or persistence tactic, to use for successful influence attempts. As such, politically skilled individuals stand out from their counterparts because they have a capacity to "get things done" (Andrews, Kacmar, and Harris 2009; Kacmar et al. 2013).

In the literature, political skill is considered an individual difference variable that stresses two primary skills: 1) the employee's ability to understand the work environment, including the people "acting" within it, and 2) the use of that knowledge to influence others in pursuit of individual goals (Ferris, Davidson, and Perrewé 2005a; Ferris et al. 2007). Political skill is usually treated as a higher-order construct, which includes four distinct, yet connected, dimensions: 1) social astuteness, 2) networking ability, 3) interpersonal influence, and 4) apparent sincerity (Ferris et al. 2005b). Moreover, political skill is considered to be an ability that is both learned and innate (Ferris et al. 2012). Indeed, theorists have argued that this is an important skill set that is necessary for survival in today's dynamic organizational environment (Ferris et al. 2007). This is particularly prevalent in a sales context, where salespeople are often involved in an "intricate web of relationships" with constituents both within and outside the firm (Treadway et al. 2010).

Interestingly, research on political skill in sales has not yet fully made its way to the marketing literature (see Bolander et al. 2015 for a recent notable exception). While political skill has primarily focused on the political arena within organizations, the dimensions of political skill (social astuteness, networking ability, interpersonal influence, and apparent sincerity) do have an important role in sales, especially due to the interpersonal and dynamic aspect of sales jobs. Indeed, some researchers in organizational behavior have started to discuss and show the importance of political skill in sales settings (Blickle et al. 2011c; Blickle, Oerder, and Summers 2010a; Blickle, Wendel, and Ferris 2010b). Notwithstanding these contributions, this study takes another step towards formally introducing political skill into the sales literature by arguing that salespeople who have high political skill are able to more accurately select the appropriate persistence tactic (i.e., nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence) to enact with hesitant prospects. In these instances, salespeople are able to leverage their political skill by carefully selecting which persistence tactics to undertake; subsequently, they are able to enhance the positive outcomes and mitigate the negative consequences associated with persistence. More specifically, political skill will enhance the effects of persistence tactics on salesperson productivity, ultimately improving salesperson performance.

Overview of Research Approach

The main objective of this study is to unravel the nature of persistence in sales and to examine its impact on sales performance. As such, "the choice of research methodology must be appropriate for the research problems and objective" (Frankel, Naslund, and Bolumole 2005, p. 187). It is acknowledged here that all research methodologies have strengths, weaknesses, and limitations (McGrath 1982; Vogt, Gardner, and Haeffele 2012). Accordingly, the choice of

method involves trade-offs in terms of generalizability, precision, and realism. Therefore, in order to overcome the weaknesses and limitations of different research methodologies, researchers have suggested the use of multiple methods, from different classes of methods, in order to obtain richer and more robust findings (Creswell 2013; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010; Vogt et al. 2012).

Accordingly, in order to explore the aforementioned research questions, this dissertation utilized a mixed methods approach by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. Specifically, this dissertation implemented two studies, an exploratory qualitative method that was based on grounded theory and individual interviews, and a survey-based design approach to address the research questions and objectives. Due to the infancy of the area, and given the lack of research on persistence in a sales setting, a mixed methods approach was appropriate to provide a better and richer understanding of persistence from the perspective of the sales professional. Additionally, Davis, Golicic, and Boerstler (2011) list additional benefits of the use of multiple methods, including the ability to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, and the ability to tell a more comprehensive and complete story. By using a combination of qualitative and quantitative traditions, this study was able to bolster its findings by providing triangulation across-methods (Davis et al. 2011; Jick 1979).

Study One: Grounded Theory Using Individual Interviews

The main objective of this study was to answer the following research questions: how does salesperson persistence manifest behaviorally? That is, the aim was to identify the meaning of persistence in sales and, what specific types of behaviors do salespeople enact in their persistence efforts. In order to truly begin to explore and understand the notion of salesperson persistence it was important to examine the phenomenon directly. This means that it was

necessary to dive into the processes themselves by collecting fine-grained qualitative data (Langley 1999). Grounded theory, a well-established qualitative approach, is a sensemaking strategy that attempts to build a theoretical structure from the "bottom up" by staying close to the original data. As such, this dissertation relied on a grounded theory qualitative approach.

The research utilized in-depth interviews as the primary mode of data collection. The participants for these interviews were individuals with professional sales experience (e.g., sales representatives, account executives, sales managers) responsible for acquiring new business. These individuals have had or continue to have direct exposure to the phenomenon of interest (persistence). The interviews provided the opportunity to delve deeply into the everyday world meanings as interpreted by the participants (Morrison et al. 2012). Thus, the interviews were designed to obtain individual descriptions, narratives, and experiences. Interviews with sales professionals were collected until theoretical saturation was reached, or when no new or relevant data emerged pertaining to emergent themes and categories (Glaser 1978).

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Prior to any coding, initial reading of transcribed interviews took place in order to get a general sense of the data (Bernard 2011; Maxwell 2013). Analysis of the qualitative data was conducted using NVivo Software, and followed the well-established tradition of Strauss and Corbin (1998). Specifically, theoretical memos and constant comparison analysis was utilized in conjunction with open coding, axial coding, and selecting coding until overall themes and categories were identified.

Study Two: Field Survey with Archival Performance Metrics

One of the most common and widely used research designs in the social and behavioral sciences, surveys provide the opportunity to use structured questionnaires to elicit specific information from participants (Frankel et al. 2005; Vogt et al. 2012). Survey designs provide a

"quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of the population" (Creswell 2013, p. 145). Accordingly, and with the aid of statistical analysis, surveys provide the benefit of making generalizations about a population. In particular, survey designs serve as a vehicle for collecting data to empirically examine the proposed relationships in a theoretical model (Hollander 1976). Therefore, the ability to provide evidence and the efficiency of surveys makes it an adequate research approach in addressing the research questions and objectives of this dissertation, especially when coupled with archival data on salesperson performance.

The survey was designed to capture responses from business-to-business salespeople regarding the persistence behaviors they enact (e.g., nurture-focused and closure-focused) during prospecting. In order to make meaningful interpretations, archival data based from company records was used to match salesperson persistence behaviors and objective performance. The survey also explored the moderating effect of political skill. The survey was hosted online using Qualtrics and the data was analyzed using PLS software.

Contributions of this Research

This dissertation makes several key contributions to both theory and practice. First, the main contribution of this dissertation is that it introduces the notion of persistence in the sales domain, where persistence is highly pertinent and prevalent, but hitherto unexamined. The use of a qualitative research approach in this dissertation provides a first-hand account of the nature of persistence in a sales context, while the survey-based study offers quantifiable evidence of the indirect impact of salesperson persistence on objective sales performance. Second, this research offers insight into the complex nature of persistence and clarifies how persistence impacts

salesperson performance. Specifically, this research identifies two complementary persistence approaches (i.e., nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence) as the critical behaviors that have varying effects on salesperson productivity, and ultimately performance. Third, this study contributes to the sales influence literature by advancing a set of sales-specific persistence tactics that complement existing, channel-based influence tactics (e.g., coercion, making threats) explored in prior sales research. In particular, this research directly responds to the statement by Plouffe, Bolander, and Cote (2014) that "there is no real theory to suggest which tactics salespeople are likely to use to create certain styles or how salespeople differ in their ability to effectively use tactics" (p. 144). Fourth, this research examines political skill as an individual salesperson resource that may shape the effectiveness of their persistence efforts. Finally, it is worth underscoring that this research offers managers insight regarding how to train, coach, and advise their salesforce on when to employ different persistence behaviors leading to improved sales results. Overall, by gaining an understanding of persistence behaviors, scholars and practitioners can begin to gain insights into the persistence phenomenon, which is often recognized as important, but not well understood in the sales domain.

Organization of this Dissertation

This dissertation is organized as follows. The present chapter (Chapter One) provides an introduction to the dissertation. Specifically, the problem is defined, the motivation for the research is discussed, and an overview of the theoretical and research approaches is provided. Chapter Two details the qualitative study, including the methodology, analyses, and findings. Chapter Three offers a comprehensive literature review, which provides the impetus for the development of the theoretical model. Additionally, the proposed conceptual model and its

associated hypotheses are discussed. Chapter Four describes the research methodology for study two. In particular, the details of data collection and data analysis techniques are outlined. Chapter Five provides the findings and results of the quantitative study. Chapter Six concludes the dissertation by providing a discussion and by highlighting the key theoretical and managerial implications of this research.

CHAPTER TWO – QUALITATIVE STUDY

The objective of this chapter is to specify the methodology and findings associated with the study one. This chapter should be considered in tandem with Chapter Three, which provides an exhaustive literature review. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the methodology and research design associated with the study. In particular, a general overview is provided, the data collection is explained, the data analysis is described, and research trustworthiness is discussed. The second section provides the findings that emerge from the qualitative work.

Study Overview

The purpose of the study was to explore the nature of persistence by utilizing the qualitative method of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Given the lack of persistence research in the sales literature (see Chapter Three), the aim of this study is to obtain a first-hand perspective from sales professionals and to develop insights and theory that can be further examined in the study two. Hence, it is appropriate that the first step in exploring persistence in a sales domain involves employing a qualitative study in order to glean insights regarding this unexplored phenomenon. Indeed, qualitative research provides a rich mechanism for addressing the intricacies of a phenomenon, as well as "how" questions, from the perspectives of participants (Pratt 2009).

This study was designed to answer the following research question: how does salesperson persistence manifest behaviorally? In order to begin to explore and understand the notion of salesperson persistence it was important to examine the phenomenon directly. This meant that it was necessary to plunge into the essence and "process" of the phenomenon by collecting fine-

grained qualitative data (Langley 1999; Pettigrew 1992; Van de Ven 1992). This provided an opportunity to understand patterns in the phenomenon, which are crucial in developing theory. Langley (1999) uses the term "process research" to describe research that is concerned with understanding how things evolve over time and why they evolve in this way. Sensemaking, as described by Langley (1999), is a means for moving towards a theoretical understanding that "does not betray the richness, dynamism, and complexity of the data but that is understandable and potentially useful to others" (p. 694). One particular methodology is grounded theory, which is a sensemaking strategy that attempts to build a theoretical structure from the "bottom up" by staying close to the original data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Grounded theory has its roots in symbolic interactionism (see Blumer 1969) and the purpose is to discover a theory of a phenomenon that pertains to a particular situation. It is important to emphasize that the central aim of this methodology is theory building, and not theory testing (Goulding 2002). This situation takes into account the process of interaction, action, or engagement that an individual experiences in response to the phenomenon (Creswell 1998). One premise of grounded theory is the fact that people are confronted with social issues and that people work towards solving these issues (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Glaser and Strauss (1967) have emphasized that the goal of grounded theory is to "discover theory from data." Moreover, "the goal of grounded theory is to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior which is relevant and problematic for those involved" (Strauss 1987, p. 34). As such, one purpose of grounded theory is to type behavior and not people (Glaser 1978). With the focus of the research questions on the behaviors associated with sales persistence, grounded theory was an appropriate approach to investigate the nature of persistence in the sales domain.

Taken together, this dissertation drew on a grounded theory approach to better understand salesperson persistence and to build theory from the ground up using insights and descriptions from those actually involved with the phenomenon. While there are several schools of thought regarding grounded theory (e.g., Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007; Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013; Glaser 1978; Strauss and Corbin 1998), this dissertation adopted the Strauss and Corbin approach. An additional advantage of this approach is that there are a set of well-established guidelines for conducting research and interpreting data (Flint, Woodruff, and Gardial 2002; Strauss and Corbin 1998).

The Role of Extant Literature

It is noteworthy to mention that grounded theory researchers have differing views with regards to the role of existing literature (Suddaby 2006). On one hand, some researchers contend that the researcher should enter the study with a "blank sheet" with no prior experience or knowledge, and in some cases, with no concrete research questions. The rationale here is that the researcher should have no preconceived notions or biases before learning about a phenomenon. On the other hand, others suggest that the researcher must extensively read the literature until the data is collected and analyzed. Needless, this dissertation takes the stance that the literature should be considered and in fact can be treated as a source of data (Strauss 1987). Indeed, grounded theory should not be, and was not, used as an excuse to ignore the literature (Suddaby 2006). In fact, this chapter of the dissertation should not be viewed in isolation and should, instead, be considered jointly with Chapter Three.

In this dissertation, the literature played several important roles in conjunction with the qualitative study. First, an extensive review of the literature was conducted on the main phenomenon of interest (persistence). During this review, the researcher attempted to get a sense

of the different perspectives and theoretical foundations in the persistence literature. With this prior knowledge in mind, the researcher then began to speak with participants. Despite having knowledge of the literature, the researcher maintained an open mind. Second, the literature provided a great avenue for further understanding and labeling of some emerging categories and themes. For example, many of the participants shared how they enacted different persistence approaches by relying on their ability to interpret non-verbal cues and their ability to get prospects to like them (discussed in the findings section). With these insights in mind, the literature pointed the researcher towards a large body of literature on political skill, which is a higher order phenomenon that incorporates these insights. This, in turn, helped with the some of the higher order coding (i.e., axial coding) of the transcripts. As another example, the extensive literature review on persistence revealed that most business researchers relied on goal-setting theory (Latham and Locke 1991) as a theoretical lens. In contrast, the qualitative work revealed that in the sales domain, persistence is actually a form of social influence (discussed in the findings section), which guided the researcher towards the social influence theory literature.

Data Collection

Maxwell (2013) stresses that the most important consideration in qualitative sampling decisions is selecting those times, settings, and individuals that can actually provide the information that is needed in order to answer the research questions. Accordingly, and consistent with grounded theory procedures, open sampling was initially used to select participants (Strauss and Corbin 1998). This involved deliberately selecting participants in order to obtain critical information that could not be acquired otherwise. At this stage, participant selection was flexible and aimed at gaining insight into the phenomenon and to get a sense of where to sample next. Following the method of grounded theory, remaining participants were determined using

theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987). According to this, "what" data to collect next and "where" to find them should be based on analytic grounds (e.g., what other participants are needed in order to clarify and corroborate emergent themes based on existing data). In other words, the process of data collection was controlled by the emerging theory.

To explore salesperson persistence in business-to-business settings, participants were initially recruited by contacting acquaintances and connections of the researcher and the researcher's advisors. More specifically, the researcher sent a detailed email, with an overview of the study and an invite to participate, to potential participants. Those who participated in the study were offered a $25 Amazon gift card. Further interviews were then obtained through a chain of referrals, also known as snowball sampling, from interviewed participants (Noy 2008). In the end, in-depth interviews were conducted with thirty-one sales professionals in (see Table 1 for a list of participants). Both males (24 total) and females (7 total) were sampled. This ratio is representative of the ratio of men and women in the professional sales world (Comer, Nicholls, and Vermillion 1998). The age of participants ranged from twenty-four to seventy years old. Participants ranged from having two years of experience to having more than forty years of experience. Participants also represented a diverse set of industries. For instance, participants had experience in healthcare, electronics, mining, and retailing. To stress, the focus was on obtaining a perspective on salesperson persistence at the level of the individual salesperson.

This study relied on in-depth interviews as the primary mode of data collection. Interviews are an important source of evidence about the everyday experiences of individuals (Yin 2013). Accordingly, interviewing, as a "pipeline for transmitting knowledge," allows the opportunity to examine the everyday world meanings as interpreted by those involved with the

Table 1 - List of Qualitative Study Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Title	Sales Experience (in years)	Industry Experience
Jerry	Male	42	Product Sales Representative	19	Building Materials, Distribution, Electronics
Adam	Male	36	Manager of Global Sales	15	Mining, Software, Website Development, Pharmaceutical
Sean	Male	57	Senior Account Manager	36	Distribution, Electronics
Logan	Male	36	Director of Business Development	12	Financial Management, Digital Advertising
Lance	Male	70	Sales Representative	50	Office Furniture, Industrial Office Equipment, Real Estate
Palmer	Male	53	Manager of Business Development	10	Contract Manufacturing, Supply Chain Solutions, Printed Packaging, Pharmaceutical
Parker	Male	40	Sales Executive	15	Information Technology, Telecommunications, Custom Software
Matthew	Male	32	Senior Business Advisor	7	Online Advertising, Digital Advertising
Walter	Male	33	Major Account Executive	8	Office Technology, Software
Claire	Female	44	Sales Representative	22	Advertising, Homecare Services, Pharmaceutical, Real Estate
Susan	Female	36	Sales Representative	5	Real Estate

Table 1 - Continued

Name	Gender	Age	Title	Sales Experience (in years)	Industry Experience
Tara	Female	48	Senior Sales Executive	26	Consumer Packaged Goods, Food Services
Kane	Male	33	Global Treasury Sales Vice President	2	Financial Services
Onofre	Male	40	Area Sales Manager	4	Mining, Software
Jacob	Male	38	Treasury Sales Director	10	Financial Institutional Solutions
Ted	Male	24	Account Executive	2	Information Technology, Software
Bruce	Male	70	Vice President of Sales and Marketing	40	Computer, Financial Services, Information Technology
Hernando	Male	36	Sales Manager	8	Medical Equipment, Pharmaceutical, Education Software
Pierre	Male	66	Sales Executive	35	Industrial Office Equipment, Advertising, Print Media
Walden	Male	35	Chief Executive Officer	13	Enterprise Software, Media
Earl	Male	39	Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing	18	Manufacturing, Housing, Pharmaceutical
Abigail	Female	35	Senior Specialty Sales Professional	13	Pharmaceutical, Industrial Office Equipment
Tanner	Male	25	Inside Sales Specialist	3	Software, Marketing Solutions

Table 1 - Continued

Name	Gender	Age	Title	Sales Experience (in years)	Industry Experience
Raul	Male	41	Regional Sales Representative	11	Manufacturing
Carter	Male	32	Account Manager	9	Information Technology, Business Analytics, Financial Services
Carole	Female	29	Account Executive	4	Information Technology, Enterprise Software
Daisy	Female	45	Director of Distribution	24	Food Services, Food Equipment Manufacturing
Brandon	Male	54	Sales Director	25	Pharmaceutical, Chemical, Consulting Engineering
Brad	Male	31	Senior Business Development Representative	10	Automotive, Business-to-Business Marketing Campaigns, Information Technology
Cassidy	Female	27	Account Manager	6	Media, Digital Advertising
Blake	Male	32	Senior Sales Professional	6	Medical Equipment, Pharmaceutical, Food Distribution

Notes: Names are pseudonyms. Some ages and years of experience are estimates. Average age of participants is 41 years old. Average sales experience is 15 years.

phenomenon (Morrison et al. 2012). Interview questions consisted of a combination of grand tour, mini-tour and experience descriptive questions (Spradley 1979). The interviews were designed to be friendly conversations, where new elements were introduced intermittently to assist and elicit information from the participants. The aim was for the questions to be open-ended and to be discovery oriented in an effort to capture individual descriptions, narratives, and experiences (Flint et al. 2002). An interview guide, that outlined the planned topics and questions, was employed (see Appendix A for interview guide). Interviews lasted between forty minutes to an hour, were tape-recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analyses

In compliance with qualitative research methods, it is important to emphasize that data analysis began as data were collected. During the interviews, preliminary interpretations took place as careful attention was paid to the words and descriptions used by the participants. These interpretations were kept internal and were not shared with the participants. In order to get a gist of the data, the first step of the analysis consisted of an initial reading of the transcribed interviews (Bernard 2011; Maxwell 2013), also known as the overview approach in grounded theory (Strauss 1987). The aim of this was to gain a general impression of possible categories that may be used to guide coding, in order to ensure consistency and to reduce the overall number of codes used. Additionally, analytical memos were created for each transcript in order to aid in the interpretation and analysis (Glaser 1978).

The rest of the analyses were conducted leveraging the well-established highly structured steps of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). All coding was performed using NVivo version 10 software. The first step consisted of open coding, which was the process were concepts were identified and their properties and dimensions were found. This was accomplished

by “breaking the data” into discrete parts and by comparing each incident. Specifically, this was achieved by using microanalysis, a detailed line-by-line analysis, to generate initial codes in order to discover relationships. Next, codes were then grouped into concepts that were similar. Concepts were then “abstracted” and “aggregated” into more unifying categories. To ensure that findings were grounded in the data, the constant comparison method was utilized (Glaser and Strauss 1967). More specifically, this involved a comparison between each new code, concept, and category, with previous emerging codes, concepts, and categories.

This stage of the analysis resulted in a total of 179 codes, 19 concepts, and 7 categories. Sample codes include, “applying pressure,” “drilling down,” “hard selling,” “balancing act,” “not giving up,” “articulate value,” “active listening,” “asking questions,” and “being flexible.” Sample concepts include, “attempt close,” “probe resistance,” “maintain contact,” “social astuteness,” and “meeting professional goals.” Sample categories are nurture-focused persistence, closure-focused persistence, and political skill. To further demonstrate the process of open coding, consider the following example for the category “probe resistance.” As depicted in Figure 2, the open codes consisted of “applying pressure,” “confront resistance,” “drilling down,” “being relentless,” “digging deep,” “calling out,” and “asking questions.” Due to the similarity between these codes, they were than grouped into the more abstract category of “probe resistance.”

The next step of analysis in the Strauss and Corbin (1998) technique is axial coding. This process involved relating categories to their subcategories. The term “axial” indicates that coding took place around the axis of a category and linking categories. Here, the aim is to make connections between the categories that emerged during open coding. One important aspect of axial coding was the use of a coding paradigm or logic diagram, which aided in identifying the

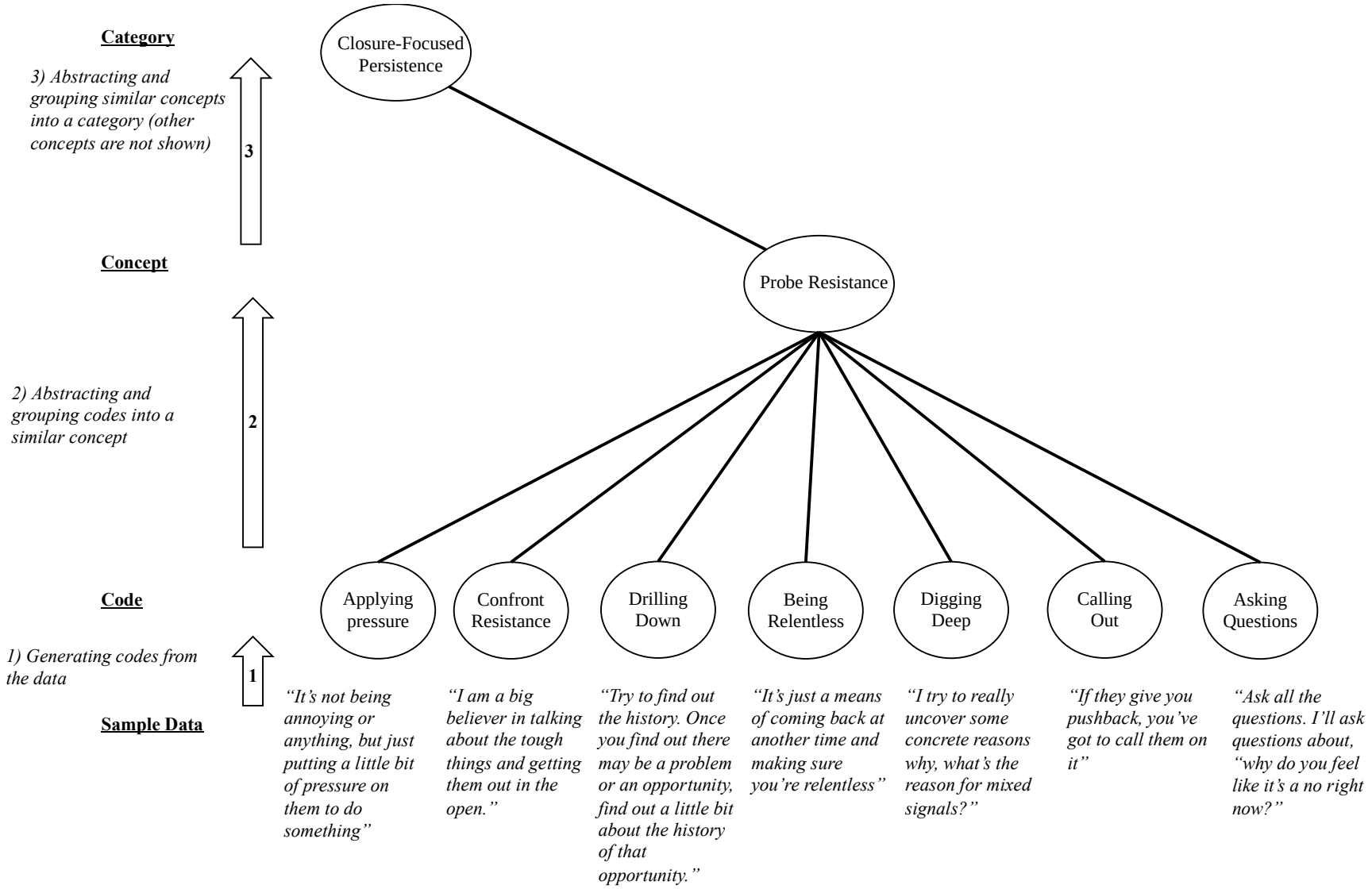


Figure 2 - Sample Open Coding Process for Probe Resistance

different components and relationships of the theory. More specifically, the paradigm model, which incorporates coding for conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences, was utilized. Using these labels helped illuminate the relationships between categories. Through this analysis, two categories (i.e., goal attainment and expected payoff) were coded under conditions, one category (i.e., political skill) was coded under interactions, and two categories (i.e., productivity and performance) were coded under consequences.

The final step in the analysis was selective coding. This step involved identifying a storyline that integrates the categories that were established by axial coding. In other words, it was the process of integrating and refining the theory. During selective coding, a central category was identified and finalized as a conceptual model was developed. Since the vast majority of the categories were related to persistence, this stage of the analysis identified the central category as the persistence approaches that salespeople enact. With this in mind, the theory was integrated around this core category and the relationships discovered during axial coding were considered in relation to persistence approaches.

Research Trustworthiness

It is important that the findings from the qualitative research are deemed trustworthy. Trustworthiness refers to a process that confirms and demonstrates that the research that was conducted is sound and believable. That is, methods of trustworthiness are used in order to validate the data collection and to ensure that the best interpretations are made (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Wallendorf and Belk 1989). Analogous to the notions of reliability and validity in the quantitative paradigm, qualitative research involves a particular set of trustworthiness criteria, including confirmability, transferability, credibility, and dependability. Confirmability refers to the ability for an independent auditor to trace the process to the original transcripts.

Transferability describes the ability of the research findings to be transferred to another research context. Credibility denotes the notion that the findings of the research are adequate and acceptable. Dependability is used to demonstrate that findings are consistent and reliable, regardless of any change (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, the following steps were taken. Confirmability was assured by the use of NVivo software for performing all analysis and synthesis. Coding took place at a line-by-line micro level, so that results can be easily traced and confirmed. Transferability consisted of the use of "thick descriptions" to present the findings (Geertz 1973). Furthermore, transferability was also taken into consideration during theoretical sampling, where a conscious effort was made to include participants from different industries, positions, and experiences. Credibility was confirmed by asking questions to the participants to confirm the understanding of participant meaning. In addition to these efforts to ensure trustworthiness, one of the dissertation advisors discussed in-depth the initial coding and interpretations with the researcher. Additionally, inter reliability of coding and interpretation was ensured. One of the dissertation advisors independently coded and interpreted the data. Afterwards, the advisor and the researcher met and collectively discussed and reviewed the interpretations.

Findings

This study uncovered several key insights regarding the nature of salesperson persistence and how salesperson persistence manifests behaviorally (refer to Figure 3). It is important to emphasize that these findings should be considered in tandem with the theory and literature review in Chapter Three. First, the qualitative interviews show that persistence in a sales domain

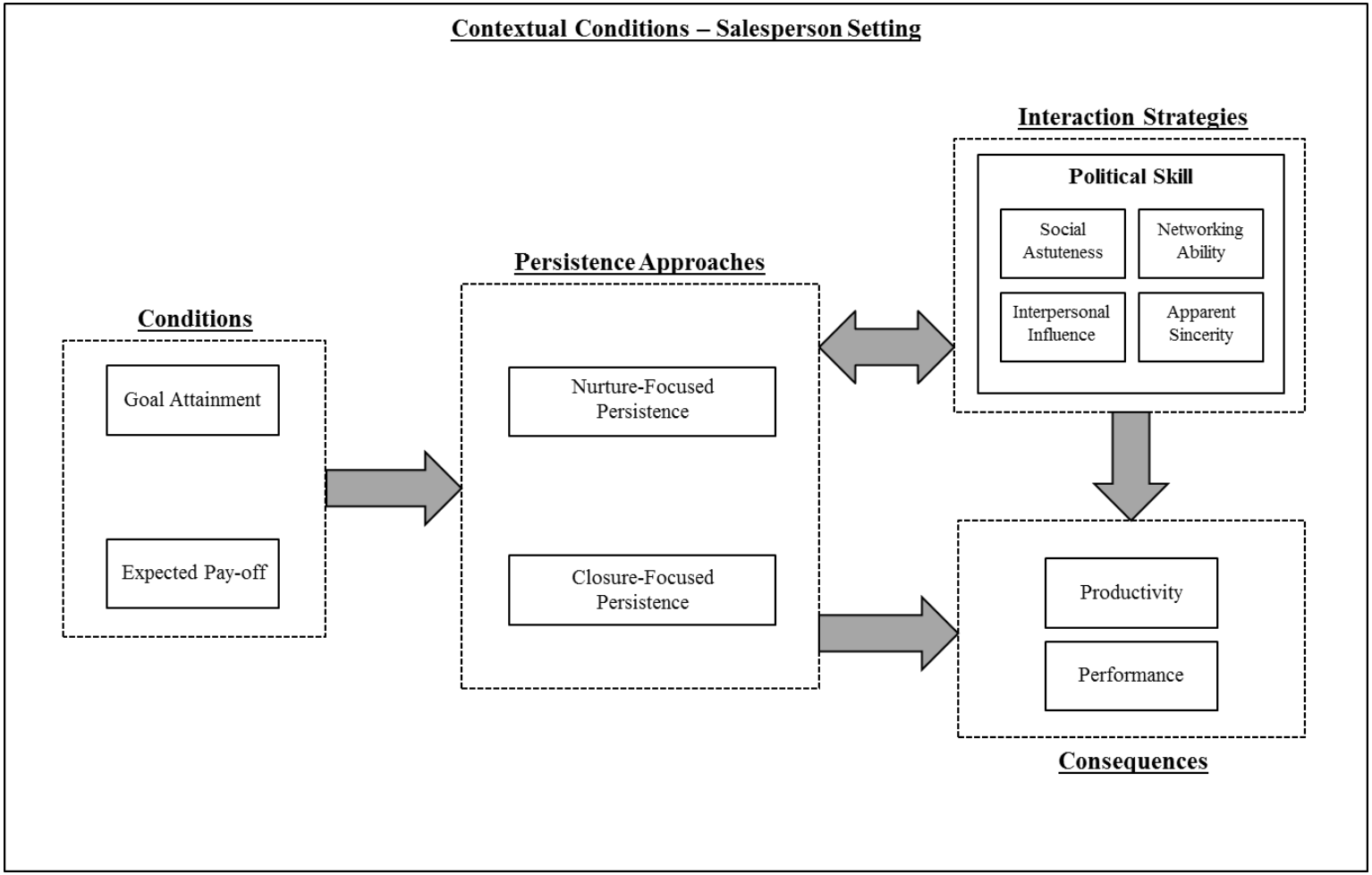


Figure 3 - Salesperson Persistence Model

is a social influence process. Second, the findings suggest that salesperson persistence is a complex phenomenon that is comprised of more than one way for salespeople to persist, namely, nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence. Within each of these persistence approaches that salespeople enact, there are unique persistence tactics that salespeople employ (see Figure 4). Third, the findings provide evidence that salesperson persistence is contingent on an individual salesperson's political skill. Fourth, results show that there are two causal conditions that lead to salesperson persistence approaches: goal attainment and expected pay-off. Finally, the data reveal that the consequences associated with salesperson persistence include salesperson productivity and salesperson performance. It is important to note that, while the data did provide significant insight regarding the causal conditions (e.g., goal attainment and expected payoff) and consequences (e.g., productivity and performance) associated with salesperson persistence, the focus of this study was aimed at unraveling the characteristics of persistence in a sales domain and its behavioral manifestations.

Persistence as a Social Influence Process

A key insight revealed through this study was that persistence in sales is characterized as a social influence process (Jones 1990; Levy et al. 1998). This finding provides a unique perspective and complements the significant body of literature on persistence, which has primarily been grounded in goal theory (Johnson, Chang, and Lord 2006; Latham and Locke 1991; Locke 1991; Locke and Latham 2006). That is, salespeople enact persistence behaviors in order to sway the thoughts, feelings, and actions of hesitant prospects. More specifically, salespeople persist in order to elicit a desired response from prospects. Pierre, one of the study participants, eloquently discusses how persistence and influence are interrelated.

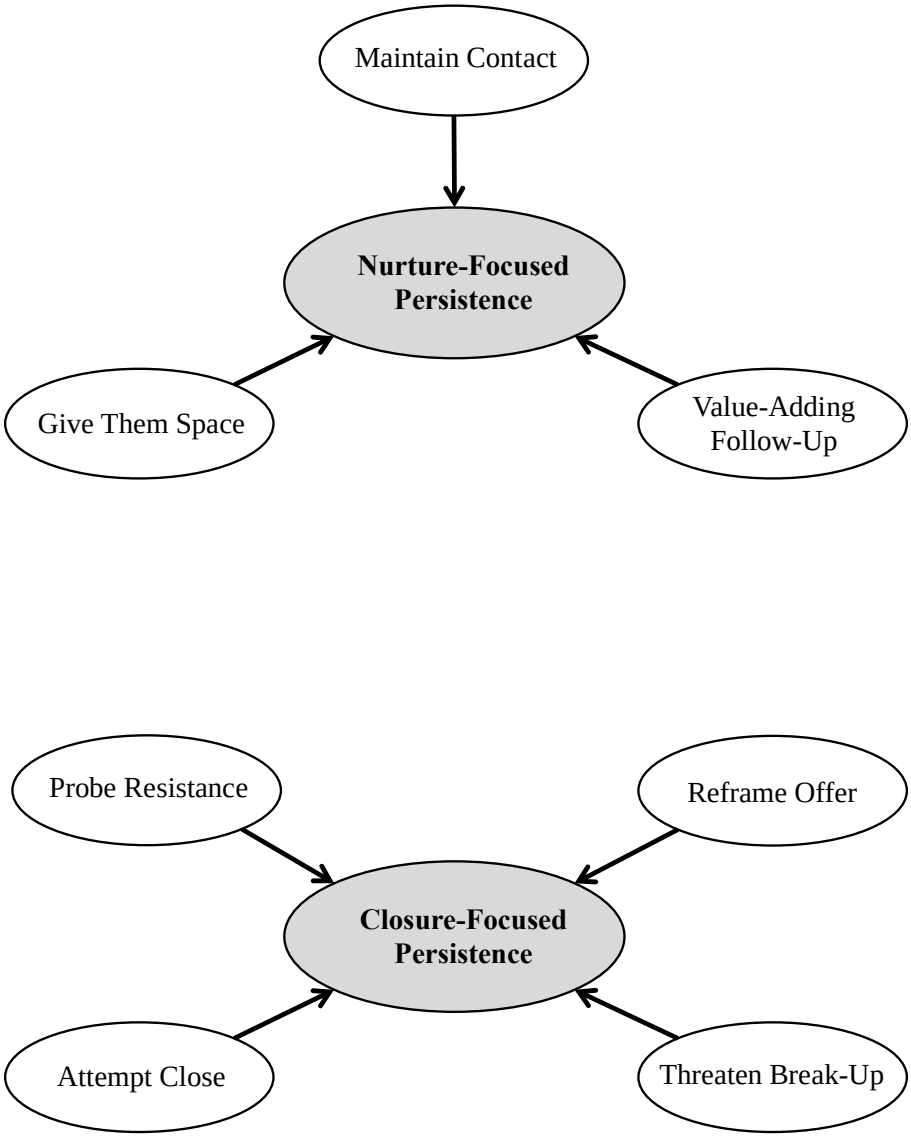


Figure 4 - Salesperson Persistence Tactics

> "So being persistent means to never let a potential customer out of your ability to be able to influence. Just because you're seeing a negative response doesn't mean that the next time you're not going to be able to get the response that you want. You can continue to do this and have the respect of the customer because they generally, as long as you have good ideas to be able to be in front of them, they generally want you to keep coming back. They're in business to make money and the more assets they have out there that are showing them good ideas and methods and strategies to make money, it's only a benefit to them. The way you handle rejection, don't let it impact your ability to be persistent and keep going back to that customer." *(Pierre, Sales Executive)*

The participants emphasized that influence is a critical factor in persistence efforts, especially as salespeople attempt to gain prospect commitment or to uncover the true motive of the prospect. In order to do so, salespeople use persistence behaviors to influence prospects by getting them to reveal their true intentions. In this way, persistence can also be viewed as a social persuasion process, where salespeople have to articulate and convince hesitant prospects to open up. For example, Carter explains how he persists with prospects in an effort to gain commitment or to convince them of an unknown need.

> "You have to be just persistent, driven, very energetic, personable, have good communication skills. A lot of it's not what you know but being able to articulate enough to convince somebody, to have social persuasion. I just think persistence is really the main thing because you can sit, when I was at that Iraq group, when you're trying to go into films and build a repertoire, it takes a while to do that. You're just kind of preparing for three months and finally stuff starts to take hold. It's kind of like if you're doing commercial real estate sales, that could take a year before you're really producing any money. That's a long time to sit around just grinding on it. So I think persistence is number one. Anybody could know a product up and down but to be able to articulate it and sell it are two different things… not imposing your will, but just being able to convince somebody to not just buy your product but essentially you're convincing somebody to have a stake in you as well… also convincing somebody that they might need something they might not actually know they need." *(Carter, Account Manager)*

Nurture-Focused Persistence

Another important finding that emerged from the interviews with participants was that one of the ways that salespeople persist with hesitant prospects is through a nurture-focused approach. Under this approach, participants described how their persistence efforts were aimed at

preserving the prospect and opportunity. In particular, in the face of prospect resistance, salespeople discussed how nurture-focused persistence behaviors where characterized by behaviors geared towards laying the foundation for future exchange. Here, salespeople adopted more of a long-term orientation with prospects. This is inherent in the following quote by Brad.

> "Interviewer: Tell me about a time when you met with a new prospect to explore the possibility of doing business with them and the prospect gave you mixed signals about their interest. What did you do?
>
> It can really depend, but usually I try and tailor it to kind of feeling the situation out differently. I'd say for me, it's kind of a long term sales cycle. So what I like to do is, if I don't think we're going to close a deal right then and there, I'll put them into a nurture role. If I think there's an opportunity to generate business in the future, it might be a situation where I follow up with them on a regular basis just to touch base, see if the timing wasn't right." *(Brad, Senior Business Development Representative)*

In a similar vein, participants also discussed the importance of taking a passive and less obtrusive approach when persisting with hesitant prospects. Here, salespeople do not want to "be in their face" and instead use indirect tactics in order to influence hesitant prospects. By being more "outward-looking," this approach is predicated on being much more cooperative and collaborative with hesitant prospects. As Daisy put it, "you get more with honey than you do with vinegar." This approach revolves around remaining "top of mind," without being overtly aggressive. As such, a nurture-focused persistence approach consists of "soft tactics" that are intended to make the salesperson seem non-coercive. In the following passage, it can be inferred how Cassidy enacts a nurture-focused persistence approach.

> "I'm not going to, again, hard sell them into something. I'll make sure that I follow up with them again consistently. It's kind of the same response, just less of a frequency. So I'll email people and I'll call them but I'll make sure I'm still top of mind if they do change their minds but I'll email them on a monthly or quarterly basis as opposed to weekly or monthly. It's usually more then, not "Hi, let's get back together and talk about your product", it's more like "Hey, I read this interesting article that I thought you might be interested in" or "We're doing this new thing and it's cool, you should check it out" not, "It's cool, you should buy it." It's something that seems like I'm trying to help you

> do your job better as opposed to being like, "Buy something from me." *(Cassidy, Account Manager)*

More specifically, the findings suggests that nurture-focused persistence is a function of three particular persistence tactics: 1) maintain contact, 2) value-adding follow-up, and 3) give them space.

Maintain Contact

One of the nurture-focused persistence tactics that emerged from the data was the notion of maintaining contact with hesitant prospects. This category has a dimensional range from low to high. Here, participants shared the importance of maintaining regular contact with hesitant prospects. Participants acknowledged that it was necessary to remain "within their field of vision." Salespeople felt that, if they could constantly remind hesitant prospects of their existence, they could indirectly influence the prospects by remaining top of mind. According to Lance, an experienced sale professional with fifty years of sales experience, "persistence is also keeping your face in front of them so they know who you are and what you sell." In this way, prospects do not have to always be explicitly asked about a particular order. For instance, the following quote by Brandon highlights how he keeps in touch with hesitant prospects in hopes of eventually being considered and remembered for a future exchange.

> "The best you can do there is keep in touch… over time because people change, policies change. So that's kind of worst case… It means not dropping the ball, basically, and also understanding that no today doesn't necessarily mean no forever. So in the second case, I've had customers that I've called on for years and they may have had no interest in working with us. They may not have any needs. It could've been a personality thing where there was a person the customer had a relationship with, a competitor, and they really weren't interested. Over time, some customers you keep in touch with every three months, every six months, and it may take a long time but eventually they'll think of you or you might catch them at the right moment and there could be a project at that point that you actually can sell. I think that's what it's about, just not giving up and continuing to keep positive and keep trying." *(Brandon, Sales Director)*

Maintaining contact does not need to necessarily always be business related or involve a physical meeting with prospects. Instead, it may consist of routine follow-ups, courtesy calls, small gift bags, or birthday cards. Again, salespeople are persisting in order for the prospect to think of them and their company. There is no set schedule for how often or how much to maintain contact, but participants did recognize that it was important to not annoy hesitant prospects. This is evident in the following passage with Onofre, who is an Area Sales Manager in the mining industry.

> "Interviewer: What does being persistent mean to you?
>
> Onofre: Being persistent, to me, it's being there not necessarily every day, not necessarily once a week, but just being able to communicate to your potential client enough so the client knows that you're there and you're not bugging him.
>
> Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me more about being there, not bugging the customer, and so forth?
>
> Onofre: Well yeah, I mean, I'm not going to call my client once a week or email him every day. I want to touch base with him this week and then I might not do it for three weeks. I'm going to call different times and when I email different times, trying to keep the conversation new. I don't always ask about, "Hey, how's it going? Do you have the PO yet? Have you guys made a decision yet?" *(Onofre, Area Sales Manager)*

Value-Adding Follow-Up

Another type of persistence tactic that surfaced from the conversations with participants was the idea of value-adding follow-up. With a dimensional range of low to high, this refers to a salesperson's focus on providing value to a hesitant prospect with each follow-up contact. The objective of this behavior is to also remain top of mind with hesitant prospects. Unlike the maintaining contact tactic, which may be more "quantity" based, this particular tactic is more focused on providing "quality" follow-up. That is, participants conveyed the importance of persisting with a purpose. Accordingly, a persistence effort should bring value to the hesitant prospects. As long as there was new value for prospects with every follow-up or contact with a

prospect, participants felt that it was appropriate and acceptable to continue to persist. As Abigail indicates, as long as there is value being provided with each customer touch point, a salesperson is not being an annoyance or a nuisance.

> "I will always do that and I think that's what makes me successful as long as I'm trying to give something back.… There's a fine line between being persistent and being annoying and you need to make sure you're persistent. If you're providing, I say being annoying because if you're not providing any value to your customer, you're not taking any different approach and you just keep on showing up week after week and nothing is happening, I define that as just being annoying and a nuisance to your customers because nothing is happening. You're told to be persistent when you're in sales but you have to provide some sort of value each time you go in because, if not, then you are annoying" *(Abigail, Senior Specialty Sales Professional)*

It is important to note that the value-add that salespeople might provide for prospects is not always related to the particular sales message or effort that they are currently pursuing. Instead of always referencing the specific opportunity in their value-add follow-up, salespeople here may, for instance, provide hesitant prospects with company-specific news, industry-related news, or information about an upcoming trade show. In short, it is crucial that the value-add follow-up is of something relevant and useful to hesitant prospects. Jerry unequivocally states that there must always be a valid reason to reach out, and that it is incumbent on him to provide value.

> "When you make the call, even if you're calling somebody just to check in and be friendly and talk about their weekend or whatever. You should still always have an offering and always have a valid business reason…. To me, being persistent is making sure that all my customers are up to speed with what's going on in the market which means I just need to call them two or three times a week and let them know what's going on. To me, being persistent does not mean calling them and trying to hard sell them every day or every other day just because you couldn't get the sale. To me, being persistent is being an extension of their business and keeping them informed at all times of any market moves so that they're educated enough to make good business decisions for their business…. If you're always calling them with a valid business reason and an offer with something that makes sense, that fits their business, then I think you're doing well." *(Jerry, Product Sales Representative)*

Give Them Space

The final nurture-focused persistence tactic that evolved from the data is giving hesitant prospects space. Ranging from high to low, this approach is based on salespeople actually decreasing their frequency of follow-up with hesitant prospects. As participants described, the rationale is that by minimizing contact, prospects will over time recall and remember the salesperson because the salesperson was non-intrusive. This tactic revolves around being patient and may require salespeople to "drop off the grid for a little bit." This is counter to what most people would consider persistent behavior. As Susan explains, the idea is to "persist without appearing persistent."

> "Susan: Everyone tells you in sales, "You've got to persist. You've got to persist" but you've got to persist in a way that doesn't appear to be persistent. So I guess that's why I'm saying patience because patience meaning you have to give them space and along the way give them tantalizing objects, tantalizing things that pique their interest, you know?"
>
> Interviewer: How do you manage this idea of appearing in a way that doesn't appear like persistence?
>
> Susan: How do you persist and not be persistent? [Laughter] You just have to find another approach with them and one that is less intrusive than what you had chosen. For some reason, they have decided that you are potentially too aggressive. So you have to find another way that shows them that they can be in charge of the relationship because they have felt like you have driven it, that you've been the driver. So everybody wants to be in control of their relationships but that's how you have to really change your approach and you truly do, I think, give them space." *(Susan, Sales Representative)*

It must be noted that this approach does not suggest that salespeople are not following-up or touching base with hesitant prospects. Instead, salespeople use more caution and are much more strategic in their reduced follow-up contact. For instance, some participants described how they use a "threshold" in gauging when to reach back out to hesitant prospects. These thresholds are usually defined in terms of days and could be anywhere from a couple of days to ninety days. In some cases, salespeople may seek permission from hesitant prospects to follow-up with them

on a given day. Here, participants described holding prospects accountable and "putting the ball back in their court." Again, the idea with giving them space is to give prospects time and to not make them feel like they are being hounded. Raul shares how he gives hesitant prospects time, but also acknowledges the importance of maintaining a line of communication.

> "Interviewer: What do you do when you face resistance from prospective buyers?
>
> Raul: We give them some time. "Here's our information. Here's our website. Talk to our customer that's actually doing the same thing you're doing in the same territory. Talk to them. See the benefits that they're getting from something now." When there's resistance on that, all you can really do is show them that somebody else is actually doing the same thing they want to do. Resistance is more based on, "Well, I don't know if it'll work here in this ground condition" or whatever but normally, having somebody with experience, somebody doing a job now, we either take them to that job site so they can see it, see that it's actually happening, it can be done in their territory or their area, but that's all you can do and let them see that it will work, it can work, and keep contact with them. Keep open communication with them and hopefully they turn around and decide they want to buy something from us." *(Raul, Regional Sales Representative)*

Closure-Focused Persistence

Complementary to nurture-focused persistence, the data provided strong evidence that salespeople enact a closure-focused persistence approach. Under this approach, in the face of resistance from prospects, salespeople utilize behaviors that are tailored towards bringing the sales process to a conclusion. Here, participants reflected on how it was important for them to reach a cessation with a hesitant prospect. This does not necessarily always imply that salespeople have to "close" a deal and make a sale, but could also involve getting a definitive "no" from the hesitant prospect. The objective is to unravel the true intention of the prospect, whether it is to buy or not. It is an internal resolution that salespeople are looking for. In the following quote by Matthew, it is apparent that he will make sure to "exhaust" himself in order to get at the root of a prospect's hesitation. He strives to get a resolution and won't stop until he does.

> "I want to know that I know that and I'm going to really exhaust that and once I do know that, I'm going to walk away and not waste the rest of my life trying to close every deal that comes by. So really get at the heart of what it is, if it's too expensive, they don't believe in the value of it – because really, there's only a few different reasons people say no. They don't like the people, they don't like the product, or they don't like the price. Well, they don't like the price, maybe there's a lower cost option that would be adequate for them. If they don't like the product, either they don't understand it or I haven't given them a good framework to view it from… maybe to sum it up, I always feel like I want to keep pushing until I have some kind of resolution… really follow-up until you get to a point where they've made a decision that, yes, they're going to do it or not, they're not going to." *(Matthew, Senior Business Advisor)*

Salespeople will use closure-focused persistence tactics in order to get an outcome that they are content and satisfied with. Closure-focused persistence may be characterized as being aggressive, "inward-looking," and short-term focused. The aim is to directly confront the resistance that is put up by prospects. In a way, participants talked about "calling out the elephant in the room" in order to get to a fact-based conclusion, whether it is to gain a commitment or to unmask the prospects true motive. Adam adamantly states how he won't stop persisting with prospects until he can obtain a very clear and logical conclusion.

> "I think a good portion of it is tenacity. So a lot of what I do is make sure that I keep following something to a point where I know it's no longer worth pursuing. So an example of that would be I'm not going to give up just because a customer quit responding to my emails for a few months. I may continue to set reminders for myself in our CRM to send an email or leave them a voicemail or try to get a call with them or somehow figure out a way to meet with them up to 16 times… Persistent, I mean, is a very basic action that I would say, if I were to look at myself or sales guys that I manage and say, "This is what I want persistence to mean to you" is scheduling follow-ups in the CRM, holding those activities, and continuing to change it until it's very logically concluded… I want either the customer to tell me that we're not moving forward with this or clear evidence that they're out of business, deceased, you name it. For all you know, their phone number changed and their email system is down every time you try to call them." *(Adam, Manager of Global Sales)*

From the data, it is found that closure-focused persistence consists of four particular tactics: 1) probe resistance, 2) reframe offer, 3) attempt close, and 4) threaten break-up.

Probe Resistance

One of the more common closure-focused persistence tactics that participants discussed in great detail was probing resistance, which varied in a dimensional range from low to high. This refers to the degree to which salespeople encourage hesitant prospects to articulate the reasons for their hesitation to purchase from the firm. Salespeople will confront the prospects by explicitly asking them to explain their objections. In the following passage, Kane conveys how it is of the utmost importance for him to get at the crux of prospect resistance.

> "Interviewer: In general, what do you do when you face resistance from prospective buyers or clients?
>
> Kane: You try to find to why there's resistance. That's the number one thing. If they're pushing back on you, you need to find out why they're pushing back and it could be, you know, there are many reasons why they could be pushing back. So finding out which one of those, if it's one or many, and then trying to address those concerns, is probably the first and foremost thing that you're trying to do, is think on your feet a little bit as well when you are getting pushback… Yeah, it's getting to the crux of why are they pushing back and then addressing that. That's probably the first and foremost thing you're trying to figure out." *(Kane, Global Treasury Sales Vice President)*

Only by probing and digging deeper with prospects do salespeople get a sense of closure. Hence, salespeople will persist by probing the resistance as a way to "call out" the prospect and hold them accountable. Participants also mentioned that a challenge arises when prospects put up a "smoke screen." In these instances, prospects may be sending salespeople mixed signals and it is incumbent on the salesperson to probe and get to the "bottom if it." As several of the participants mentioned, there was an initial interest by the prospect when they agreed to meet with the salesperson. So, when they face reluctance, they believe that they have the prerogative to probe. Walter alludes to this in the following quote.

> "I typically don't like to go out without a fight. So I think a lot of new reps, what they do is if a customer gives them an objection or says, "You know what, I'm not interested", they don't fight back. They let the customer dictate what it is. For me, I try to figure out if we can't move forward, why? "Can you just tell me, is there something you needed to

> address? Is it a pricing issue?" You try to uncover that…From my perspective, there's a lot of times when you want to know why a customer's not going to do business with you and if they tell you after a couple of interactions, "Everything's good. Everything's good" and then all of a sudden they don't want to do business with you, I've got to figure out why." *(Walter, Major Account Executive)*

Reframe the Offer

A second category of closure-focused persistence that emerged from the data is reframe the offer. Ranging from a low to high dimensional range, this is characterized as the extent to which salespeople provide hesitant prospects alternative offers in an attempt to persuade a purchase. Several of the participants shared that, in response to prospect resistance, they would persist by changing their sales "message from time to time" in order to discover the motives of the prospect. The logic here is that if a salesperson can "put it in a different light" or "sweeten the deal," they will be able to entice and assess prospect interest. By doing so, salespeople are able to either gain commitment or not in order to obtain the closure that they seek. Bruce stresses the importance of reframing the offer in response to mixed signals from hesitant prospects.

> "In some cases, if you get a mixed signal, what you have to do is stop and reengineer the vision with the prospect across the table from you. As an example, if they're not seeing the path that you're talking about, then you step back and reengineer the vision so that they understand the path, so that they have a better understanding of the path, and then you move it on through the process and you'll get mixed signals but mixed signals are also opportunities… Some salespeople will get defensive because they feel like they're getting a no and they'll immediately go into defensive mode and that's a mistake. What you do is use it as an opportunity to maybe do something like, "Well, what if we could do this instead of that? Would that be a better fit? What if we look at it from a different approach? It might work better under that type of arrangement… persistence is just something where you take your cues and try to reengineer the vision and move on." *(Bruce, Vice President of Sales and Marketing)*

When employing this persistence tactic, participants discussed the importance of being creative and flexible. As Blake highlights, "persistent in thinking outside the box and approaching new ways to make the next sales call more successful." The objective is for salespeople to find new and alternative ways to gauge and test hesitant prospects, with the

ultimate hope of obtaining a positive response (i.e., prospect commitment). For the participants, reframing the offer allows them to overcome prospect "walls." The following quote from Earl illustrates.

> "Persistence is just staying on top of that customer continuously, not accepting no, continuing to build relationships and break down walls. Walls are created by the customer because they've got other suppliers or they're too busy to see you. It's just constantly trying to find new angles and new tactics to break that wall down and being persistent, to me, is just continually following up and staying on top of a prospect until you have the opportunity to hopefully get in the door with them and start working. A sales rep has to be persistent." *(Earl, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing)*

Attempt Close

A third category of closure-focused persistence that was found is attempt close. Consisting of a dimensional range of low to high, this entails explicitly asking hesitant prospects for a commitment and, perhaps, even an order. Salespeople employ this tactic in an effort to directly induce true prospect motives. By putting them "on the spot" and being straight, salespeople are able to force immediate reactions that allow them to gain the conclusion that they desire. For example, Walden, who has been in sales for thirteen years and recently started his own company, talks about how it is important for him to attempt to close a prospect as a way for him to illicit a prospect reaction. Based on this reaction, he is able to determine his next course of action.

> "The first thing is asking what's the right next step? Does this sound like something you'd be interested in pursuing and doing moving forward? So basically getting a verbal, "Yes, I want to move forward and get a contract" and the other thing is, I try as best as I can to never just deliver the contract and send them an email but, if I can, sit down and meet with them and actually go through it. If I can't sit down in person, then actually walking them through it on the phone as we go over the contract, the main points. So I can get their reaction of what, you know, if they all of a sudden, we're at contract point and they say, "No", I explain it to them or there might be something they misread that could be causing an issue down the road but, too, if I do explain it to them and they go, "Man, that's high" on that particular item, then I know where we probably need to think about negotiating. I can go, "What are you thinking there?" and maybe get some feedback on it, so I can go back to the other people in the team and say, "Well, what

> about if we did this?" and try basically to communicate that and go and negotiate for that." *(Walden, Chief Executive Officer)*

Along these lines, salespeople who obtain this immediate response are able to gain the resolution they seek much sooner. According to Adam, "obviously you can ask… a lot sales guys don't like doing that. I'm actually a fan of it because it tells you where to stop spending time that you don't have." Despite the benefits, it was interesting to see that this tactic was not as common and prevalent among the participants. For those who did attempt a close with hesitant prospects, the importance of being fearless and being able "flat out ask" was emphasized. According to them, it is appropriate to directly ask for an order because they have done all of the legwork to get to that point. For instance, Blake boasts how he is not afraid of attempting to close.

> "You can't be afraid to ruffle feathers by asking for the business… You have to ask for the business. In any sales position, you can't just go in there and go through your entire product presentation or service presentation and say, "Okay, thank you for your time" and leave… If you don't ask for the business, then you're not holding your customer accountable. You have to put it back on them… If you've done all your work and presented a product, if you don't ask them for anything, then what are you selling? What are you doing? I think it's important to, if you've done your part, you cannot be afraid to ask for the business especially after you've done all the legwork." *(Blake, Senior Sales Professional)*

Threaten Break-Up

The final type of closure-focused persistence that appeared in the data is threaten break-up. This particular tactic refers to the degree to which salespeople notify hesitant prospects that they will no longer be actively pursuing their business. Here, participants discussed how they responded to resistance from prospects by simply conveying to them that they would no longer be contacting them. The objective of doing so is to directly extract the prospect's "state of mind." Participants described how threatening to disengage from a prospect was a good way to trigger prospect intentions. The idea behind this approach is that prospects will reveal their true

intentions by how they respond. If they are really interested, they will respond in a positive way and ask for the salesperson to continue to be engaged. Meanwhile, if they are not remotely interested, they will not respond. Lucas, who is a firm believer of this approach, demonstrates how he utilizes this.

> "I guess being persistent means continuing the course of action until you get like a response, either yea or nay. Basically until they say, "Yes, let's move forward" or "No, now's not a good time" or to the point where I've pursued them and I don't think it's going to go forward, so I send a breakup email or a breakup template to try to either draw them back into the process or set the stage for down the road… So usually that's when giving that out, that "Hey, this is the last email I'm going to send you. If I don't hear back, I don't want to bug you if you're not interested. I'd love to work with you but I understand timing is a factor." If they don't engage with that kind of breakup email, I just disconnect." *(Logan, Director of Business Development)*

Salespeople use this approach in order to determine if they are of value. They recognize that prospects have expressed some initial interest when they agreed to meet with them, but in order to gain the closure and conclusion that they seek; they need to determine if they are even "worth it." While this may be a risky approach, participants did discuss that it was sometimes the best way to gain the feedback and guidance that they need in calculating where to invest their time. In the following passage, Matthew articulates how he uses a breakup email after several follow-up attempts.

> "Interviewer: What does being persistent mean to you?
>
> Matthew: Well, I think it just means feeling you're worth it, putting the effort into following up in an appropriate way and even following up differently. It's a hard thing to remember that this is what I do all day long but for the people that I'm selling to, it is not their primary focus any day let alone every day, like it is for me. So I try to be respectful. I try to not be irritating in pursuing but generally how far I get in the process, somebody's read a few e-books on my website and I call them and they look like they might be a good lead but I don't really know much about them, I might call and email them a combined total of three, four, maybe five times at most and then typically I send what I call a breakup email. "Hey, this seems like something that would be helpful to you but it's not the right time. I completely understand. I'm not going to bother you anymore. Let me know if something changes and you'd like to talk" and every once in a while, that actually gets them engaged again but if it doesn't, I'm happy to just let it go and get rid of

> it… If they're interested, it seems like it's a good fit, seems like it might be able to happen, that one I'll pay a little more attention and have a few more phone calls to push it until you know for sure that it is going to happen or it's not going to happen or maybe it's not going to happen right now… I'm just trying to be consistent so I know if it's going to happen or it's not." *(Matthew, Senior Business Advisor)*

Salesperson Specific Skill

Another significant finding from this study was that salesperson persistence shouldn't be considered in isolation and instead needs to also account for individual salesperson skills. Participants discussed the importance of several key skills that they relied on for successful persistence efforts. For example, participants mentioned skills related to being able to interpret nonverbal behavior, leveraging existing connections and contacts, being persuasive, and appearing trustworthy. In grounded theory terminology, these were the "interaction strategies" that salespeople employed in their environment. While participants didn't explicitly use the term *political skill*, or any of its associated dimensions, a review of the literature reveals that participants were indeed describing the multiple components associated with this construct. According to a bourgeoning body of literature, political skill is "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (Ferris et al. 2005b, p. 127) and includes the dimensions of social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. This finding from the study is also consistent with the more recently developed salesperson theory-of-mind (SToM), which describes a salesperson's interpersonal-mentalizing skills, or the ability to "read the minds" of customers (Dietvorst et al. 2009). Using functional magnetic resonance imaging techniques from neuroscience and other methods, Dietvorst et al. (2009) show that SToM is comprised of four factors: 1) rapport building, 2) detecting nonverbal cues, 3) taking a bird's eye view, and 4) shaping the interaction.

Social Astuteness

One of the main skills that emerged from the data was salesperson social astuteness. On a range from low to high, this consists of the salesperson's ability to observe and understand themselves, the social environment around them, and the motivation of others (Ferris et al. 2007). In these cases, salespeople are keen to cues from hesitant prospects and the sales situation in order to enhance the outcome of their persistence efforts. Likewise, salespeople are able to use cues to curtail the negative implications of persistence. In addition to being able to understand and "read" prospects, participants acknowledged that it was important to exhibit self-awareness. Blake explains, "So I think self-awareness is a big thing. I think a lot of times, the typical salesperson is just unaware of how they are coming across in their surrounding and their environment and I think that's a big thing to be successful." With regards to the types of cues, many of the participants discussed being able to detect nonverbal behavior from hesitant prospects. This is evident in the following passage.

> "Hernando: I think you just have to be able to understand their verbiage, how they act with you if you meet with them the first time, if you can be persistent or not. Like I said, there's always ways to move around there. If they're open about it, be as persistent as you can.
>
> Interviewer: Can you tell me more about how you can tell, you'd said from a meeting, you have to understand their verbiage. Can you tell me a little bit more about how you gauge all of that?
>
> Hernando: Yeah, so when you're like in an interview or when your customer is somewhere, depending on how their, when I say verbiage, I mean like how they're acting, how their physical movements during an interview or in a conversation are, if they're really paying attention to you, if they're looking at you, eye to eye contact. If they're fiddling with their phone or writing notes or not looking at you, then you know they're not interested. If they cut you off or are interrupting you, I mean, that's what I mean about verbiage. It's not just about the talking but it's how they're acting when they're with you. If you're talking to them for two minutes and in those two minutes, they really pay attention to you, then that's a good sign. If you're in a meeting five minutes and out of those five minutes, they only met your eyes one time, I don't think a person

> really seems interested at first. He just wants me in and out. That's what I mean, you really have to learn how to identify those things." *(Hernando, Sales Manager)*

Participants also mentioned being on the lookout for other social cues. They discussed deliberately scanning the environment and "always picking up signals and filing them away." By being able to understand signals and social cues, salespeople are able to calculate where to expend their persistence efforts with hesitant prospects. For instance, Adam states the importance of being able to "pick up on the vibes of when it's definitely no longer worth pursuing the customer as it would be a waste of time or effort." As another example, the following passage with Ted illustrates how he is able to utilize emotional intelligence in order to determine where to direct his persistence efforts.

> "Ted: You just have to bring that emotional intelligence to the equation as well and really be able to determine if a particular prospect is a candidate to be persistent on. As I mentioned before, if you're working those five, six, seven touches in and you have those planned out, then that's good persistence. If you're working with a prospect and you think your solution would work well for them based on the problems and challenges they've been talking to you about and for whatever reason they're not seeing it, that may be worth persistence as well and maybe attacking the issue from another angle but you also don't want to, as I mentioned, you don't want to cross over that line. So if you're overly persistent and just hammering a prospect with phone calls or emails at a rate that's just getting annoying, then that's overly persistent. I'd probably say persistence is less important than knowing how to use it and that's where that emotional intelligence comes into play.
>
> Interviewer: Can you tell me more about emotional intelligence and how exactly it comes into play there?
>
> Ted: Absolutely. Emotional intelligence is really just being able to gauge the emotions of somebody else, being able to, throughout a conversation, determine how receptive they are, how in-tune they are. Are you keeping them engaged? It's really just being able to tell the emotions of the other person as you're talking to them and the way that ties into persistence is it's a great way to notice whether you need to push a little harder, be a little bit more persistent with them, or whether you need to back off for a little bit, let them absorb some of the information, and maybe keep them in the loop rather than just continuing to hammer their phone lines or be overtly pushy. That's where emotional intelligence comes into play there." *(Ted, Account Executive)*

Interpersonal Influence

Another ability that participants mentioned was interpersonal influence. This refers to the salesperson's subtle style of influence and behavioral flexibility (Ferris et al. 2005b). In the marketing and sales literature, this is most analogous to the well-established notion of adaptive selling (Spiro and Weitz 1990). Here, participants talked about building rapport, articulating clearly, and becoming likeable. By doing so, salespeople can come off as being trustworthy, innocent, and non-intimidating. Consequently, salespeople are able to be more convincing and persuasive. Abigail mentions the importance of being friendly and personable as a way to "humanize" the sales role, especially since salespeople tend to have such a negative stereotype.

> "You always hear people buy from people they like, so I think it's a lot easier and you get a lot farther if you show up with a friendly face. I don't know how to articulate this, but I do feel like I do well because I'm personable and friendly. I do share personal things. I'm not strictly business when I go in to an account. I think you have to humanize the role or people aren't really going to want to be around you or buy from you. You have to be likeable…. I mean, I think people in general make certain assumptions about salespeople and so I think to build trust, respect, and develop that relationship is paramount to being successful in sales. You have to be personable. I guess that's what I mean by humanizing." *(Abigail, Senior Specialty Sales Professional)*

Another important aspect to interpersonal influence is the ability to adapt to different and changing situations. In order to do so, participants discussed the significance of active listening and the necessity of being able to effectively interact. The objective is to get prospects to arrive at the salesperson's desired goal, by shaping the interaction and making the prospect feel like they are independently making the decision without being pressured to do so. This is evident in the following quote by Brad.

> "You can't be very inward-focused. You need to be able to interact. People want to buy things from people they like. So being likeable, not talkative, but being able to have engaging conversations is important. You can talk too much. You want to be a good listener too so you understand the needs because a lot of people don't want to, a true salesperson will sell something without the person feeling like they've been sold. They feel like they've had a need met. So being able to be talkative but in a way that is also

> listening to the needs and really addressing the concerns." *(Brad, Senior Business Development Representative)*

Networking Ability

A third important ability that emerged from the data is networking ability, which describes a salesperson's use of social capital as a way to gain an advantage (Brass 2001). Salespeople with superlative networking ability are able to better position themselves for success by leveraging their connections and contacts. This allows them to identify with whom to persist and where they will have the greatest opportunity for success in their persistence efforts. They take advantage of their networks and try to build on relationships they currently have to gain information and entry with new prospects. Because these salespeople have strong networks, they are able to find alternative paths to ensure a higher rate of success. Take the following statement, by Parker, as an example.

> "If you make a commitment that you're going to be in a meeting with someone, you make that commitment to your boss, make that commitment to your company, make that commitment to yourself, you've got to find a way to get out and get that meeting with that company. So I'd start by reaching out to the folks I perceived to be the decision makers at that company. If I was unable to reach them, then I'd find another path. I'd use a tool like LinkedIn and find some people I know that are in common with some folks at that company and I'd use them and their relationships to try to get an introduction. If that didn't work, I'd find another path. I'd talk to some people that I network with and find out maybe some guidance on the best way to get into an account. Maybe we check and see whenever those people are speaking on a panel. If it means attending their conference, just talking to somebody for ten minutes that spoke on a panel, not giving in until you get the meeting. To me, that's being persistent." *(Parker, Sales Executive)*

Participants also talked about using their networks in order to confirm their volitions. In particular, participants would use their networks in order to validate their decision on which prospects to persist with in order to enhance success. Palmer, a seasoned salesperson who is now a sales manager, explains how he proactively uses his network to gain information. In doing so,

he is aiming at ensuring that he channels his persistence efforts towards prospects that provide the greatest opportunity for success.

> "If I have a sales call later this week and I'm making a visit to that client and I'm meeting this person for the first time, the best thing I could do is, number one, go on their website and find out about that company. I should know what products they produce and serve the market with, how many locations they have, and is there anybody on that website that I might know? Chances are maybe not. Make sure I'm familiar with their products. Then let me look at this person on LinkedIn. Even if we're not connected, I can go up and take a look and make sure exactly what their responsibilities are, how long they've been with the company, and what did they do before? Okay, so maybe they came from a company that I know very well. Maybe we know somebody either at the current company they're in or the company they used to work at before. The other thing I'll do is take a look at their connections… I may talk to people in the industry that I know, colleagues, to see if they're doing business with them and what they think about them and just try to validate my thoughts… I use colleagues. I use information that's at my disposal, be it LinkedIn or the business news, about what's going on with the company." *(Palmer, Manager of Business Development)*

Apparent Sincerity

The last dimension of political skill, which was inherent in the data, is apparent sincerity. This denotes a salesperson's ability to be perceived as being authentic, genuine, sincere, and honest (Ferris et al. 2007). Salespeople who are perceived as such are able to gain prospect confidence. Participants reiterated the importance of being honest and viewed as trustworthy in order to enhance the credibility of their persistence efforts. By doing so, salespeople are not believed to be selfish and manipulative. For example, Sean underscores the importance of showing honesty and integrity in his interactions with hesitant prospects.

> "Oh yeah, every customer is different, just like every salesperson is different. You have to be a business chameleon, so to speak. What works for one customer is not necessarily going to work for the next customer or any other. There are certain things that are probably core to all customers and in that case, I would say honesty and integrity. Those work for everybody." *(Sean, Senior Account Manager)*

Participants really showed a sense of pride when they were perceived as being sincere with prospects, as this was an indication of success. Dana boasts, "they called me a straight

shooter, which was a very big compliment to me because it tells me that I do the right thing and I don't try and oversell." Other participants indicated how appearing sincere made it look like they were "passive" and less "pushy," leaving a positive impression with hesitant prospects. This is because prospects construe the salesperson as being an "extension" of their business and genuinely concerned with their best interests and well-being. It is important to note that participants acknowledged that this is not an instantaneous process. Appearing sincere is not something that salespeople can "fake." Instead, salespeople have to develop this image and reputation over time. Tara, a senior sales executive at one of the largest corporations in the world, explains how she adopts a "can-do attitude" with prospects by demonstrating her commitment to them by doing the little things.

> "I believe if you do the little things along the way that are meaningful, the customer's going to trust you with the big things because you've proven that you're going to be there for them on the little things. If you don't do the little things right, they're never going to agree to the big things. So I think a can-do attitude is important to communicate your commitment to their success or the success of the partnership." *(Tara, Senior Sales Executive)*

Salesperson Persistence Conditions

Goal Attainment

The data supported that one of the important drivers of persistence is goal attainment. This finding is consistent with the myriad of existing research on goals and goal-setting theory (Austin and Vancouver 1996; Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999; Latham 2003; Latham and Locke 1979; Locke and Latham 1990; Tammemagi, O'Hora, and Maglieri 2013). According to this rich body of literature, persistence is a critical mechanism that individuals employ in order to achieve the goals that they set or that have been assigned to them. Goal attainment is especially significant and prevalent in the context of sales, where sales people are often assigned sales goals (Brown et al. 1997; Fang et al. 2004; Verbeke and Bagozzi 2000). Salespeople are commonly

assigned a sales quota, in which they are responsible for attaining. Hence, it is no surprise that salespeople tend to be goal-oriented and motivated to work towards their goals. For example, Jacob acknowledges, "goals and objectives fulfill me… I think salespeople tend to be folks that are driven by goals… meeting or exceeding those different targets is fulfilling." Participants regularly discussed that one of the main reasons that they persisted with hesitant prospects was to move towards achieving their personal or organizational goals. Ted summarizes what drives him to persist with hesitant prospects and how it is an important element of his job.

> "When you persist, it definitely sets you up to help better reach your goals. I remember, I saw a stat somewhere that a lot of times, it takes at least three touches before a prospect will respond or reach out to you. Often times, I've found the best results are found when you touch them five or six times or maybe even a little more than that. The numbers show that, I mean, if you just reach out to them like once, then you'll probably get lost in the shuffle of life and it's nothing out of malice. They're just too busy to miss one touch and not even think about it. Persistence, it's definitely by reaching out to them more than the once in a while. You get more calls. You get more engagement. You get more meetings and demos by being persistent. At that point, you're playing the numbers. So it definitely reflects in your quota. It helps you reach both your professional and personal goals when it comes to meeting your sales goals." *(Ted, Account Executive)*

Expected Pay-Off

Another significant driver of persistence that emerged from our data is expected pay-off. Here, participants shared how their persistence efforts were motivated by financial gains, feelings of success, and the "thrill of a win." In all of these cases, participants specified that they would assess and calculate the "return on investment." Salespeople would carefully research and consider the size and potential for an opportunity, probability of closing, perceived fit with the prospect, and likeability of the prospect in their decisions to persist. This is consistent with recent findings in the entrepreneurship literature, which found that entrepreneurs' decision to persist is a function of the probability of success, financial returns, non-financial benefits, and switching

costs (Holland and Shepherd 2013). The following quote from Carter illustrates how he diligently evaluates a prospect in order to channel his persistence efforts.

> "Once you kind of, well, with any prospect, you do your background due diligence. I kind of have an understanding of size and scope and business model and, for example, if you're going in and setting up a whole bunch of insurance policies on a company, if a company's got five hundred employees versus five, you kind of have an understanding of how much money you're about to make. If it's a five person company, I may give them the time of day, but I'm not going to roll the red carpet out for them. If you know you're about to make and have the potential to make a pretty good amount of money with somebody, you're going to stay at them and at least force them into giving you the opportunity to quote their business." *(Carter, Account Manager)*

Salesperson Persistence Consequences

Salesperson Productivity

One of the substantial consequences of persistence that surfaced in the data was salesperson productivity. Here, participants alluded to the fact that persistence had a direct impact on their productivity. For salespeople, productivity refers to effectiveness and efficiency (Ahearne, Jelinek, and Rapp 2005; Robinson et al. 2002; Wilson and Hunt 2011). On the one hand, effectiveness is the extent to which salespeople are successful in performing their sales tasks and objectives. On the other hand, efficiency considers specifically the amount of resources salespeople use in order to obtain a desired outcome. With regards to effectiveness, participants recognized that persistence allowed them to ultimately succeed in their pursuit of prospects. For some, persistence was the sole reason they were able to secure new business. For example, Earl conveys how persistence and dedication may eventually lead to sales success.

> "Once that trust foundation is available, that customer will start opening up to you more and you can understand his business model better and how you can fit in it, but you have to just be able to see that and understand it so when a customer does push you out and says, "I'm not interested" or "No thanks", you have to be able to tell, "Do I need to cut my losses now because it's not worth it? There's nothing else there" or "Do I need to stay in contact and develop this?" Some people are going to get told no 70% of the time and the good reps, it didn't even bother them. They'll continue to go and take that 70 percentile, that one customer that's told them no two or three times, and turn it into a joke or a challenge and continue to get that guy. It might take one or two years to get him but

> they will get him because they're dedicated and they know the steps it takes to get that customer in the door." *(Earl, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing)*

Despite the potential for ultimate success from persisting with hesitant prospects, a majority of the participants acknowledged that one of the biggest challenges they faced was time management, especially since time is one of the biggest resources that they possess. As Adam succinctly put it, "the biggest asset for a sales guy is time. That's probably the number one thing he has. So over-pursuing or over-persistence on the wrong opportunities can chew up or destroy that resource." As such, salespeople are constantly struggling to gauge how to use their time. They have to be very strategic with how they allocate their time in order to maximize the return. However, some salespeople did suggest that persistence allowed them to more quickly identify where to use their time. This is apparent in the following quote from Bruce.

> "I think the best reason to persist is to evaluate the impact of persisting in a negative fashion and then also on the positive side is I'll go spend my time with someone that we can close and end up having a good customer relationship with…You can keep calling this customer, you can keep going to their office, you can keep doing whatever, and if it doesn't produce a result, then persistence has just made you less productive because you're not going to have a close ratio. The importance of selling is to be able to maximize your close ratio. If I'm on ten calls, I would rather close six of those calls than be on twenty calls or thirty calls because I want to keep on going and being persistent." *(Bruce, Vice President of Sales and Marketing)*

Salesperson Performance

In the data, it was found that the ultimate impact of persistence for salespeople is on salesperson performance. Salesperson performance is "behavior that has been evaluated in terms of its contribution to the goals of the organization" (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1979, p. 33). Accordingly, participants unanimously agreed that persistence, to some extent, contributed to performance. In fact, some participants attributed their successes more to persistence than anything else. These successes included generating sales revenue, meeting sales quotas, and receiving promotions within the organization. As the participants repeatedly mentioned, and is

vividly said by Brandon, “it’s knowing that it takes persistence in the first place. Somebody who thinks you can just make a few phone calls and get the sale is probably not going to be in sales very long.” Similarly, Claire adamantly believes that persistence is a prerequisite for salespeople and fully contributes to performance.

> “Interviewer: To what extent do you believe that being persistent contributes to your performance as a salesperson?
>
> Claire: Oh, I mean, 100%. If you give up on people that say no, you might as well quit being in sales. You’re going to hear no 20 times before you hear a yes. It’s so rare that you go into an office and talk to them and ask for business the first time you go in and they say, “Sure, here you go.” It happens but it’s pretty darn rare. They’re usually happy with who they’re using. Why should they switch? That’s the question and that’s what you need to find out. So if you aren’t persistent, you aren’t going to be in sales very long.” *(Claire, Sales Representative)*

While many participants associated persistence with success, participants emphasized that this is not always unequivocal. Along these lines, it was admitted that there was a “fine-line” and that it was a constant balancing act. It is important for salespeople to persist but, as the participants recognized, there are negative consequences (e.g., annoying prospects) associated with persisting that could lead to detrimental effects on performance. As such, salespeople have to persist at “healthy levels” and be careful to not over-persist in order to reap the benefits of persistence. As Tara very eloquently remarks,

> “Oh, I think it’s very important. I think that it’s important to be persistent as a salesperson to be successful, but at a healthy level. I think the follow-up, I think that it demonstrates a willingness to reach a goal but it also is important to recognize when to focus your energy elsewhere. It’s back to saying no, realizing when the effort outweighs the benefit because if a customer agrees to something reluctantly or, what’s the word, too quickly, if they don’t really think through the process, then they may end up regretting the decision and maybe feeling a little coerced or pushed into it and that’s not really setting yourself up.” *(Tara, Senior Sales Executive)*

Summary of Qualitative Findings

This qualitative study sought to gain insights regarding the nature of persistence in sales and the behavioral manifestation of persistence in a sales context. Interviews with thirty-one sales professionals revealed several key findings. First, persistence in sales should be considered as a form of social influence. Second, salesperson persistence is a multifaceted phenomenon that includes more than one way for salespeople to persist (i.e., nurture-focused and closure-focused). Each persistence approach contains persistence tactics that salespeople enact (e.g., attempt close, maintain contact). Third, the findings suggest that salesperson persistence is contingent on an individual salesperson's political skill. Political skill is a higher order phenomenon that consists of social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. Fourth, the findings shed light on two particular causal conditions – namely, goal attainment and expected pay-off – that lead a salesperson to persist. Finally, the study provides evidence that the consequences resulting from salesperson persistence are related to productivity and performance. In the next chapter, these findings are elaborated in further detail with regards to how they pertain to, and build on, the existing literature.

CHAPTER THREE - LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a literature review. The review is composed of two parts. Part One offers a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and theoretical underpinnings of the dissertation. In particular, an extensive review of persistence, social influence theory, political skill, adaptive selling, and influence tactics is provided. The aim of this section is to provide a substantive examination of the literature and to describe the theoretical justification for this study. Part Two builds on the thorough review of the literature provided in Part One and presents the conceptual model. Moreover, social influence theory is used to develop the hypotheses. Additionally, the impact of persistence approaches on sales productivity and the moderating effect of political skill are discussed.

Part One: Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Persistence

Significance of Persistence

Persistence is ubiquitous and deeply engrained in culture and society. For instance, America was founded and built on the premise that hard work and persistent pursuit of goals leads to success, happiness, and privilege (Miller and Wrosch 2007). The popularity of persistence is further accentuated by the virtue, glorification, and rewards given to those who persist. As such, young kids are taught to be persistent in school, athletes are told be persistent in their sport, and business professionals are advised to persist in order to ascend the corporate ladder.

A myriad of success stories are found in the media and popular press as examples of

persistent people who have created successful businesses in the face of adversity and tribulations along the way (Brower 2007). The message here is clear: "persistence pays off." The significance of persistence in society is succinctly summarized in the following quote by the United States president Calvin Coolidge:

> "Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race." (Originally cited in Knowles 1999, p. 537)

The quote by Coolidge and the view by many individuals indicate that persistence is a desirable and admirable quality (Meier and Albrecht 2003). This is even more evident in many popular adages, such as "a winner never quits and a quitter never wins," "when the going gets tough, the tough get going," "if at first you don't succeed try, try again," and "energy and persistence conquer all things." Hence, when people develop plans to pursue certain goals, constant persistence in implementing those plans is a requirement for successful goal attainment (Zhang et al. 2013). The role of persistence is more noteworthy in situations where the path to goal attainment is "paved with snags and barriers" (Fox and Hoffman 2002). This is because persistence is truly tested in situations where we are not told or guaranteed a specific outcome (Di Paula and Campbell 2002). Nonetheless, people who persist at life goals and "press on" have reported higher subjective well-being, good health, fare better under stress, and lead more productive lives (Bandura 1996; Carver and Scheier 2001; Di Paula and Campbell 2002; Miller and Wrosch 2007; Sheldon et al. 2010).

With an organizational context, persistence is highly desirable (Goltz 1999; Sandelands et al. 1988). Many practitioners agree that persistence is important to have and that persistence usually pays off. For example, persistence is crucial in entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurs are

constantly faced with the decision to persist with their venture in the face of adversity (Gatewood et al. 2002; Shane, Locke, and Collins 2003). Accordingly, research has found that persistence is an important driver of entrepreneurial success (Alvarez and Busenitz 2001; DeTienne, Shepherd, and De Castro 2008; Holland and Shepherd 2013). The occurrence of persistence is especially significant in a sales context. In a survey of 215 sales managers from a mixture of industries, it was found that persistence was the fourth-highest rated factor related to salesperson success, after listening skills, follow-up skills, and the ability to adapt sales style from situation to situation (Marshall et al. 2003). Similarly, Keck et al. (1995) found that, within multi-line insurance agency sales, persistence was the third-highest ranked item after personal enjoyment of selling and willingness to work hard as a critical success factor associated with sales performance.

Interestingly, given the prevalence and significance of persistence for individuals, society, and business, persistence and persistent goal striving remains rather underexplored (Fischer et al. 2007). This is especially striking given the fact that very few considerable goals are achieved without encountering adversity and obstacles. Consequently, emotional and financial tolls may be exhibited. Within a sales context, it is surprising that the phenomenon of persistence has been by and large neglected, especially when considering the fact that persistence is a critical success factor thought to contribute to salesperson performance, and tends to be an integral message transmitted to salespeople by managers. So, while persistence has been studied sporadically and positive psychology has renewed interest in investigating persistence (Seligman et al. 2005), the lack of attention in the sales domain makes it a worthy and fruitful area for scholars to explore. It would therefore seem that it is of critical importance to further understand the role of persistence as it pertains to the sales world.

What is Persistence?

In order to begin exploring the notion of persistence, it is necessary to examine how it has been conceptualized and studied in the literature. Persistence has been studied in a variety of disciplines, such as education (Gloria and Ho 2003; Witkow et al. 2015; Zhang et al. 2013), psychology (Cupach et al. 2011; Etcheverry and Le 2005; Walton et al. 2012), marketing (Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999; Fischer et al. 2007; Gal and McShane 2012), management (Bowles and Flynn 2010; Patel and Thatcher 2014; Wanberg et al. 2005), sport science (Gernigon, Fleurance, and Reine 2000; Le Foll et al. 2006; Martin-Krumm et al. 2003), and economics (Barañano and Moral 2013; Benhabib et al. 2006; Bentzen et al. 2005). More specifically, and for purposes here, the study of persistence can be delineated into those contexts that fall within the business literature and those that do not. In particular, the non-business literature has examined persistence in a myriad of contexts, including academic persistence (Bank, Biddle, and Slavings 1992; Dooley, Payne, and Robb 2012; Witkow et al. 2015), pretrial publicity effects persistence (Daftary-Kapur et al. 2014), relationship persistence (Arriaga et al. 2006; Cupach et al. 2011; Walton et al. 2012), stalker persistence (McEwan, Mullen, and MacKenzie 2009), sports persistence (Le Foll et al. 2006; Martin-Krumm et al. 2003; Orbach, Singer, and Murphey 1997), gambling persistence (Billieux et al. 2012; Ladouceur and Sévigny 2005; Young et al. 2008), adolescence persistence (Garcia et al. 2012), and food and beverage processing and innovation persistence (Triguero, Córcoles, and Cuerva 2013).

Likewise, the business literature includes studies spanning across a wide variety of contexts, including entrepreneurship (DeTienne et al. 2008; Gimeno et al. 1997; Holland and Shepherd 2013; Millán, Congregado, and Román 2014), entrepreneurship education programs (Fayolle and Gailly 2015), self-employment (Patel and Thatcher 2014), leadership (Ghoshal and

Bruch 2003; Ilies, Judge, and Wagner 2006; Kovjanic, Schuh, and Jonas 2013), job search (Hausknecht 2010; Wanberg et al. 2005), consumer behavior (Fischer et al. 2007; Gal and McShane 2012; Jones 2008), and organizational behavior (Conlon 1980; Grant 2008; Grant et al. 2007; Sandelands et al. 1988). Overall, a survey of the literature reveals that persistence has widely been viewed, utilized, and conceptualized differently across disciplines and contexts (see Table 2 for a review of select research on persistence).

Behavioral Persistence

One particular conceptualization is that persistence encompasses behavior and includes goal-directed behavior. From this behavioral perspective, persistence consists of the behavior associated with the continued course of action over time capturing the behavioral outcomes that evolve over time (Seo et al. 2004). Highly persistent individuals are described behaviorally as "determined, conscientious, and ambitious because their enthusiasm and perseverance in hard work often leads them to becoming overachievers in academic and occupational roles" (Cloninger et al. 2011, p. 2). Meanwhile, people who tend to be low in persistence are described behaviorally as "changeable, irresolute, and easily discouraged" (Cloninger, Svrakic, and Przybeck 1993; Cloninger et al. 2011). From a relationship pursuit point of view, persistence is conceptualized as both the frequency and intensity of relationship pursuit (Cupach et al. 2011; Davis, Ace, and Andra 2000). In this instance, persistence behaviors range in degree, from mild (e.g., repeated calls) to extreme (e.g., surveillance) (Roberts 2005; Spitzberg and Cupach 2014). Likewise, a persistent stalker is described by his or her continued behavior in spite of intervention (McEwan et al. 2009). Similarly, academic persistence is conceptualized as including general and specific goal-directed behaviors associated with commitment to action (e.g., attaining a college degree) (Robbins et al. 2004).

Table 2 - Select Research on Persistence

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Witkow, Huynh, and Fuligni (2015)	Participants were considered as persisting if they (a) had already graduated from a four-year college or (b) were currently attending a four-year college or studying for a Bachelor's degree	Academic persistence	Dependent variable	Longitudinal survey	408 Latino, Asian, and European-American students	1. Family obligations, discrimination, and financial burdens are associated with higher rates of persistence 2. Reducing ethnic disparities in college persistence should not only include academic factors, but also family circumstances that may cause college attendance to be a hardship
Patel and Thatcher (2014)	Persistence in self-employment occurs when individuals who are engaged in self-employment decide to stay self-employed	Self-employment persistence	Dependent variable	Longitudinal survey	Employment history of a cohort of 2,839 individuals	1. Individual attributes play an important role in self-employment persistence 2. Openness to experience, autonomy, and tenacious goal pursuit increase persistence in self-employment, while neuroticism reduces persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Holland and Shepherd (2013)	Persistence occurs when the entrepreneur chooses to continue with an opportunity regardless of counterinfluences or enticing alternatives	Entrepreneur persistence	Dependent variable	Conjoint experiment	100 entrepreneurs	1. There is a direct effect of adversity on the persistence decision for entrepreneurs 2. An entrepreneur's personal values (other than economic or extrinsic motivation) affect the way they choose to persist
Kovjanic, Schuh, and Jonas (2013)	Persistence measured as how much time participants spent on the idea-generating task	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	190 German employees	1.There is a link between transformational leadership and employee persistence. 2. Satisfaction of the needs for competence and relatedness mediates the relationship between transformational and work engagement, which, in turn, has a positive relationship to quality, quantity, and persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Zhang, Chan, and Guan (2013)	Persistence is the degree to which an individual continues a goal-directed behavior until the goal is achieved	Academic persistence	Moderator	Experimental	Undergraduate students (148 in study 1, 138 in study 2)	1. Persistence is positively associated with goal progress among participants with implementation intentions 2. Implementation intentions facilitate goal progress when one persists in goal-directed behavior
Garcia, Kerekes, and Archer (2012)	Persistence is a temperament dimension characterized by the extent to which a person will continue to expect and seek rewards even when the expected outcome is only rarely successful	Adolescent persistence	Independent variable	Survey	High school students (304 in study 1, 164 in study 2)	1. The relationship between persistence and positive affect is mediated by self-directedness, whereas there is no support that self-directedness mediates the relationship between persistence and negative affect and life satisfaction 2. Persistence maintains motivation through delay periods, while self-directedness yields pleasant experiences

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Belderbos, Gilsing, and Lokshin (2012)	Persistence is the degree to which prior involvement in an alliance with a specific partner type predicts current involvement in such alliances (being engaged in past alliance activities increases the probability to be engaged in these activities currently)	Alliances persistence	Dependent variable	Secondary panel data	3,181 firms	1. Alliance strategies with different partner types exhibit different degrees of persistence 2. Alliance strategies with different partner types are interrelated, where the interrelation effects are not necessarily less pronounced than persistence effects
Gal and McShane (2012)	Persistence is the degree to which a consumer continuously pursues his or her goal until completion (eliminating debt)	Consumer persistence (getting out of debt)	Dependent variable	Longitudinal secondary data	5,943 clients of a debt settlement company	1. Completing discrete subtasks motivates consumers to persist in pursuit of a goal 2. There is a positive effect of subgoal completion on goal persistence 3. Closing off debt accounts is predictive of a person eliminating debts at any point

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Walton, Cohen, Cwir, and Spencer (2012)	Persistence is measured by the time spent on a particular task (insoluble math puzzle)	Math problem-solving persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	Undergraduate students (75 in study1, 26 in study 2, 116 in study 3, 112 in study 4)	1. Mere sense of social connectedness and belonging enhances achievement motivation 2. People acquire interests and goals from others, especially those who they feel socially connected to
Cloninger, Zohar, Hirschmann, and Dahan (2011)	Persistence is characterized by the extent to which a person will continue to expect and seek rewards even when the expected outcome is only rarely successful	Affective and clinical disorders	Independent variable	Interviews, survey	285 Israeli individuals	1. Highly persistent people are more likely to have anxiety disorders than mood disorders, even with the presence of other traits (high harm avoidance and low self-directedness) that increase the risk for both 2. High persistence increases both positive and negative emotions 3. High persistence reduces negative emotions and increases positive emotions if the individual is easy going

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Cupach, Spitzberg, Bolingbroke, and Tellitocci (2011)	Persistence is manifested in both the frequency and intensity of relationship pursuit behavior	Dating and romantic relationships reconciliation persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	433 undergraduate students	There is strong support that linking, rumination, and self-efficacy predict persistence of reconciliation attempts after the breakup of a dating or romantic relationship
Patzelt, Lechner, and Klaukien (2011)	Persistence is measured as the likelihood to allocate further resources to an underperforming R&D project	Project management persistence	Dependent variable	Conjoint experiment	1,632 decision points (nested within 51 scientists)	Positive feedback enhances persistence of underperforming R&D projects, and this effect becomes stronger with increasing network size, network density, and communication frequency
Bowles and Flynn (2010)	Persistence is continuing to negotiate in the face of "no"	Negotiation persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	University students and staff (77 in study 1, 114 in study 2)	1. Gender composition of dyads affects persistence in negotiations 2. Women persist more with male naysayers than with female naysayers in a stereotypically low-status/indirect manner

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Hausknecht (2010)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent to which candidates continue to retest and repeat the selection process following an unsuccessful first attempt	Job application persistence	Dependent variable (measured as a binary variable)	Longitudinal secondary data	15,338 candidates	1. Responsibility does not predict retest propensity 2. Internal candidates are five times more likely to repeat the selection process than external candidates 3. Failing candidates pursued alternative response strategies when retesting, as opposed to passing candidates who generally replicated their initial profiles
Hoang and Gimeno (2010)	Persistence consists of the actions taken in response to negative feedback	Venture and organizational founding persistence	Dependent variable	Conceptual	N/A	1. Founders with a central entrepreneurial identity may be more committed to their role and avoid giving up prematurely 2. As opposed to those with low centrality, individuals with high centrality are less likely to abandon their efforts in response to negative environmental feedback

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
McEwan, Mullen, and MacKenzie (2009)	Persistence consists of behavior that continues in spite of intervention (there may be fluctuations in intensity). Persistent stalkers continue to harass the victim in the face of interventions intended to make them desist	Stalking persistence	Dependent variable (measured as low, moderate, or high)	Longitudinal secondary data	200 stalkers	1. The type of prior relationship between stalker and victim is strongly associated with persistence, with prior acquaintances the most persistent, and strangers the least 2. Greater stalking persistence is related to being older than 30 years, psychosis, sending the victim unsolicited materials, and having an intimacy seeking or resentful motivation
DeTienne, Shepherd, and De Castro (2008)	Persistence consists of the extent of continuing to pursue a venture despite poor performance	Entrepreneur persistence (for under-performing firms)	Dependent variable	Conjoint experiment, survey	89 entrepreneurs	The decision to persist with an under-performing firm is related to environmental munificence, personal investment, personal options, previous organizational success, and perceived collect efficacy

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Grant (2008)	Persistence refers to the amount of time that employees invest in their efforts (operationalized as the number of overtime hours as overtime measures the time employees invest in their work (Mitchell and Daniels 2003)	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	58 firefighters (study 1), 140 fundraising callers (study 2)	Intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between prosocial motivation and persistence, such that high levels of intrinsic motivation strengthen this relationship
Grant et al. (2007)	Persistence is the time an individual spends on a task – (e.g., persistent callers are willing to be on the phone, especially in response to inevitably frequent rejections)	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	39 fundraising callers (study 1), 39 undergraduate students (study 2), 122 undergraduate students (study 3)	1. Minimal and brief contact with beneficiaries can enable employees to maintain their motivation 2. Respectful contact, which is the degree of communication between employees and beneficiaries that is characterized by courtesy and appreciation, increases persistence behavior of employees

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Miller and Wrosch (2007)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent to "press on" when there are serious obstacles to realizing goals	Adolescent persistence	Independent variable	Survey (blood collection for C-reactive protein)	90 adolescents	1. The inability to disengage from goals has downstream biological consequences (systematic inflammation) 2. People who can disengage from unattainable goals enjoy better well-being 3. Persistence can be maladaptive
Klehe and Anderson (2007)	Persistence is the degree to which level of effort is sustained over time (measured as the participant's linear regression weight of level of effort over time, where a negative weight indicates lower persistence)	Internet search persistence	Dependent variable	Experiment (internet search task)	138 undergraduate students	Measures of motivation (e.g., direction of effort, computer self-efficacy, and persistence) played an important role in predicting typical performance, whereas measures of ability (e.g., procedural skills and knowledge of the means and content of the task) played a greater role under maximum performance conditions

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Fischer, Otnes, and Tuncay (2007)	Persistence is conceptualized as repeated attempts to try and achieve goals when "smooth action toward goal attainment is impeded in some manner" (Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999)	Consumer persistence (pursuing parenthood using ART – assisted reproductive technologies)	N/A	Qualitative – semi-structured interviews	23 women, 3 men	1. When consumers pursue parenthood, the discourses of scientific rationalism, self-management, and fatalism collectively furnish them with a range of understandings of whether and how to persist 2. Integrating cultural and cognitive perspectives is important to gain a richer understanding of consumer persistence (cultural perspective complements cognitive models)
Ilies, Judge, and Wagner (2006)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent of goal pursuit in the face of continued discrepancies	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Conceptual	N/A	Employees who experience more positive emotions will be motivated to persist longer in their efforts to complete work tasks successfully

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Foll, Rascle, and Higgins (2006)	Persistence is endurance, or the refusal to give up, especially when faced with opposition (Bandura 1986) – persistence is the tendency to continue in a given direction in spite of difficulties	Sporting persistence	Dependent variable	Survey, golf-putting exercise	110 novice golf students	1. Attributional style influences short-term putting persistence, whereas state-attributions did not impact persistence 2. Participants with a "high personal control" attribution style showed greater persistence than those with "low personal control" attribution style 3. Individuals with an external, uncontrollable, stable attribution style persisted less than those with any other sports attributional style
Westphal and Bednar (2005)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent of continued pursuit of current corporate strategy in response to low firm performance	Strategic persistence (corporate strategy)	Dependent variable	Survey	228 boards (companies)	Pluralistic ignorance on boards is a strong determinant of strategic persistence in response to low firm performance

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Etcheverry and Le (2005)	Persistence is conceptualized as the behavior to which a person continues his or her involvement in a relationship	Romantic relationship persistence	Dependent variable	Longitudinal survey (administered 7 months apart)	137 undergraduate students	1. Commitment predicts relationship persistence 2. Accessibility of commitment significantly moderates the relationship between commitment and relationship persistence
Wanberg et al. (2005)	Persistence is the extent to which job-search intensity continues over time	Job-search persistence	Dependent variable	Longitudinal survey (10-waves)	903 unemployed unemployment insurance recipients	Core self-evaluation (higher self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, perceived control, emotional stability) is related to persistence in job search
Hiller and Hambrick (2005)	Persistence is the degree to which the firm's strategy remains unchanged over time (a component of strategic choice)	Strategic persistence	Dependent variable	Conceptual	N/A	The greater the CEO's core self-evaluation, the greater the organization's persistence in pursuing strategies that were launched by the CEO

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Seo, Barret, and Bartunek (2004)	Persistence refers to a behavioral pattern of maintaining the initially chosen course of action over time (operationalized as the duration of action)	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Conceptual	N/A	1. Affective feelings at work affect three dimensions of behavioral outcomes (direction, intensity, and persistence) directly and indirectly by affecting goal level and goal commitment and judgment components of work motivation (expectancy, utility, and progress judgments)
Szekely et al. (2004)	Persistence defined as perseverance despite frustration and fatigue	Adult persistence (genetic makeup of humans)	Dependent variable	Survey, DNA sampling	157 Hungarian individuals	1. Persistence as a trait is related to serotonergic and dopaminergic neurotransmitter systems in the genetic makeup of humans 2. There is a significant decrease of persistence scores in the presence of the 7-repeat allele of DRD4 VNTR (for male adults) 3. Persistence is a risk factor for ADHD

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Vansteenkiste et al. (2004)	Persistence involves doing additional work, that involves doing tasks that are not part of the learning activity itself but incorporate going above and beyond	Learning persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	200 undergraduates (study 1), 374 undergraduates (study 2), 224 high school students (study 3)	1. Both intrinsic goals and autonomy support result in more free-choice persistence 2. Intrinsic goals are more engaged and accepted when they are encountered in an autonomy-supportive climate
Gloria and Ho (2003)	Persistence is conceptualized as the degree to which students continue pursuit of a college education (persistence decisions)	Academic persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	160 Asian American undergraduate students	1. Social support is the strongest predictor of academic persistence 2. Self-beliefs and comfort in the university environment have a positive significant relationship with academic persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Mau (2003)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent to which aspiring students continue their pursuit of the same aspiration (science and engineering career) six years after being identified (dichotomized)	Career aspiration persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	827 eight-grade students	1. Academic proficiency and math self-efficacy are the most predictive variables in science and engineering career persistence 2. Men are more likely than women to persist in science and engineering career aspirations
Meier and Albrecht (2003)	Persistence is a behavioral process that is motivated and organized over time in a continuing pursuit of an outcome, goal, or a particular course of action (emphasis on an act of enduring continuance)	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Conceptual	N/A	1. The persistence process includes: goal decision, implementation, and evaluation 2. There are eight techniques of decision making (optimizing, rational, bounded rationality, satisficing, implicit favorite, intuitive, political, disjointed incrementalism) that may influence the goal decision stage

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Sommer and Baumeister (2002)	Persistence is conceptualized as the degree of continuance in a course of action in the presence of threat of rejection	Interpersonal relationship persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	39 undergraduate students	1. Different levels of self-esteem are associated with different habitual ways of handling the threat of rejection 2. Rejection priming has a stronger effect on individuals with low-self esteem 3. For low self-esteem individuals, rejection elicits a response of hopelessness and passive withdrawal
Di Paula and Campbell (2002)	Persistence consists of the extent to which a participant continues to work on a task or goal in the face of failure, amount of success, and the presence of alternatives	Word Fragment Test and Remote Associates Test persistence, academic persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	171 undergraduate students (study 1), 83 undergraduate students (study 2)	1. The degree of failure is potentially an important cue for calibrating persistence 2. Low self-esteem individuals engage in more cognitive persistence (rumination) than those with high self-esteem 3. High self-esteem people make better use of cues

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
McEvily and Chakravarthy (2002)	Persistence refers to the extent to which a company continues to utilize resource-based knowledge (complexity, tacitness, specificity) in light of competitor imitation	Resource based product persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	63 adhesives firms	Complexity and tacitness of technological knowledge are useful for defending a firm's major product improvements from imitation, but not so for minor improvements (resource specificity is negatively related to major product performance)
Inkpen and Ross (2001)	Persistence is the extent to which firms continue with their alliances in the face of negative feedback	Strategic alliances persistence	N/A	Case studies	Four alliances	1. Organizations excessively persist with failing alliances due to project psychological social and organizational and contextual determinants 2. Elements during three critical alliance life-cycle stages (negotiation and formation, implementation and operation, and dissolution) can lead to excessive persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Audia, Locke, and Smith (2000)	Persistence is the extent to which a firm's strategic profile remained stable over time) in the face of a discrete or radical environmental change (tendency for firms to stick with strategies that have worked in the past)	Strategic persistence	Dependent variable	Longitudinal secondary data, experimental (computer-based simulation)	150 companies (study 1), 168 undergraduate seniors (study 2)	1. Past success increases strategic persistence in the face of dramatic environmental changes 2. The relationship between success and persistence (with regard to dysfunctional persistence) is mediated by greater satisfaction with past performance, more confidence in the correctness of current strategies, higher goals, self-efficacy, and less information seeking
Gernigon, Fleurance, and Reine (2000)	Persistence is conceptualized as the degree of continuance in a course of action in response to failure	Perceptual-motor task persistence (computer gun-shooting game)	Dependent variable	Experimental	60 high school students	1. Failure attributed to internal causes leads to less presentence 2. Contingent failure yields less persistence than the contingent success, where uncontrollability impacts persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Kisfalvi (2000)	Persistence refers to the extent to which organizations pursue strategies that may no longer be appropriate and that can at times turn out to be disastrous	CEO strategic persistence	N/A	Case study (interviews, direct observation, archival documents)	1 CEO	1. The CEO's individual-level factors due to particular life trajectory play a major role in strategic persistence 2. CEO's character-based personal issues also impact strategic persistence 3. Decision makers are predisposed to persist in certain strategic directions that have personal significance to them
De Fruyt, De Wiele, and Heeringen (2000)	Persistence is conceptualized by the extent to which an individual will continue to expect and seek rewards even if the expected outcome may be slightly successful	Personality and Individual differences persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	130 psychiatric patients	1. With regards to the Big Five factors, conscientiousness was found to have the greatest impact on persistence 2. There is a negative correlation between novelty seeking and persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Goltz (1999)	Persistence is characterized by the degree of continued behaviors that have been historically resulted in more reinforcement, despite significant changes in environmental contingencies ("behavioral momentum")	Financial decision maker (organizational) persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	Undergraduate students (256 in study 1, 57 in study 2) and MBA students (44 in study 2)	1. Levels of persistence during failure experiences can be explained by the magnitude, rate, or variability of positive outcomes received earlier (during a period of intermittently occurring positive outcomes) 2. In the presence of failure, matching and behavioral momentum can be used to understand and predict persistence in organizations
Gimeno et al. (1997	Persistence is conceptualized as whether a new business venture entrepreneur continues to pursue a venture, despite low performance (survive or exit from business)	New venture persistence (for under-performing firms)	Dependent variable	Longitudinal survey (over 3 periods in 3 years)	1,547 entrepreneurs	1. Small and new ventures have different required thresholds of performance which determine survival or exit 2. Entrepreneurial skills are related to persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Maslyn, Farmer, and Fedor (1996)	Persistence is comprised of the extent to which an individual will continue to use influence further in order to accomplish their goals (when resistance is encountered, upon initial failure)	Employee subordinate influence persistence (upward influence on immediate supervisors and other managers)	Dependent variable	Survey (2 waves, one month apart)	158 employees of national nonprofit organization	1. Employees are more likely to persist with an influence attempt with their supervisors, as opposed to quit or go to another manager 2. High costs, low goal importance, low work experience, and a positive subordinate-supervisor relationship are associated with decisions to quit, whereas high goal importance and poorer subordinate-supervisor relations tend to be associated with decisions to influence the same supervisor again 3. Lack of work experience is related with the decision to influence someone other than the immediate supervisor

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Christodoulou and Rosen (1995)	Persistence is the extent to which a person will continue to expect and seek rewards even when the expected outcome is only seldom successful	Personality and Individual differences persistence	Independent variable	Survey	428 undergraduate students	1. Persistence is an independent dimension of temperament (with regards to the Cloninger Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire) and should not be considered as a subscale of reward dependence 2. Persistence is positively related to reward dependence and negatively related to novelty seeking
Cloninger, Svrakic, and Przybeck (1993)	Persistence refers to perseverance despite frustration and fatigue	Personality and Individual differences persistence	Independent variable	Survey	150 men, 150 women	1. Persistence is negatively related to fatigability, impulsiveness, and disorderliness 2. Persistence is a separate dimension of human temperament, which is manifest early in life, and involves pre-conceptual biases in perceptual memory and habit formation

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
McGiboney and Carter (1993)	Persistence refers to the degree of effort to which an individual holds firmly and steadfastly to some purpose or task	Adolescent persistence	Independent variable	Survey	50 high school students	1. Persistence is related to emotional stability, assertiveness, competitiveness, aggressiveness, self-reliance, self-assurance, self-sufficiency, and self-discipline 2. Persistence was not found to be correlated with expediency
Lant, Milliken, and Batra (1992)	Persistence is the conceptualized as the extent to which top-level managers continue pursuit of their current strategic orientation (or to alter an organization's strategic course) when there are shifts in an organization's environment	Strategic persistence	Dependent variable	Secondary data (10K reports)	40 computer companies, 40 furniture companies	1. Firms likelihood to persist is a function of their industry context, past performance, managerial interpretations, and top management team characteristics 2. Despite negative performance feedback, the majority of poorly performing firms in the sample continued with past strategic orientations

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Bank, Biddle, and Slavings (1992)	Persistence is defined as re-enrollment on the campus as indicated by official university records (enrollment for at least three semesters is deemed as high persistence, and those who left after the first semester have the lowest persistence score)	Undergraduate academic persistence	Dependent variable	Longitudinal secondary data (university records), survey (preliminary)	1,017 students at a large Midwestern state university	1. Expectancy of positional hope is significantly related to persistence, while social, academic, personal, and financial hopes are not correlated with persistence 2. Students own normative expectations, academic potential, and self-labels have a very strong relationship with persistence
Langan-Fox (1991)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent of continued pursuit of goals which individuals hoped to regulate, plan, and control (over a year span)	Gender differences and identity persistence	Dependent variable	Survey (2 waves, 4 months apart)	205 undergraduate students	1. Females had more tightly-held and persisting goals than males 2. Differences between genders and persisting goals types includes physical, character, autonomy, intimacy and contact in general with others

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Multon, Brown, and Lent (1991)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent to which behavior will be sustained in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences (operationalized as: 1) time spent on task, 2) number of items or tasks attempted or completed, 3) number of academic terms completed)	Academic persistence	Dependent variable	Meta-analysis	39 studies (18 studies used in the meta-analysis for persistence)	1. Self-efficacy accounts for approximately 14% of the variance in the student's academic performance and approximately 12% of the variance in their academic persistence 2. The relationship between self-efficacy and persistence may vary by student types, measures, and study characteristics 3. A large portion of effect size variance can be explained by how persistence was operationalized
Miller and Hom (1990)	Persistence is measured as the degree of continued action towards a task and not giving up in the face of failure	Anagram and matching tasks solving persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	131 undergraduate students	1. The presence of an extrinsic reward minimizes the impact of ego threat on persistence 2. Reduced persistence was the due to ego threat, and not learned helplessness

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Bank, Slavings, and Biddle (1990)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent to which students continue their academic college pursuit at the same university ("does not drop out" and "does not transfer")	Undergraduate academic persistence	Dependent variable	Survey (3 waves over a year)	1,240 undergraduate freshman	1. Social influence has a substantial influence on undergraduate academic persistence 2. Faculty members have a smaller impact on persistence than do peers and parents 3. Normative and modeling influences have direct impact on persistence behaviors
Sandelands, Brockner, and Glynn (1988)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent to which an individual continues with a particular course of action (rather than stray from it) in light of negative feedback (measured as the amount of time spent on the insoluble anagrams)	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	60 graduate (M.B.A.) students	1. Persistence is greater in the continuous rather than in the discrete condition 2. High self-esteem individuals are more persistent in the continuous than in the discrete condition 3. Ego involvement and self-esteem moderate the impact of contingency perceptions on persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Leatherwood and Conlon (1987)	Persistence is characterized as the extent of commitment to a course of action following a setback	Project persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental (2 separate sessions)	24 M.B.A. students, 43 undergraduate students	1. Persistence is not only related to whether a decision maker feels responsible for a setback, but also on the degree to which another party can be held responsible 2. When blame could be attributed to an external source (union members), there was tendency for less persistence; when blame could be attributed to the participants past actions, then there was a tendency to persist more
Zaleski (1987)	Persistence refers to resistance, endurance, and perseverance in attending to and working for a goal	Self-set goal persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	120 undergraduate students, 211 volunteers	1. Persistence is greater when goals are less important, more likely to be achieved, and less in conflict 2. Expectancy impacts persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Lufi and Cohen (1987)	Persistence is characterized as the extent to which a persistent spends time (unrestricted) or number of attempts on a task that may be very difficult of insoluble	Children persistence (gymnastics)	Dependent variable	Survey	322 Israeli children	1. A meaningful development of a scale to measure persistence in children 2. Boys who participate in the difficult sport of competitive gymnastics had higher levels of persistence compared to other non-gymnastic boys 3. People who persist in a task are more likely to believe in their ability to direct their actions (internal locus of control), despite the difficulty and time required
Jacobs, Prentice-Dunn, and Rogers (1984)	Persistence is conceptualized as the behavioral action of continuing a task following a failure on an initial performance task	Anagram solving persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	96 undergraduate students	1. Self-efficacy expectancies are the best predictor of persistence 2. High and low outcome expectancies impacted persistence when subjects were not self-aware

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
McFarlin, Baumeister and Blascovich (1984)	(measured as the amount of time spent working on the task)	Anagram and puzzle solving persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	Undergraduate students (93 male in study 1, 47 in study 2)	1. High self-esteem subjects persisted longer than did moderate or low self-esteem subjects when receiving failure feedback 2. Low self-esteem subjects performed better after receiving negative failure feedback (high self-esteem people may engage in nonproductive persistence)
Conlon (1980)	Persistence is conceptualized as the individual behavior to pursue and continue pursuit of a new task in light of feedback (confirming, disconfirming)	Organizational employee persistence (persisting at a novel task performance strategy)	Dependent variable	Experimental	70 undergraduate students	1. Confirming and disconfirming feedback about the expected outcomes of a behavior affects the decision to persist 2. The content of feedback affects behaviors and beliefs 3. Content of feedback interacts with the value of the expected outcome of the feedback to impact persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Robinson and Price-Bonham (1978)	Persistence is the maintenance of effortful behavior over a period of time (can be physical or cognitive in nature)	Child persistence (marble dropping task)	Dependent variable	Experimental	20 children and their fathers	1. The physical presence of a father does not necessarily lead to greater persistence 2. Reinforcement and paternal attention is positively related to persistence 3. Boys persisted more with non contingent statements without attention (intermittent reinforcement), while girls persisted more under continuous reinforcement
Meir and Barak (1974)	Persistence is conceptualized as the proportion of time that an employee has continued to pursue the same job since graduation	Organizational employee persistence	Dependent variable	Survey	1,027 employees (from 10 different occupations)	1. Persistence at work is positively correlated with intrinsic needs 2. There is no correlation between extrinsic needs and persistence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Clarke (1972)	Persistence is comprised of the extent to which an individual continues with a task in light of feedback	Tracing task persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	40 high school students (grade 12)	1. Feedback is necessary for persistence 2. High achievement and low affiliation motivation leads to greater persistence
Chaikin (1971)	Persistence is defined as the level of desire to continue with a task	Light switches game task persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	60 undergraduate students	1. Individuals who are aware that they are highly competent on a task show a desire to go on to a different task (lack of persistence with the original task) 2. Persistence is likely to be a curvilinear function of perceived competence, where both high and low perceived competence lead to less persistence than moderate competence

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Feather (1962)	Persistence is conceptualized as the extent to which an individual continues after task when the person is confronted with a very difficult or insoluble task and is unrestricted in either the time or number of attempts he or she can work at it (can be measured as the total time or total trials a person undertakes before switching to an alternate activity)	Personality and Individual differences persistence	N/A	Conceptual (literature review)	N/A	1. Three main classes of persistence studies, in terms of the extent to which the approach adopted: 1) personality oriented, 2) situation oriented, 3) both personality and situation oriented 2. Studies of persistence that revolve around traits are personality oriented and focus on the stable characteristics of the person which are assumed to transcend the immediate situation 3. Studies of persistence that are based on the notion of resistance to extinction are situation oriented and focus on properties of the immediate situation 4. Studies of persistence that take a motivational stance consider both person and situation

Table 2 - Continued

Article	Conceptualization	Context	How persistence is used	Method	Sample	Key Findings
Feather (1961)	Persistence is comprised of the total time or total trials that an individual works at a particular task before turning to an alternative achievement activity	Perceptual reasoning test persistence	Dependent variable	Experimental	89 undergraduate students (males)	1. Persistence is associated more with an individual's motive to achieve success compared to the individual's motive to avoid failure 2. When an individual's motive to avoid failure is greater than the motive to achieve success, persistence at the initial achievement task is greater when the initial probability of success is low 3. When the initial probability of success is high, individuals with a higher motive to achieve success are likely to persist more at the initial achievement task 4. When the initial probability of success is low, individuals who have a greater motive to avoid failure are likely to persist longer

In a similar vein, consumer persistence takes into account the repeated attempts that consumers try to achieve goals when confronted with an impediment to goal attainment (Fischer et al. 2007). Within the organizational behavior domain, persistence is considered to be a dimension of motivation. For instance, Mitchell (1997) suggests that "motivation focuses on psychological processes involved with the arousal, direction, intensity, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal directed" (p. 60). With regards to self-employment, persistence occurs when individuals who are self-employed decide to remain self-employed (Patel and Thatcher 2014). In this instance, the decision to persist is influenced by an individual's attributes, knowledge, and experience, and not necessarily driven by performance. Similarly, job-search persistence is characterized by the extent to which job-search intensity continues over time (Wanberg et al. 2005).

Meanwhile, entrepreneurial persistence is characterized by the decision to continue with an opportunity regardless of "counterinfluences or enticing alternatives" (Holland and Shepherd 2013). Here, the decision to persist is impacted by personal characteristics of the entrepreneur and feedback from the environment relative to thresholds. Similarly, Hoang and Gimeno (2010) treat entrepreneurial persistence as behaviors taken in response to feedback. This is especially heightened by the distinct fact that uncertainty and ambiguity are associated with the entrepreneurial environment.

In other instances, persistence is conceptualized simply as the amount of time an individual spends on a task and invests in their efforts before turning aside (Fox and Hoffman 2002; Grant 2008; Grant et al. 2007). For others, persistence is viewed as endurance and consists of the refusal to give up, especially in the presence of opposition (Bandura 2001; Le Foll et al. 2006).

Persistence Process

Other researchers have described persistence as a process (Conlon 1980; Meier and Albrecht 2003). Under this perspective, persistence is characterized as a series of decisions in which the individual evaluates some particular input or set of inputs as they consider their behavior towards a goal. Here, persistence is viewed as a behavioral process that is motivated over time and is comprised of distinct activities that are progressed over time as the individual continues to pursue an outcome or goal (Meier and Albrecht 2003). In the model proposed by Meier and Albrecht (2003), there are three stages in the persistence process when an individual is faced with a problem: goal decision, implementation, and evaluation. The process begins with a decision to create a goal that is designed to mitigate the experienced problem. The authors suggest several decision-making techniques, such as optimizing and satisficing. The next stage in the persistence process is implementation behavior, which is geared towards accomplishing the goal established during the first stage. The final stage is comprised of evaluation, in which the individual assesses whether they have achieved the goal or the need to reevaluate the goal. When reevaluating the goal, the process further includes assessing whether the outcome is acceptable, the goal needs to be aborted, or the goal needs to be redefined.

In the management literature, Conlon (1980) put forth an early model that described the persistence process as including decision-making and individual adoption. According to his model, an individual has to adopt a new behavior before the decision to persist. Once an individual decides to adopt a new behavior, they formulate or reformulate cognitions about that new behavior. Next, they reassess this new behavior given environmental cues (e.g., contradictions, unexpected outcomes, new alternatives) and informational inputs (personal, social, and organizational responses to the performance of the new behavior). This will in turn

facilitate the individual with the decision of whether to persist with that particular new behavior or not. A major implication of this model is that the new behavior may persist if reevaluation of the behavior is not "cued," or if the behavior is perceived to be preferred over other visible alternatives (Conlon 1980).

Persistence as a Trait

Another common conceptualization is that persistence is a human trait. Traits play an important part in influencing human behavior, motivation, and adaptation (Bandura 1996; O'Connell and Sheikh 2007; Taylor and Brown 1988). Integrating findings from neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, developmental and clinical psychology, and psychiatry, Cloninger and colleagues have pioneered the psychobiological model of personality (Cloninger et al. 1993). According to their model, there are four dimensions of human temperament: novelty seeking, harm avoidance, reward dependence, and persistence. Persistence is considered a source of uniqueness, as an inborn and unalterable trait (Baum and Locke 2004; Cloninger et al. 1994; Garcia 2012; Garcia et al. 2012; Gillespie et al. 2003; Heath, Cloninger, and Martin 1994). As an early scholar, Ryans (1939), once said, "the existence of a general trait of persistence, which permeates all behavior of the organism" (p. 737).

Moreover, trait persistence has been linked to the brain's noradrenergic system (Cloninger et al. 1994). For instance, Szekely et al. (2004) found a significant association between the DRD4 VNTR gene and persistence as they explored the relation between persistence and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The main premise of this line of research is that persistence is in the genetic make-up of individuals, and underlying brain circuitry explains the activation, maintenance, and inhibition of human behavior in response to stimuli (Cloninger 2004; Cloninger et al. 2011; Garcia 2012; Garcia et al. 2012; Gusnard et al.

2003). Therefore, persistence may be viewed as an individual difference variable (Kuhl 1994; Szekely et al. 2004) and may be defined as a "temperament dimension characterized by the extent to which a person will continue to expect and seek rewards even when the expected outcome is only rarely successful" (Garcia et al. 2012, p. 1035). The overarching implication of this research is that high persistence may be an adaptive behavior, but only when rewards are intermittent and the contingencies remain stable (Cloninger et al. 1994; Garcia et al. 2012).

Macro-level Persistence

Persistence has not just been limited to individuals and the individual as a unit of analysis. There are streams of research that have extrapolated and applied the notion of persistence at macro-levels, including persistence in supply chains (Melnyk, Ritchie, and Calantone 2013), alliances (Inkpen and Ross 2001; Jacob, Belderbos, and Gilsing 2013), firm-level innovation (Le Bas and Poussing 2014; Patzelt et al. 2011), new ventures (Gimeno et al. 1997; Steffens, Terjesen, and Davidsson 2012), GNP growth (Barañano and Moral 2013; Maury and Tripier 2003), corporate performance (Bentzen et al. 2005; Goddard and Wilson 1996), knowledge-based advantages (McEvily and Chakravarthy 2002), and projects (Leatherwood and Conlon 1987). For instance, innovative persistence is a well-studied phenomenon that has been applied to industrial organizations (Alfranca, Rama, and von Tunzelmann 2004; Flaig and Stadler 1994; Raymond et al. 2010; Triguero et al. 2013). This line of research explores why firms innovate persistently and the impact on associated consequences. As another example, persistence has also been considered within the context of alliances (Belderbos et al. 2012; Inkpen and Ross 2001; Jacob et al. 2013). Here, persistence is conceptualized as the extent to which a firm's prior involvement in strategic alliances predicts current alliance strategy engagement. Accordingly, research has supported that there are four broad determinants that lead

to persistence in alliances: project, psychological, social, and organizational/contextual factors (Inkpen and Ross 2001).

Another rich research stream revolves around the notion of strategic persistence (Audia et al. 2000; George et al. 2006; Hiller and Hambrick 2005; Kisfalvi 2000; Westphal and Bednar 2005). Strategic persistence consists of the extent to which a firm's strategy remains unchanged over time in the face of environmental changes. For instance, this research has found that strategic persistence is linked to executive tenure (Finkelstein and Hambrick 1990), executive personality (Kisfalvi 2000), and executive confidence (Audia et al. 2000). At a broader level, in the economics literature, researchers have sought to understand GNP growth persistence (Barañano and Moral 2013; Bentzen et al. 2005; Maury and Tripier 2003). In these studies, scholars have modeled and tried to understand why observed GNP growth persists over time.

Measuring Persistence

In the literature, assessing and measuring persistence has been a function of researcher conceptualization. That is, the method for capturing persistence has depended on whether researchers treat it as a predictor or an outcome. Research that has treated persistence as a predictor has predominantly taken the perspective the persistence is a trait. Meanwhile, researchers that treat persistence as an outcome have adopted the view that persistence is a behavior. Consequently, researchers have primarily used either survey methods or experimental methods.

Most studies have utilized the use of experiments in order to assess persistence by observing physical tasks (Kovjanic et al. 2013; McGiboney and Carter 1993). In these studies, researchers make observations and keep track of participants as they persist in a particular task. Here, persistence is captured directly by having participants placed in a situation that required

persistence on a task that was very difficult, effortful, or unsolvable (McFarlin 1985; Robinson and Price-Bonham 1978; Sommer and Baumeister 2002; Walton et al. 2012). For instance, researchers have commonly used insoluble math puzzles and anagrams.

In other studies, persistence has been measured by the time a subject spends on a given task (Conlon 1980; Grant 2008; Grant et al. 2007). For example, Grant and his colleagues (2007) used the time (minutes and seconds) fundraiser callers spent on the phone trying to increase donations as a measure of persistence. Similarly, Grant (2008) used overtime hours as an indicator of persistence among firefighters. In the academic persistence literature, scholars tend to assess persistence using such measures as degree completion, progress towards degree completion, and retention (Dooley et al. 2012; Robbins et al. 2004; Witkow et al. 2015).

Scholars have also implemented creative alternate strategies to assess persistence, such as conjoint experiments (DeTienne et al. 2008; Holland and Shepherd 2013; Patzelt et al. 2011) and free-choice persistence (Vansteenkiste et al. 2004). Conjoint experiments have allowed entrepreneurship researchers to capture the actual persistence decisions "in action," as opposed to in retrospect. Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) used several creative experiments to measure free-choice persistence. In one of their experiments, they recorded persistence by whether students went to gain additional information about a campus wide initiative on pro-ecology by either visiting the college library or participating in an extracurricular trip to a plant that recycled used materials. In another experiment, they assessed persistence by noting students who voluntarily picked up additional reading material. In their last experiment, they used volunteered Tai-bo exercise demonstrations to measure free-choice persistence.

Outside of experiments, researchers have used self-report surveys and questionnaires to capture persistence (Constantin, Holman, and Hojbotă 2012; Gloria and Ho 2003; Lufi and

Cohen 1987; Mischel, Zeiss, and Zeiss 1974). The most recently proposed scale by Constantin et al. (2012) includes a 5-point scale (ranging from in a very low degree to in a very high degree) with 16 items designed to tap into long-term purposes pursuing, current purpose pursuing, and recurrence of unattained purposes. Sample items of this scale include "I keep on investing time and effort in ideas and projects that require years of work and patience," "Once I decide to do something, I am like a bulldog: I don't give up until I reach the goal," and "I often come up with new ideas on an older problem or project." Interestingly, in the social sciences, the use of these instruments has not blossomed, likely due to insufficient validation.

In the clinical field, instead of using scales specifically aimed at measuring persistence, researchers have relied on comprehensive personality and temperament indexes (Cloninger et al. 2011; Garcia et al. 2012; Zohar and Cloninger 2011). The most popular and psychometrically well-established instrument used is the Cloninger et al. (1993) Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). The TCI is considered to be a psychobiological theory that incorporates four dimensions of temperament and three dimensions of character (De Fruyt et al. 2000). Specifically, the TCI assesses the temperament dimensions of novelty seeking (NS), harm avoidance (HA), reward dependence (RD), and persistence (PS); while also measuring the character dimensions of self-directedness (SD), cooperativeness (CO), and self-transcendence (ST).

Persistence is Not Always Positive

It is necessary to mention that persistence is not always universally viewed as having a positive connotation. That is, persistence can either have positive or negative effects. In fact, there are several researchers who have acknowledged and realized that there is a "dark-side" to persistence (Cloninger et al. 2011; Garcia et al. 2012; Heckhausen and Schulz 1995; Holland and

Shepherd 2013; Klinger 1975; McFarlin et al. 1984; McGrath 1999; Nesse 2000; Sandelands et al. 1988; Wrosch et al. 2003). This is especially heightened in situations where goals can be quite difficult or unattainable. Scholars have realized that the admirable "press on" aspect of persistence can be countervailing, especially when there are serious obstacles to goal attainment (Miller and Wrosch 2007; Wrosch et al. 2003). As Sandelands et al. (1988) state, "In these cases, persistence is pathetic at best and self-abusive at worst" (p. 208). Others have suggested that a potential negative implication of persistence is that highly persistent people tend to be perfectionists (Cloninger et al. 2011; Flett and Hewitt 2002). The underlying premise is that persistence has both psychological costs and benefits. In these instances, individuals become fixated on goal attainment and may become oblivious to signs and feedback to disengage from goal pursuit.

Related Constructs

At this point, it is important to consider and discuss other similarly related constructs to persistence in the literature (see Table 3 for a summary of related constructs). Specifically, key related constructs include grit, hardiness, perseverance, resilience, and tenacity. While there is overlap with the way these constructs are conceptualized, there are distinct nuances between these constructs and persistence. The key take away here is that, despite similarities in how these constructs all make reference to pursuit in the face of adversity, none of these phenomena have been directly examined in a sales setting. Next, these individual constructs are reviewed and a discussion about the differences between them and persistence is provided.

Grit

Grit is a relatively new phenomenon that has been suggested in the psychology literature (Duckworth et al. 2011; Duckworth et al. 2007; Duckworth and Quinn 2009; Von Culin,

Table 3 - Persistence Related Constructs

Construct	Definition	Type	How it is primarily modeled	Connotation
Grit	The tendency to pursue long-term challenging goals with perseverance and passion	Trait	Predictor	Positive
Hardiness	A personality style associated with resilience, good health, and performance under stressful conditions, which is characterized by a strong sense of commitment, control, and challenge	Trait	Predictor	Positive
Perseverance	The determination and tendency to steadfastly and doggedly continue a course of action in pursuit of a goal or purpose (usually deemed positive), over a long period despite difficulties, setbacks and the lack of immediate rewards	Trait	Predictor	Positive
Resilience	A relatively stable personality trait characterized by the ability to bounce back from negative experiences and by flexible adaptation to adversity, extreme stress, threatening situation, or the ever-changing demands of life	Trait	Predictor	Positive
Tenacity	The tendency to be strong-willed and resolutely continue with an action by not letting go or accepting failure	Trait	Predictor	Positive
Persistence	Smooth action toward goal attainment is impeded in some matter	Behavior	Criterion*	Balanced (both positive and negative)

*****In this dissertation, persistence is modeled as a predictor

Tsukayama, and Duckworth 2014). Duckworth and her colleagues have really taken the charge in distinguishing grit as a psychological trait. Here, grit is conceptualized as "the adversity, and plateaus in progress" (Duckworth et al. 2007, p. 1087). In order to differentiate grit from other related constructs, the authors highlight the two key facets of perseverance and passion. In general, grit is used to describe an individual trait that encourages "showing up" in different life domains, even in the face of confronted setbacks and adversity (Eskreis-Winkler et al. 2014).

Grit has been primarily examined in the non-business literature and has been shown to be a predictor of achievement (Duckworth et al. 2011; Duckworth et al. 2007; Duckworth and Quinn 2009). For example, empirical investigations have revealed that grittier spellers perform better at the National Spelling Bee due to their willingness to engage in deliberate practice (Duckworth et al. 2011; Duckworth et al. 2007). Similarly, grit was found to lead to teacher effectiveness and retention (Duckworth and Quinn 2009; Robertson-Kraft and Duckworth 2014). In a study that examined grit across various life contexts, Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014) found that grit was associated with soldiers completing an Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) selection course, sales employees (within a vacation ownership corporation) keeping their jobs, students graduating from high school, and men remaining married. More recently, grittier individuals were found to pursue happiness through engagement and meaning as opposed to through hedonic pleasure (Von Culin et al. 2014).

With regards to measuring grit, researchers have primarily relied on self-report or informant-report questionnaires (Duckworth et al. 2007; Duckworth and Quinn 2009). Due to the relative infancy of this concept, there are primarily two well-established indexes for measuring grit: Grit Scale (Grit-O) and the shorter version, Short Grit Scale (Grit-S). These are 5-point Likert scales (ranging from 1 = not at all like me to 5 = very much like me) and are comprised of

items that fall under consistency of interest (passion) and perseverance of effort. Sample items from the consistency of interest category include “I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one,” and “I become interested in new pursuits every month.” Meanwhile, sample items representing perseverance of effort include “Setbacks don’t discourage me,” and “I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.”

Hardiness

Coming from existential psychology, hardiness is an individual trait that includes commitment, control, and challenge (Khoshaba and Maddi 1999; Kobasa 1979; McNellis 2013). Commitment describes the ability to find purpose during stressful situations, control describes the capacity to view outcomes as being manageable, and challenge consists of the ability to effectively process change. These “3Cs” act as cognitive and emotional buffers that give the individual the encouragement and motivation to continue with a difficult and stressful task (Maddi 2002). Since its inception, hardiness was defined as “a constellation of personality characteristics that function as a resistance resource in the encounter with stressful life events” (Kobasa 1979, p. 169). Consequently, individuals with high hardiness have the ability to view stressful situations in a “positive light” as they work vigorously to meet goals and objectives (Bartone et al. 2009; Maddi 2006). Hence, a key facet of the hardiness trait is the individual’s ability to effectively handle stressful situations and environments. In general, hardiness is viewed as a positive trait that helps people flourish under stress (Cash and Gardner 2011).

Hardiness was initially proposed as an individual difference variable in the late 1970s as a characteristic affecting the relationship between stress and health (Kobasa 1979). Accordingly, research has found evidence that hardy individuals perform better and stay healthier when confronted with stress (Beasley, Thompson, and Davidson 2003; Delahaij, Gaillard, and van

Dam 2010; Hystad, Eid, and Brevik 2011). In a 12-year longitudinal study, Maddi and Kobasa (1984) found that, during a time where the United States economy was going through the decentralization of multiple industries, hardiness was a key variable that separated the adaptive and maladaptive employee. Moreover, further studies provide support that there is a positive relationship between hardiness and job performance (Maddi 2006; Westman 1990), job satisfaction (Luszczynska and Cieslak 2005; McCalister et al. 2006), organizational citizenship behavior (Turnipseed 2003), job clarity (Turnipseed 1999), and leadership (Bartone et al. 2009; Johnsen et al. 2009). Specifically among accounting professionals, research has shown that trait hardiness is activated as a defense to negative consequences, such as burnout and turnover intentions, in producing positive work outcomes (Law 2005; Law, Sweeney, and Summers 2008; McNellis 2013). A meta-analysis by Eschleman, Bowling, and Alarcon (2010) reveals that hardiness is positively related to personality traits that protect people from stress, social support, active coping, and performance. Furthermore, their analysis reveals that there is a negative relationship between hardiness and stressors, strains, regressive coping, and those personality traits believed to intensify the effects of stress.

In the literature, hardiness has been primarily modeled as an independent variable. In measuring and assessing hardiness, scholars have relied on self-report surveys that tap into the three aspects of hardiness (3Cs). The items on these questionnaires attempt at capturing the qualities associated with internal locus of control, a sense of commitment, and a sense of challenge (Carver 1989). The prominent scale used in these studies is the dispositional resiliency (hardiness) scale (DRS) put forth by Bartone et al. (1989). This instrument consists of 45-items, with 15 questions specifically addressing each facet of hardiness. Sample items capturing a sense of commitment include “by working hard you can always achieve your goals,” and “trying your

best at work really pays off in the end." Sample items comprising control include "planning ahead can help avoid most future problems," and "if I'm working on a difficult task, I know when to seek help." Finally, sample items representing challenge include "I often wake up eager to take up my life wherever it left off," and "I like it when things are uncertain or predictable."

Perseverance

The relevance and importance of perseverance is highlighted by the fact that there has been a renewed interest in psychology to explore this personality trait (DiMenichi and Richmond 2015). Perseverance has been described as "almost superhuman" and can be defined as "the ability doggedly to continue a course of action in pursuit of a goal, over a long period and despite difficulties, setbacks and the lack of immediate rewards (and indeed the lack of any guaranteed ultimate rewards); with simultaneous, continuous productivity" (Charlton 2009, p. 238). A key facet of perseverance is the ability to be patient and to delay gratification (Lumpkin and Brigham 2011). That is, perseverance is predicated on the notion that efforts today will "pay off" in the future. In general, perseverance is conceptualized as the determination and the ability to keep doing the right thing despite adversity and obstacles that seem insurmountable.

While the literature on perseverance is more abundant than it is on grit and hardiness, empirical research on perseverance is still quite limited. In an attempt to examine in-depth the meaning of perseverance, Kruse (2006) conducted a phenomenological qualitative study that explored the lived-experience of caregivers after traumatic events. She found that the structure of perseverance revolved around "struggling cautiously through the challenge while relying on others guides a focus toward the future." While scant, perseverance has also drawn attention in the business literature (Åstebro, Jeffrey, and Adomdza 2007; Kitchell 1997; Markman, Baron, and Balkin 2005; Mudrack 2004; Ndubisi 2008; Van Gelderen 2012). For instance, a study of

Malaysian entrepreneurs revealed that male entrepreneurs are more flexible and exhibit higher levels of perseverance in relation to their female counterparts (Ndubisi 2008). Moreover, optimism and past expenditures were found to increase perseverance among inventors after being told to quit (Åstebro et al. 2007). Similarly, an investigation of 217 patent inventors reveals that perseverance and self-efficacy occur simultaneously, where inventors with higher levels of perseverance reported higher annual earnings (Markman et al. 2005).

In a sales context, perseverance has been described as a behavioral tactic used to cope with sales call anxiety (Belschak, Verbeke, and Bagozzi 2006). Specifically, the authors describe sales perseverance as "attempts to press ahead with the sale despite one's feelings of anxiety" (p.411). In their study, they propose and find evidence that persevering is an appropriate way for salespeople to modify the situation and handle challenging customer interactions successfully. Meanwhile, more recent literature in cognitive psychology has shown a direct link between perseverance and cognitive performance, where reflection of past failures may actually cause an individual to work harder in order to offset a perceived disparity (DiMenichi and Richmond 2015).

In a different vein, instead of examining perseverance directly, some research in the clinical field has focused specifically on the lack of perseverance and its clinical consequences (e.g., addictive behaviors, eating disorders, alcohol consumption) (Hamza, Willoughby, and Heffer 2015; Lynam et al. 2011; Riley et al. 2015). In this line of research, lack of perseverance is conceptualized as the tendency to quit and to lack focus when a task becomes difficult or boring. For example, in a recent study of 1,158 college women, it was found that the lack of perseverance was the primary predictor of the maintenance of non-suicidal injury (NSSI) (Riley et al. 2015).

Researchers have implemented a variety of approaches to assessing perseverance. The main distinction between these approaches is whether researchers were interested in perseverance as a trait (e.g., Kitchell 1997; Mudrack 2004) or a behavior (e.g., Tenenbaum et al. 2005; Williams and Desteno 2008). When perseverance was treated as a trait (usually as a predictor), the use of self-report surveys and questionnaires were used. Some of the research relied on large personality and character assessments, such as the NEO-PI-R Self-Discipline Scale (Costa and McCrae 1992) and the Sensation Seeking Scale (Zuckerman 1994). Others developed shorter survey instruments intended to only capture perseverance (Kitchell 1997; Mudrack 2004). Sample items from the Kitchell (1997) 7-point scale include "I have the staying power to do work that requires long hours and hard work," and "when I hit a snag in what I am doing, I don't stop until I have found a way to get around it." Items from the Mudrack (2004) instrument, which is anchored in a 5-point Likert scale, include statements such as "I can work at a difficult task for a long time without getting tired of it" and "I stick at a job even though it seems I am not getting results."

Resilience

Interestingly, resilience was first observed in ecology as the degree to which a system can tolerate disturbance and continue to function (Holling 1973). Since then, resilience has caught the attention of a wider academic and practitioner audience across multiple disciplines with a focus on understanding the interaction between individuals and their environments (Limnios et al. 2014). At its broadest level, resilience describes a trait that captures an individual's ability to adapt when confronted with tragedy, trauma, or other adversity (Bonanno 2004; Bonanno et al. 2002; Masten 2001; Newman 2005; Wagnild and Young 1993). Specifically, people with high resilience are able to easily and quickly overcome setbacks in life and career goals (Zautra, Hall,

and Murray 2010). The resilience process begins when an individual's experience is interrupted by stressors, challenges, disappointments, or a negative situation; in which case, the individual assesses their strengths in order to learn and grow from the negative experience (Ifeagwazi, Chukwuorji, and Zacchaeus 2015; Richardson 2002; Richardson and Waite 2002). A key element of resilience is that it involves a positive dynamic adaptation process that allows individuals to "bounce back" in the face of adversity, extreme stress, threating situations, or the ever-changing demands of life (Luthar, Tata, and Kwesiga 2009; Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker 2000; Masten and Obradović 2006; Windle, Bennett, and Noyes 2011). Another important aspect of resilience is optimism (Connor and Davidson 2003). Overall, resilience has evolved to incorporate biological, emotional, and psychological processes (Hayward et al. 2010; Lee et al. 2013; Wagnild 2011).

Research on resilience has spawned across a wide spectrum of disciplines, including ecology (Gunderson and Holling 2001; Walker et al. 2002), metallurgy (Alderson, Fitzgerald, and Evans 2000; Callister 2003), individual and organizational psychology (Barnett and Pratt 2000; Powley 2009), supply chain management (Ponomarov and Holcomb 2009; Sheffi 2005), strategic management (Hamel and Valikangas 2003; Reinmoeller and Van Baardwijk 2005), and entrepreneurship (Bullough and Renko 2013; Bullough, Renko, and Myatt 2014; Cope 2011; Hayward et al. 2010). A recent example includes an empirical study that examined the effects of resilience on entrepreneurial intentions in Afghanistan under the conditions of war (Bullough et al. 2014). The authors of this study found that highly resilient entrepreneurs were less likely to be negatively impacted by perceived danger, as they were able to develop entrepreneurial intentions from adversity and believe in their entrepreneurial intentions. Thus, it is not surprising that successful entrepreneurs with high levels of resilience are willing to work hard to accomplish

their goals, to adapt to changes in the environment, to tolerate higher levels of ambiguity, and are able to learn from their mistakes (Ayala and Manzano 2014; Blatt 2009; Cooper, Estes, and Allen 2004; London 1993). In a different vein, resilience has been suggested to be a dimension of the higher-order construct "psychological capital," which has been shown to have an impact on individual performance and satisfaction (Avey, Luthans, and Youssef 2010; Avey, Wernsing, and Mhatre 2011; Luthans 2002; Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio 2006). From a macro-perspective, scholars have claimed and found evidence that high levels of resilience are related to firm success (Coutu 2002; Lengnick-Hall and Beck 2005; Richtnér and Löfsten 2014; Sutcliffe and Vogus 2003). Under this point of view, resilience is viewed positively and as a key determinant in what allows individuals, groups, and companies to flourish under the constraints of dynamic environments. In a more recent study from cognitive psychology, researchers showed that highly resilient individuals are more likely to have positive evaluations related to attentional broadening (Grol and De Raedt 2015).

Due to the individual-centric nature of resilience, researchers have put forth several instruments to capture this individual difference variable through the use of self-report questionnaires (for a review, see Ahern et al. 2006; Windle et al. 2011). There have been three particular scales that have good psychometric properties and been regularly validated over time: the resilience scale (Wagnild and Young 1993), the ego-resiliency scale (Block and Kremen 1996), and the Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC) (Connor and Davidson 2003). One of the earliest measurements of resilience, the Wagnild and Young (1993) scale is based on 25 items, where statements range on a 7-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The ego-resiliency scale asks 14 items anchored by a 4-point scale, where 1 = does not apply and 4 = applies very strongly. Items include "I quickly get over and recover from being startled," and "I

enjoy dealing with new and unusual situations." A more popular scale in the literature, the CD-RISC scale contains 25 items and utilizes a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not true at all) to 5 (true nearly all the time). The total score ranges from 0 to 100, where higher scores represent higher resilience. Sample items include "I tend to bounce back after illness or hardship," and "I can deal with whatever comes my way."

Tenacity

While the specific term tenacity has seldom been used in the literature, it is worth mentioning and briefly discussing as a related construct to the notion of persistence. Tenacity is usually conceptualized as a trait and a predisposition (Gollwitzer et al. 2008; Locke 2011). It has been conceptualized as a quality that involves enduring goal-directed action and energy despite any obstacles (Baum and Locke 2004). Similar to the idea of perseverance, tenacious people do not give up when faced with adversity. Accordingly, tenacity has been described as the "resoluteness" of not wanting to let go (Avila and Fern 1986). Here, a "tenacious person is characterized as strong-willed and has never learned to accept failure" (Avila and Fern 1986, p. 55). For the individual who is highly tenacious, success is the only option, which is simply a function of will power. Other scholars have treated tenacity as a goal-directed behavior (Brandtstädter and Renner 1990; Heyl, Wahl, and Mollenkopf 2007; Mueller and Kim 2004).

The importance of tenacity as a predictor of individual performance is highlighted in entrepreneurship, where tenacity was identified as an "archetypical" trait for entrepreneurs involved in business start-up (Baum, Locke, and Smith 2001; Gartner, Gatewood, and Shaver 1991; Locke 2011). In the sales context, only three articles have even considered and used the label tenacity (Avila and Fern 1986; Keck et al. 1995; Marshall et al. 2003). Of these, only Avila and Fern (1986) empirically examine tenacity. In a study of 197 salespeople in the computer

manufacturing industry, these authors found that tenacity was only positively and significantly related to the quota criterion for salespeople that worked for organizations that offered small-scale systems. In order to capture tenacity, they used 4 true and false statements including items such as “success is mostly a matter of will power,” “I have learned to accept failure,” “if I decide I want something, I won’t quit until I have it,” and “I have a tendency to give up when I meet difficult problems.” Notwithstanding the contributions of these studies, research is still lacking the consideration and examination of persistence as a behavior in the sales domain. In order to address this gap, this dissertation aims to introduce the notion of sales specific persistence behaviors.

Conclusions Based on the Persistence Literature

In reviewing the literature on persistence, several conclusions can be made. First, despite the plethora of studies across different disciplines and contexts, persistence remains under-explored and is not a fully realized construct. In the business literature, persistence research has been scattered and tends to be mainly examined in the management literature, whereas marketing scholars, surprisingly, have been rather silent about it. This is especially striking in the sales literature, as there is an implicit prima facie linkage between persistence and sales outcomes (e.g., salesperson performance). Given the relative importance of persistence in a sales context, it is startling that the academic community has not formally and directly explored persistence.

Second, it appears that in the literature there are no clear definitions and conceptualizations. This is further distorted when taken into account other relatively similar phenomena (such as grit, hardiness, perseverance, resilience). Across and within studies, scholars have confusingly used different labels interchangeably. This is further exacerbated when

considering the different possible approaches to truly assessing persistence. Ultimately, this has led to a lack of unity in studying persistence (Constantin et al. 2012).

Third, in the social sciences, persistence has predominantly been treated as an outcome variable as opposed to a predictor variable (Peterson and Seligman 2004). The lack of more research treating persistence as a predictor variable may be the result of the difficulty associated with measuring persistence. Lufi and Cohen (1987) noted this issue nearly thirty years ago, however, there has not been significant progress since then.

Fourth, unlike relatively similar constructs (e.g., resilience) persistence is not always viewed as a positive characteristic. Instead, it would seem that a more balanced approach to studying persistence might be more beneficial. That is, persistence should be viewed as neither good nor bad, where its value depends on a complex set of processes that are both internal and external that surround the individual (Cloninger et al. 2011). Although researchers have acknowledged that persistence can be a "double-edged" sword, research is still pretty scant. It becomes worthy to examine situations in which a balance in persistence is crucial (e.g., sales), and to identify situations where people may be trained to persist or not persist under certain conditions of repeated failure (Goltz 1999).

This becomes salient and critical in a sales context where salespeople are regularly advised to be persistent. The entrepreneurship literature has acknowledged and begun to explore the role of persistence among entrepreneurs as researchers are calling for more work on persistence (Holland and Shepherd 2013; Shane et al. 2003). Using the analogy and treating a salesperson as an entrepreneur, it becomes essential to explore persistence in sales, where scholars can begin to gain a deeper understanding of this very important phenomenon.

A Socio-Political Influence Perspective

Social Influence Theory

Social influence is a determinant of human behavior (Chou, Wang, and Tang 2015; Venkatesh and Brown 2001; Wang, Meister, and Gray 2013). In a general sense, social influence is the "process whereby people directly or indirectly influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others" (Turner 1991, p. 1). In particular, the study of social influence encompasses the methods, context, and characteristics of the influence attempt and the influencer (Ferris et al. 2002a; Rashotte 2009). This may entail formal, informal, intentional, and unintentional forms of influence (Ferris and Mitchell 1987). The underlying premise of social influence is that an influencer attempts to use appropriate tactics in order to influence a target in a desired direction (Barrick et al. 2009). As such, individuals respond to their social environment by adapting their attitudes and behaviors (Boh and Wong 2015; Deutsch and Gerard 1955; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

The primary objectives of social influence are twofold: to obtain an immediate social or material gain and to portray a desired self-concept (Brouer et al. 2015; Geen 1991). Social influence is analogous to the power an individual has to impact the attitudes, behaviors, opinions, goals, needs, and values of others. As French Jr. and Raven (1959) state, "influence is kinetic power, just as power is potential influence" (p. 152). Specifically, an individual may exercise social influence to persuade or force another individual to change their attitude and behavior. Therefore, by definition, social influence occurs in a dynamic interpersonal setting that incorporates the interpersonal processes involved in an influence attempt (Whitaker and Dahling 2013). At a minimum, there are at least two people involved in this interpersonal interaction where one person acts as the initiator, or the influencer, and the other becomes the target, or the recipient (Polansky, Lippitt, and Redl 1950).

Research on social influence has identified two types of influence: normative and informational influence (Deutsch and Gerard 1955; Henningsen and Henningsen 2015; Kaplan and Miller 1987). Normative influence refers to the extent of influence on the individual in order to conform to the perceived expectations of one's self or another person; meanwhile, informational influence describes the level of influence that is based on individuals unequivocally accepting information from another person who is perceived to have more power or authority (Chou et al. 2015; Lee et al. 2011). Normative influence relies on the individual's capacity to change their attitudes and behaviors in order to belong to the group, and is very similar to the in-group and out-group phenomena (Kaplan 1989; Tajfel and Turner 1979). It has been suggested that informational influence is best used when the influence attempt is logical and based on data and facts to refute why alternatives are better or worse than others (Kaplan and Miller 1987; Kelly, Jackson, and Hutson-Comeaux 1997). However, this does not mean that these types of influence are mutually exclusive. That is, informational and normative influence may interact and impact the individual's decision-making process. In fact, research has found that there is a positive correlation between normative and informational influence attempts (Henningsen and Henningsen 2003; Henningsen et al. 2003). Conversely, research has also shown that the use of one type of influence can countervail and offset the other influence type (Kelly et al. 1997). Thus, researchers usually refer to a "dual-motive scheme" to differentiate between normative influence and informational influence (Wood 2000).

Social influence theory has its roots in social psychology and has been advanced over the past forty years (Forgas and Williams 2001; Higgins et al. 2003; Jones 1990; Leary 1995; Levy et al. 1998; Tedeschi 1981). This theory has been widely applied in the fields of communication, education, psychology, sociology, marketing, and management information science (Goldsmith

and Goldsmith 2011). At the crux of social influence theory is the notion that practically all interpersonal relationships involve some form of social influence, where people are aspiring to influence each other in an "infinite cycle" of communication and exchange of information (Barrick et al. 2009; Cialdini and Trost 1998). The central aim of social influence theory is to better understand the process by which individuals can be persuaded to change their perceptions and decisions (Harris et al. 2007; Levy et al. 1998). That is, social influence theory denotes the specific nature of "social influence mechanisms" (Treadway et al. 2014). Hence, the essence of social influence theory is that it describes what enables an individual to influence others, how social influence is manifested, and the consequences of social influence on others (Levy et al. 1998). Accordingly, there are two main attributes associated with social influence theory: 1) whether social influence leads to a positive or negative change in the target's response to the influencer, and 2) the conscious or unconscious cognitive processing of the influence mechanism by the influencer (Barrick et al. 2009). In their seminal piece, Levy et al. (1998) suggest that, in addition to the direction of change and level of cognitive process, perceived intentionality and relative social status comprise the "fundamental interpersonal influence distinctions."

According to social influence theory, there are three elements of social influence. The first element, compliance, consists of an individual's behavior based on the normative influence and opinion of others. Here, an individual seeks a reward or avoids a punishment by confirming to the expectations of others. The second element, identification, refers to the acceptance of an influence attempt by an individual due to the perceived consistency with his or her values (Shen et al. 2011). With identification, the individual hopes to satisfy a self-defining relationship by embracing the influence of others. The final element, internalization, describes the acceptance of an influence attempt because the individual wants to create a self-defining relationship with

another person. Taken together, social influence is viewed as a higher-level factor that is a function of subjective norms, social identity, and group norms (Iglesias-Pradas, Hernández-García, and Fernández-Cardador 2015; Kelman 1961; Lee et al. 2011).

Social influence theory posits that there are three broad strategies for influencing behavior (Goldsmith and Goldsmith 2011). The first strategy revolves around "punishment," where the influence attempt is designed to stress the negative consequences of a behavior that it hopes to discourage people from doing. Another strategy is based on "rewarding," where individuals are presented with an incentive to change their behavior. The third, and the most pertinent strategy, involves "persuasion." Under this strategy, the assumption is that individuals will change their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors in response to information. The information, however, must be salient, relevant, and credible (Kraus et al. 2012). Therefore, individuals may be swayed by an influence attempt. However, the success of the influence attempt is contingent upon multiple factors, such as the sources of information, nature of the persuasion message, and characteristics of the receiver.

A particularly pertinent aspect of social influence theory is the influence strategies that are employed in the face of resistance (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Fennis and Stel 2011; Knowles, Butler, and Linn 2001; Knowles and Linn 2004). Especially noteworthy is the notion of approach forces – or "alpha" strategies – and avoidance forces – or "omega" strategies (see Table 4). Alpha strategies rely on persuasion that is geared towards enhancing people's motivation toward a goal by making the influence attempt more attractive. These strategies include making messages more persuasive, adding incentives, increasing source credibility, providing consensus information, emphasizing scarcity, engaging in a norm of reciprocity, or emphasizing consistency and commitment (Knowles and Linn 2004). For example, adding

Table 4 - Social Influence Strategies in the Face of Resistance

Name	Type	Definition	Examples
Alpha Strategies	Approach forces	Promote change by activating approach forces, thereby increase the motivation to move toward the goal. Rely on persuasion of making the influence attempt more attractive.	Making messages more persuasive, adding incentives, increasing source credibility, providing consensus information, emphasizing scarcity, engaging in a norm of reciprocity, emphasizing consistency and commitment
Omega Strategies	Avoidance forces	Promote change by minimizing the avoidance forces, thereby reducing the motivation to move away from the goal. Rely on cooperation and collaboration.	Sidestep resistance, address resistance indirectly, distract resistance, disrupt resistance, use resistance to promote change

incentives entails “sweetening” the deal and providing extra inducements in an attempt to obtain compliance (Cialdini 2001). As another example, a person might provide consensus information by stressing that many people are doing, thinking, and desiring the object of the persuasion attempt. In stark contrast to alpha strategies, omega strategies “promote change by minimizing the avoidance forces, thereby reducing the motivation to move away from the goal” (Knowles and Linn 2004, p. 119). This is much more of a cooperative, collaborative, and consultative approach. Under these strategies, influencers may sidestep resistance, address resistance directly, address resistance indirectly, distract resistance, disrupt resistance, consume resistance, or use resistance to promote change (Knowles and Linn 2004; Sagarin et al. 2002). For instance, sidestepping resistance might entail redefining the interaction so that the influence attempt is not perceived as an influence attempt by the target.

Within the fields of management and organizational science, social influence has long been utilized as a critical theoretical foundation (Bolino et al. 2008; Brouer et al. 2015; Cullen et al. 2014; Ferris et al. 2002a; Snell et al. 2014; Treadway et al. 2014; Whitaker and Dahling 2013). Here, the underlying premise of social influence theory is that employees and managers use influence behaviors in order to achieve positive workplace objectives and outcomes (Todd et al. 2009). Employees are motivated to use social influence in an attempt to improve their social standing and career (Feldman and Weitz 1991). Moreover, employees influence others in the organization in order to attain desired roles and assignments (Judge and Bretz Jr. 1994; Prieto 2010). For example, an employee may use influence behaviors in order to receive a bonus or a promotion. In the literature, marketing and selling are considered to be forms of influence (Bass 1997; Borders 2006; Spiro and Perreault 1979).

Social Influence in Sales

In a sales domain, salespeople may want to influence how they are perceived by their external and internal customers in order to satisfy personal and organizational goals. Here, the interactions with customers and other members of the organization are considered social influence behaviors (Borders 2006). By impacting and influencing their relationships with their customers, salespeople may be able to forge a better impression that results in increased sales. With regards to prospecting, the use of social influence by salespeople is intensified and especially notable. This is especially acute given that the influence attempt will either be successful (i.e., convert the prospect) or unsuccessful (i.e., unable to convert the prospect). The theory posits that employees who are skilled at influence attempts are more effective and successful than their counterparts. That is, the ability of the influencer to understand and manage the relationship with the target is critical for a successful influence attempt (Ferris et al. 2007). As such, social influence theory is a good foundational lens that can be used to better understand the outcomes of customer and workplace relationships (Cullen et al. 2014).

While social influence theory has been used to describe, explain, predict, and understand the "what" of influence attempts, social psychologists have emphasized the need to understand the characteristics and mechanisms of influence attempts (Higgins et al. 2003; Jones 1990). As such, political skill has been suggested as the missing link in social influence theory, which provides insights and justifications into the "how" of influence attempts (Ferris et al. 2005b; Ferris et al. 2007). The notion of political skill purports that the success of an influence attempt depends on the situational context as well as the social astuteness, interpersonal style, networking ability, and apparent sincerity of the influencer in order to properly execute the influence attempt. In other words, the use of influence tactics alone is not sufficient, and

individuals have to do so in a socially appropriate manner. Accordingly, social influence theorists have proposed that political skill is a critical moderator of the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes (Harris et al. 2007).

Social influence theory and the advancements and contributions of political skill provide a much richer and robust theoretical basis for investigating salesperson persistence tactics. Despite the abundance of research on social influence, scholars have not extensively examined and focused on the execution of influence attempts in achieving positive work outcomes (Brouer et al. 2015; Ferris et al. 2002a). This is especially the case in the sales literature, where influence is at the heart of the selling process. Salespeople who are good at using social influence improve their performance and avoid negative consequences that are byproducts of their decisions (Cullen et al. 2014). Using social influence theory as a theoretical lens, the sales interaction with the customer is a situation that is characterized by the use of influence tactics. The ultimate goal of the salesperson is to enact behaviors in order to influence the customer in a way that will benefit their personal and organizational goals (Barrick et al. 2009). This may be done in a very purposeful and strategic way that results in customers buying from the salesperson and entering a long-term business relationship.

Taking into consideration that salespeople tend to be incentivized by commission in a predominantly performance-based profession, it is in the best interest of salespeople to "paint" themselves in the best picture possible when dealing with prospects. This is especially acute when dealing with hesitant prospects. Hesitant prospects may not be forthright in their response to an influence attempt, and, as such, salespeople have to be extra cautious in how they respond to these prospects. This is exacerbated when considering that the initial influence attempt has implications for not only the success or failure of the current attempt, but may also have a chain

reaction on the outcome of subsequent attempts and, ultimately, salesperson productivity and satisfaction (Cartwright 1959; Instone, Major, and Bunker 1983; Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma 1973).

Political Skill

While there has been a flourishing of recent research on political skill, the notion of a politically skilled employee is not new in the literature. Indeed, Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983) were the first to concurrently and separately propose the idea over thirty years ago. Early work by Pfeffer (1981) took into consideration the perspective of power, politics, and political skill in organizations. He argued that power, which is structural in nature, is a resource that can be acquired through the use of organizational politics (Ferris et al. 2012). Accordingly, political skill can be thought of as the tool that allows an individual to obtain power in the organization (Pfeffer 2010a; Pfeffer 2010b). Meanwhile, Mintzberg (1983), who claimed that an organization is a political arena, viewed political skill as an interpersonal style, exercised by those with formal power, to negotiate, manipulate, and persuade others in the organization. The main contention of these early scholars is that employees who were interpersonally savvy where more effective at influencing others at work, and had better success in securing organizational resources (Ferris et al. 2012; Munyon et al. 2015).

Interestingly, since this initial conceptualization, the topic of political skill remained unexplored for almost 20 years. After clearly defining political skill and creating a research program, Ferris and his colleagues have really pioneered the effort towards a better understanding of political skill. Ferris et al. (1999) note that it is important to move beyond the study of only particular influence tactics or political behaviors, and to move towards a better understanding of the political skill of the influencer. An understanding of both of these

perspectives provides a more complete and holistic understanding of the influence attempt. This shift in focus from the "what" of influence to the inclusion of the "how" of influence provides the much needed missing link that social psychologists had been arguing for (e.g., Jones 1990). As such, political skill fills this void by describing the style of delivery and execution of the influence attempt (Ferris et al. 2012). This literature stream has evolved into providing the basis for a theoretical foundation (Treadway et al. 2013).

In their seminal piece, Ferris et al. (2005b) define political skill as "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (p.127). Expanding on early work, these scholars grow the notion of political skill to include the exercise of influence that is not limited to only those with formal authority (Ferris et al. 2012). Instead, influencers only need to have personal resources, established goals, and the ability to choose and enact appropriate behaviors for the situation (Treadway et al. 2013). The key here is that highly politically skilled individuals know which behaviors are needed in order to execute successful influence attempts. In order to determine which behaviors to enact, the politically skilled have the ability to accurately assess and comprehend the environment around them. They have the capacity to read both people and situations, as they use this information to make informed decisions regarding the influence tactics they choose.

Accordingly, one of the underlying premises of this line of research is that employees with high political skill are in a better position to more accurately select and implement influence tactics to influence others (Ferris et al. 2007). This is accomplished by the politically skilled individuals' ability to calibrate their situation specific behavior in an effective and influential way (Treadway et al. 2013). Politically skilled individuals are different from their counterparts

because they have a capacity to capitalize on opportunities that are in their own best interests and they are able to "get things done" (Andrews et al. 2009; Kacmar et al. 2013). A key attribute of the politically skilled is that they are able to interact with others in nonthreatening ways, as they are more engaged in work tasks and social environments (Hochwarter et al. 2010).

Within the management and organizational behavior domain, political skill is considered to be an individual difference factor that stresses two primary skills: 1) the employee's ability to understand the work environment, including the people "acting" within it, and 2) the use of that knowledge to influence others in pursuit of individual goals (Ferris et al. 2005b; Ferris et al. 2007). Ferris et al. (2007) claim that political skill is "a comprehensive pattern of social competencies, with cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations, which have both direct effects on outcomes, as well as moderating effects on predictor-outcome relationships" (p. 291). Accordingly, the literature describes political skill as incorporating both a cognitive and a behavior component. The cognitive aspect, which is at the intrapsychic level, incorporates the individual's understanding of their respective environment.

Meanwhile, the behavioral aspect, which occurs at the interpersonal level, involves the individual's adaptive behavior towards achieving personal or organizational goals (Brouer et al. 2015; Ferris et al. 2012). Thus, individuals with high political skill will view work as an opportunity to attain personal goals (Munyon et al. 2015). For these individuals, organizational politics is not viewed negatively because they are able to control their environment making it less ambiguous (Kacmar et al. 2013). Since its more recent conceptualization, political skill has been depicted as a complex multidimensional construct (Ferris et al. 1999). Political skill includes four distinct, yet interrelated, dimensions: 1) social astuteness, 2) networking ability, 3) interpersonal influence, and 4) apparent sincerity (Ferris et al. 2005b).

Dimensions of Political Skill

Social astuteness refers to an individual's capacity to observe and understand themselves, the social environment around them, and the motivation of others (Ferris et al. 2007). Those with high social astuteness have a keen understanding of everything that is going on around them, as they regularly monitor the environment looking for politically oriented behavior (Whitaker and Dahling 2013). They use information and cues in their surroundings in order to determine the socially appropriate behavior (Bandura 1991). Additionally, these individuals have a high level of self-awareness and are considerate and sensitive of other people. This in turn allows them to better identify with others, as they are accurate in interpreting the behavior of others (Ferris et al. 2012). Furthermore, the politically skilled are better able to interpret the needs of others, while also predicting how others will react to their behaviors (Cullen et al. 2014). This feature of political skill is considered to be an intrapsychic process that does not have an immediate impact on others. Instead, the socially astute internalize the information that they are able to sense, through the use of a heightened level of awareness that allows them to self-regulate to the situation around them (Ferris et al. 2012). Of the four dimensions of political skill, social astuteness has been found to be the strongest predictor of job performance (Ferris et al. 2005b). Thus, it can be inferred that social astuteness is at the core of political skill and is a necessary condition for the political skill process.

The second dimension of political skill, networking ability, describes the ability to understand organization dynamics and how to leverage social capital in order to gain an advantage (Brass 2001). As superb relationship builders, those with high networking ability skills are able to better strengthen bonds and position themselves in their networks in order to receive the greatest benefit from their connections (Ferris et al. 2007). In order to do so, they

understand the network and who has influence, giving them a high level of network awareness (Treadway et al. 2010). Politically skilled individuals also possess the ability to develop friendships easily, resulting in possibly favorable alliances and coalitions (Munyon et al. 2015). In turn, they are able to use these newly acquired connections, in addition to existing connections, to gain access to further information about their surrounding environment and the people in it. Thus, the politically skilled are able to utilize their network in order to capture valuable social capital in order to achieve their goals (Ellen, Ferris, and Buckley 2013; Perrewé et al. 2004).

Interpersonal influence, the third component of political skill, entails the subtle style of influence and behavioral flexibility (Ferris et al. 2005b). The subtle style of influence incorporates the ability to build rapport and communicate effectively while making others feel comfortable and at ease. Behavioral flexibility refers to the individual's ability to discreetly adjust their behavior to different and changing situations. Others tend to view this adaptive behavior in a positive light. Moreover, politically skilled individuals are able to implement subtle influence attempts, without threatening the target (Ferris et al. 2012). They are described as "adaptable social chameleons" (Ferris et al. 2007). Interpersonal influence has a clear behavioral implication, as this skill is only activated when others are around (Brouer et al. 2015). The argument here is that this attribute of political skill has a direct influence on others, and has a heightened impact on interpersonal relationships.

The last dimension of political skill, apparent sincerity is characterized by the perception of others. In the eyes of others, the politically skilled is viewed as authentic, genuine, sincere, honest, and trustworthy (Ferris et al. 2007). Others do not perceive the politically skilled as having any ulterior motives or malicious intentions. Accordingly, the politically skilled is not

viewed as being manipulative or coercive, making them much more effective at interpersonal influence attempts (Treadway et al. 2007). They are able to accomplish this by their acute ability to convey a calm sense of self-confidence, while remaining humble (Treadway et al. 2014). This is exacerbated when considering the sense of personal security and self-confidence of the politically skilled (Bing et al. 2011; Ewen et al. 2013). Interestingly, it is this dimension of political skill that has the most potential for successful influence (Blickle et al. 2010a).

Political Skill as a Distinct Social Effectiveness Construct

Political skill is assumed to be an ability that is inherent in the dispositional makeup of an individual, while also being a trainable skill (Ferris, Perrewé, and Douglas 2002b; Ferris et al. 2007). Thus, researchers claim that this skill is both learned and innate (Ferris et al. 2012). In other words, politically skilled employees are both born and made. While managers can select employees with high political skill during the hiring process, political skill theorists contend that managers can develop this competency through training, mentoring, and socialization (Ewen et al. 2013; Ferris et al. 2008; Pfeffer 2010a). Although research has found and treated perceptions of politics (POP) to have a negative connotation, it is important to stress that political skill is not viewed in a negative light, and instead is considered to be a set of positive traits (Brouer, Harris, and Kacmar 2011; Smith et al. 2009). In fact, it has been argued that this is an important skill set that is necessary for survival in today's dynamic organizational environment (Ferris et al. 2007). This is especially the case given that employees continue to be involved in an "intricate web of relationships" with constituents both within and outside the firm (Treadway et al. 2010).

Theorists in this area have provided ample evidence distinguishing this construct from other related constructs (Ferris et al. 2002b; Semadar, Robins, and Ferris 2006). In particular, these scholars have shown that political skill is different from other social effectiveness

constructs, including self-monitoring, political savvy, organizational Machiavellianism, and emotional intelligence. For instance, Ferris et al. (2005b) found that there was a modest significant correlation between political skill and these other social effectiveness constructs. Others have demonstrated that political skill is a superior predictor of managerial performance, when compared with emotional intelligence, self-monitoring, and leadership self-efficacy (Semadar et al. 2006). The main contention here is that political skill is the only social effectiveness construct that has been exclusively developed to assess an employee's ability to recognize and traverse the political arena of the organization (Treadway et al. 2010). Therefore, political skill should be viewed as a distinct social effectiveness construct (Munyon et al. 2015; Treadway et al. 2013).

Extant Political Skill Research

Due to the significance of political skill, researchers have had a piqued interest in examining the impact of political skill on a wide-range of organizational outcomes (Blickle et al. 2011c; Ferris et al. 2012; Jawahar et al. 2008; Munyon et al. 2015) This abundance of research has provided strong evidence of political skill having a positive effect on job performance, promotability ratings, and career success (Blickle et al. 2008; Ferris et al. 2008; Gentry et al. 2012; Hung, Yeh, and Shih 2012; Kolodinsky, Treadway, and Ferris 2007; Liu et al. 2007; Todd et al. 2009; Treadway et al. 2013). A meta-analysis by Bing et al. (2011) revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between political skill and task and contextual performance. Moreover, studies have found that the politically skilled are better suited at and more effective at influence attempts (Brouer et al. 2015; Harris et al. 2007; Treadway et al. 2007). For example, a qualitative study by Smith et al. (2009) found that plant managers used political skill in order to more effectively influence subordinates in ways that contributed to organizational outcomes. As

another example, a more recent and provocative study of college head football coaches showed that politically skilled recruiters were better at performance resource leveraging when they interacted with and influenced recruits (Treadway et al. 2014). As such, these coaches where able to use their political skill to entice and secure better recruits to commit to their colleges.

Researchers have also investigated the antecedents associated with political skill (Cullen et al. 2014; Liu et al. 2007; Meurs, Gallagher, and Perrewé 2010; Semadar et al. 2006; Treadway et al. 2007). In the literature, scholars have suggested that political skill is an important antecedent to personal and leader reputation (Blass and Ferris 2007; Ferris et al. 2003; Hall et al. 2004; Zinko et al. 2007). Cullen et al. (2014) found that political skill had a positive effect on employee popularity, which in turn led to lower levels of workplace conflict and workplace ostracism. Studies have also shown that political skill serves a key meditational role in the relationship between personality and performance (Shi, Chen, and Zhou 2011; Snell et al. 2014). In order to highlight the dispositional and developmental antecedents that predict political skill, Ferris et al. (2007) proposed a nomological network that consisted of four major themes, including perceptiveness, control, affability, and active influence (Ferris et al. 2008). They suggest that self-monitoring (see Snyder 1987), self-efficacy (see Bandura 1996), extraversion, dominance (see Jackson 1974), and mentoring contribute to political skill.

In efforts aimed at gaining a better understanding of political skill, researchers have also extensively examined the moderating effect of political skill (Ferris, Witt, and Hochwarter 2001; Moeller and Harvey 2011; Witt and Ferris 2003). For instance, it has been shown that political skill interacts with general mental ability (Ferris et al. 2001), conscientiousness (Witt and Ferris 2003), job tension (Hochwarter et al. 2007a), and perceived organizational support (Hochwarter et al. 2006) to predict better job performance. Others found evidence that political skill

negatively moderates (i.e., neutralizes) the relationship between role conflict and psychological anxiety, somatic complaints, and psychological strain (Perrewé et al. 2004). The main implication here is that political skill may serve as an antidote to the negative consequences of workplace strains and stressors (Ferris et al. 2007; Perrewé et al. 2000), while reducing emotional burnout (Meurs et al. 2010) and increasing job and career satisfaction (Harvey et al. 2007).

Theorists in this domain have widely assumed that robust findings of political skill's predictive power can be applied and generalized across situations, such as types of jobs and organizations (Blickle et al. 2011a). Indeed, scholars have been able to extend and show the effects of political skill across borders and cultures. In their study of 1511 employees from China, Germany, Russia, Turkey, and the United States, Lvina et al. (2012) demonstrated that political skill is a constant construct that does not vary among diverse cultural groups. Despite this, researchers have called for future research on political skill that considers the importance of context and potential boundary conditions (Andrews et al. 2009; Blickle et al. 2009; Ferris et al. 2002b; Kapoutsis et al. 2011).

Political Skill in Sales

Highly political skilled individuals tend to gravitate towards social and enterprising careers where they thrive on the opportunities to exercise interpersonal influence (Blickle et al. 2009; Cullen et al. 2014; Kaplan 2008). Enterprising careers (see Holland 1973) are comprised of jobs that include such tasks as speaking on behalf of a group, organizing meetings, leading discussions, bargaining, selling, and persuading others (Blickle et al. 2010a). Sales positions are considered to be enterprising careers where the need for political skill should not only be heightened, but also crucial. Hence, political skill is especially noteworthy and salient in a sales

job (Blickle et al. 2010a; Blickle et al. 2010b). This is acute considering that most sales jobs exist in a social context (Ferris et al. 2008; Ferris and Judge 1991) and this is further exacerbated when considering the role of salespeople as direct revenue generators that contribute to the success of an organization. Additionally, salespeople are in a strong interpersonal context, where "interpersonal competency" is fundamental and political skill is a stronger predictor of performance (Blickle et al. 2009; Holland 1976). This is especially the case given that the sales position requires the use of social influence tactics (Bing et al. 2011).

Research on political skill in a sales context has not quite yet made its way to the marketing literature (see Bolander et al. 2015 for a recent notable exception). However, there is little research that focuses on salespeople that exists within the organizational behavior literature (Blickle et al. 2011a; Blickle et al. 2010a; Blickle et al. 2010b). For instance, a study of automobile salespersons indicated that political skill positively moderates the relationship between the motive to get ahead, which was operationalized by the personality trait of extraversion, and sales performance (Blickle et al. 2010b). In another study of insurance salespersons, it was found that political skill significantly impacted four measures of sales performance, including sales volume, performance-based income, performance-based commission rates, and performance-based status (Blickle et al. 2011b).

Adaptive Selling

At this juncture, it is important to review the literature on adaptive selling, which incorporates a significant body of knowledge within the sales domain. In the sales literature, the notion of adaptive selling is perhaps the most appropriate form of the "how" of influence. However, the conceptualization of adaptive selling, relative to political skill, tends to be much

more limited in scope and only incorporates one aspect of the broader topic of political skill. That is, adaptive selling is most similarly aligned with the dimension of interpersonal influence within the political skill concept. Despite this, adaptive selling does not fully take into account the other facets of political skill – namely, social astuteness, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. Moreover, the importance of adaptive selling and persistence was also echoed in the qualitative interviews conducted with sales professionals. For instance, Susan emphasizes how important adaptive selling is for her when she persists with resistant prospects, "(being) adaptable is big because people change their minds a lot and you've got to roll with it and try to help them change their mind back." However, despite evidence and the prominence of adaptive selling in the sales literature, the qualitative work indicated that salespeople, with regards to persistence, actually "go beyond" the tenets of adaptive selling in what is more appropriately labeled as political skill, as discussed in Chapter Two and the previous section. Nonetheless, a discussion on adaptive selling is warranted in order to more concisely put political skill into a sales perspective.

In today's competitive world and tighter economic situation, companies are faced with the need to constantly be flexible and efficient in order to merely survive. As such, organizations have to rely on a workforce that embraces and effectively adapts (Cascio 2003; Ployhart and Bliese 2006). Here, adaptive performance specifically refers to a set of behaviors, and not an intention (Shoss, Witt, and Vera 2012). With regards to organizational outcomes, Dorsey, Cortina, and Luchman (2010) suggest that employee-level adaptive behaviors are essential for managing change, organizational learning, and staying up-to-date with shifting customer demands. In particular, it has been suggested that adaptive performance includes activities associated with handling emergencies, handling work stress, solving problems creatively, dealing

with uncertain and unpredictable work situations, demonstrating interpersonal adaptability, demonstrating cultural adaptability, demonstrating physically orientated adaptability, and learning work tasks, technologies, and procedures (Pulakos et al. 2000). The key with adaptive behaviors is that they are enacted in response to some external force. A salesperson, most notably, is entrusted to a position where this is highly pertinent and prevalent. However, in order to do so, it is important for "individuals, as adaptive organisms, adapt attitudes, behavior, and beliefs to their social context and to the reality of their own past and present behavior and situation" (Salancik and Pfeffer 1978). Due to its significance, this concept has made its way into the marketing and sales literature.

Adaptive selling, which is perhaps one of the most impactful and robust indigenous sales topics, is widely accepted in the marketing literature (Chai, Zhao, and Babin 2012; Franke and Park 2006; Giacobbe et al. 2006; Levy and Sharma 1994; McFarland, Challagalla, and Shervani 2006; Rapp, Agnihotri, and Forbes 2008; Spiro and Weitz 1990; Weitz 1978). Well documented in the literature, adaptive selling has been generally characterized as a distinct selling approach (Singh and Das 2013; Weitz 1981). It has been defined as "the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986, p. 175). The underlying premise of adaptive selling is that sales people customize their tactics in order to accommodate and fit with the idiosyncrasies and needs of the buyers with whom they are dealing with (Szymanski 1988; Weitz et al. 1986). Subsequently, the ultimate goal of adaptive selling is to bolster the relationship between the salesperson and the customer. Accordingly, adaptive selling is best utilized when the sales offering is complex, the customers are diverse with ever-changing needs,

and the sales relationship is expected to be profitable (Giacobbe et al. 2006; Román and Iacobucci 2010).

In order to use adaptive selling, it is inherent that salespeople have an understanding of the selling situation and, further, have the capacity to appropriately alter their behavior in response to customer needs and wants. Hence, salesperson adaptive behaviors involve "collecting information about a prospective customer, developing a sales strategy, evaluating the impact of these messages, and making adjustments in the sales presentation based on this evaluation" (Spiro and Weitz 1990, p. 61). This is predicated by the salesperson's ability to closely monitor the sales situation and probe customer reactions. The salesperson must also be able to recognize and interpret both customer verbal and nonverbal behavior (Byron, Terranova, and Nowicki 2007). Accordingly, the salesperson uses this information in order to more appropriately alter his or her sales tactics in order to appeal to the needs and wants of that particular customer. In addition to adapting the content of the sales message, adaptive selling involves assimilating to the customer's social and communication styles (McFarland et al. 2006; Tanner Jr. 1994). As such, adaptive selling takes into account the general ability and willingness of a salesperson to implement unique sales approaches to match their current situation (Hughes, Le Bon, and Rapp 2013).

In order for salespeople to practice adaptive selling, it is crucial that they are motivated and able to quickly adapt to the dynamic sales situations (Spiro and Weitz 1990). To effectively adapt, it is essential that salespeople are equipped with sufficient resources. Specifically, salespeople must possess knowledge of the different customer types, sales skills, and sales strategies (Weitz et al. 1986). As such, salespeople must have an adequate understanding of which approach and sales strategy is the most appropriate for each situation. The significance of

this is heightened when considering that salespeople retrieve information from their memory when applying their knowledge to a sales situation (Park and Bunn 2003). Therefore, for adaptive selling to be successful, it is essential that the salesperson effectively use this knowledge (Hunter and Perreault 2006). With experience, salespeople are able to enhance their knowledge structures and capacity to identify a wider range of selling situations (Weitz et al. 1986). Fittingly, salespeople that implement adaptive selling work smarter by carefully and strategically choosing appropriate approaches for particular customers (Sujan 1986). It is important to note that adaptive selling is not a standard solution for all customer interactions. On one extreme, a salesperson may use a customized approach for each sales call. On the other end of the spectrum, a salesperson may use a "canned presentation" for each sales call, where they do not adapt at all (Chakrabarty, Oubre, and Brown 2008; Weitz 1981). The jeopardy with such a blanket approach is that a salesperson may overextend resources or inappropriately "force fit" the selling approach. So, adaptive selling should only be utilized in instances where the benefits outweigh the costs (Eveleth and Morris 2002; Porter, Wiener, and Frankwick 2003; Weitz 1981).

Initially conceived by Weitz (1981) at a conceptual level, adaptive selling has since flourished with an extensive amount of research that has provided strong evidence of the antecedents and outcomes associated with this concept (Boorom, Goolsby, and Ramsey 1998; Franke and Park 2006; Giacobbe et al. 2006; Hunter and Perreault 2006; Jaramillo et al. 2007; Park and Holloway 2003; Park and Deitz 2006; Román and Iacobucci 2010). For instance, an often-cited meta-analysis by Franke and Park (2006) confirmed that there is a positive relationship between adaptive selling behavior and salesperson performance. Interestingly, it was found that adaptive selling accounts for 20 percent of the variance in sales performance (Giacobbe 1991). A more recent study by Román and Iacobucci (2010) examined the attitudinal

and behavioral aspects of adaptive selling. Using a dataset that consisted of 210 salesperson-customer dyads, the authors found that a salesperson's perception of the firm's customer orientation has an impact on adaptive selling through adaptive selling confidence, role ambiguity, intrinsic motivation, and customer-qualification skills. Further, they provide evidence demonstrating that adaptive selling behavior has a positive effect on not only salesperson performance, but also customer satisfaction with the product, customer satisfaction with the salesperson, and likelihood of repeat business. Another major contribution of the Román and Iacobucci (2010) study is that they theoretically and empirically distinguish between adaptive selling confidence and adaptive selling behavior. In a different vein, the use of adaptive selling is an adequate approach that can enhance relationship quality (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990). Additionally, the use of salesperson adaptive behavior has been shown to have a positive effect on customer rapport building during the early stages of the relationship formulation (Campbell, Davis, and Skinner 2006). This has significant relevance, especially since salespeople strive to develop relationships with their customers. Hence, adaptive selling may create an empathetic relationship between the salesperson and the customer (Siguaw and Honeycutt 1995).

The literature has since identified numerous factors that lead a salesperson to undertake effective adaptive selling (Boorom et al. 1998; Chai et al. 2012; Fang et al. 2004; Jaramillo et al. 2007; McMurrain and Srivastava 2009; Park and Deitz 2006; Park et al. 2010; Porter and Inks 2000; Porter et al. 2003). One body of literature focuses on the internal salesperson characteristics that lead to the tendency for salespeople to use adaptive selling. For example, scholars have identified age, skills, intrinsic motivation, internal locus of control, role ambiguity, and sales experience as significant predictors of adaptive selling. In their seminal piece, Spiro

and Weitz (1990) concisely define the six factors that lead a salesperson to use adaptive selling (p. 62):

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

These factors can more simply be classified as those that represent the motivation to use adaptive selling, those that consider the capabilities needed for adaptive selling, and those pertaining to the actual behavior (Robinson et al. 2002). Moreover, listening skills are also crucial for effective adaptive selling, as this is a primary tool that salespeople have at their disposal to sense customer needs and personalities (Pelham 2009; Pelham and Kravitz 2008; Porter et al. 2003; Shoemaker and Johlke 2002). The implication here is that salespeople who use active listening are better equipped at recognizing the particular needs and problems of the customer, and as a result, are more effective at implementing adaptive selling.

Another body of literature focuses on the external factors that impact the tendency to practice adaptive selling, such as social surroundings, work environment, and organizational climate (Bush et al. 2001; Chai et al. 2012; Grant and Cravens 1996; Jones et al. 2005; Kara et al. 2013; Piercy, Cravens, and Morgan 1998; Rapp et al. 2006; Román and Iacobucci 2010). In these studies, it is recognized that salespeople selling abilities and motives may not be the only determinant of adaptive selling, but may also include factors that are driven by their

management. Accordingly, researchers incorporate sales management variables when modeling adaptive selling and salesperson performance. One line of research focuses on the link between adaptive selling and customer orientation (Franke and Park 2006; Kara et al. 2013; Pelham and Kravitz 2008; Pettijohn, Pettijohn, and Taylor 2007; Singh and Das 2013). For example, a meta-analysis by Franke and Park (2006) showed that customer orientation and job experience are significant predictors of adaptive selling. In this same study, the authors also investigated the moderating effects of customer type (organizational or consumer), product type (good or service), salesperson gender, and selling experience. Adaptive selling has also been looked at in conjunction with sales force automation (Park et al. 2010; Rapp et al. 2008; Robinson, Marshall, and Stamps 2005). In principal, sales force automation makes it possible for salespeople to better adapt because the system provides sufficient means to capture customer information, identify customer needs, and develop richer customer relationships (Anderson, Dubinsky, and Mehta 2007). For example, CRM tools provide salespeople with real-time access to customer information, which improves adaptive selling effectiveness (Rapp et al. 2008). Accordingly, salespeople who intend to use sales force automation technology are more likely to employ adaptive selling.

Others have taken a learning and goal orientation perspective on adaptive selling (Park and Holloway 2003; Park and Deitz 2006; Sujan, Weitz, and Kumar 1994). These studies have provided support for the positive relationship between learning goal orientation and the use of adaptive selling. In particular, salespeople experiment with different selling approaches and new tactics in order to identify the best approach. For learning-orientated salespeople, failure during the sales call is attributed to the incorrect approach used, and in order to overcome this failure

they make the appropriate solution-oriented adjustment (Dweck and Leggett 1988; Elliott and Dweck 1988).

Conversely, scholars have begun to focus on the relationship between a proving goal orientation and adaptive selling (McFarland and Kidwell 2006; Silver, Dwyer, and Alford 2006). An individual deliberately trying to demonstrate competence, especially when that individual is concerned with being portrayed as being incompetent, to elicit a favorable judgment from other constituents characterizes a proving goal orientation. The contention with a proving goal orientation is that it can lead to maladaptive behaviors, such as setting low goals and task disengagement (Elliot 1999; Elliot and Church 2003; Steele-Johnson et al. 2000). In sales, the implication is that a proving goal orientation may hinder the positive effects associated with adaptive selling. More recently, Chai et al. (2012) suggest that perceived obsolescence, or the perceived unfamiliarity to apply the knowledge, methods, and technologies needed for the profession, will reduce the likelihood that a salesperson practices adaptive selling.

Influence Tactics

Researchers have long acknowledged the significance of influence behaviors. The study of influence tactics has primarily resided in the fields of social psychology (Cialdini 1987; Cialdini 2001; Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Ellemers, Doosje, and Spears 2004; Tedeschi and Bonoma 1972; Tedeschi et al. 1973), organizational behavior (Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson 1980; Kolodinsky et al. 2007; Schriesheim and Hinkin 1990; Yukl, Chavez, and Seifert 2005), and marketing (Boyle and Dwyer 1995; Frazier and Summers 1984; McFarland et al. 2006; Plouffe et al. 2014). Over the last forty years, scholars from these disciplines have focused on understanding the processes and outcomes associated with influence behaviors. The bulk of these

investigations have focused on the impact of influence tactics on decision-makers perceptions, evaluations, and compliance (Gordon 1996; Higgins et al. 2003).

The fundamental notion underscoring influence tactics is that individuals engage in behaviors that aid in "getting their way" (Kipnis et al. 1980). In this way, an individual (agent) uses influence tactics in order to gain compliance from another individual (target) (Frazier and Rody 1991). Accordingly, influence tactics are considered to be the communication mechanisms in which firms or individuals apply power in order to change the attitudes, behaviors, and opinions of others (Borders 2006; Frazier and Rody 1991; Kim 2000). Taken together, the unique influence tactics literature streams suggest that an individual's goal dictates the use of different influence tactics (Brosky 2011; Kipnis et al. 1980). It is important to emphasize that these tactics are not equally utilized; and that not every influence tactic yields the same result. For example, a study by Higgins et al. (2003) revealed that higher performance assessments were given to employees who used rationality, as compared to other influence tactics, to influence their managers.

Scholars have proposed various types of influence tactics (Jones and Pittman 1982; Kipnis et al. 1980; McFarland et al. 2006; Schriesheim and Hinkin 1990). Early research in organizational behavior, which focuses at the individual level, began with Kipnis et al. (1980), who indicate that employees may engage in eight distinct influence tactics: 1) ingratiation, 2) exchange, 3) rationality, 4) assertiveness, 5) upward appeal, 6) coalitions, 7) sanctions, and 8) blocking. Ingratiation tactics involve getting the other person to think favorably of the influencer, or putting them in a good mood before attempting an influence attempt. This could be in the form of "strategic praise," and involves a deliberate effort to get on the "good" side of others (Stengel 2000). The use of exchange tactics is predicated on social exchange theory (Thibaut and

Kelley 1959). Influencers use implied or overt promises in order to seek rewards (Yukl and Falbe 1990). Meanwhile, rationality tactics incorporate the use of logical arguments and facts in order to enhance persuasion. The importance of leveraging rationality is evident in the fact that subordinates predominantly use rationality appeals when interacting with their supervisors (Yukl and Tracey 1992). The rationale here is that employees, who work in the "trenches," may have more relevant information than do their supervisors, and thus are more persuasive when they make logical statements. Conversely, individuals enact assertiveness when they use "demands and direct requests in a forceful manner to persuade the subject of the influence attempt to comply with the requests" (Blickle 2000, p. 143). This could be in the form of setting deadlines and following up with others to wield influence. Similarly, the use of upward appeal involves persuading the other person to comply by appealing to higher management and leveraging the hierarchies of management. In these instances, individuals actively seek the support of those that are "higher up" in the organization.

In a different vein, individuals employ coalitions when they lean on, or solicit the help of, others in order to enhance the success of an influence attempt. As such, individuals may build coalitions in order to gain access to resources and to reinforce their position (Hochwarter et al. 2007b). Employees may use sanctions by using threats or punishment in order to gain compliance. Another widely studied influence tactic is self-promotion, which involves the individual trying to appear competent and accomplished (Jones 1990; Jones and Pittman 1982). Here, the individual has to balance their self-promotion efforts in order to not appear arrogant and conceited. It is noteworthy to mention that another similar, yet prevalent, taxonomy of influence tactics in the management literature includes many of these aforementioned tactics, but

also incorporates pressure tactics and consultation tactics (Gardner et al. 2016; Yukl and Falbe 1990).

Influence tactics have also been distinguished between "soft" tactics and "hard" tactics (Atuahene–Gima and Li 2000; Falbe and Yukl 1992; Higgins et al. 2003; Nonis, Sager, and Kumar 1996). On one hand, soft tactics are characterized as those that utilize personal power and involve power sharing (e.g., ingratiation or consultation). On the other hand, hard tactics consist of the use of position power and authority (e.g., self-promotion). In a similar vein, other researchers have discussed salespeople influence tactics as being either "open" or "closed" (Brown 1990; Chakrabarty, Brown, and Widing 2010; Spiro and Perreault 1979; Weitz 1981). Open tactics are more straightforward and deemed to be legitimate by customers. These tactics are undisguised and intentionally explicit (Tedeschi and Bonoma 1972). Meanwhile, closed tactics are more deceptive and considered to be manipulative by customers. Closed tactics, whether they are deliberate or unintentional, tarnish the reputation of the salesperson. This is because customers who perceive the salesperson as utilizing closed influence tactics believe that the salesperson has ulterior motives and that they do not care about their needs.

Influence Tactics in Sales and Marketing

In the marketing literature, influence tactics have been primarily investigated in research on channels of distribution (Boyle et al. 1992; Boyle and Dwyer 1995; Frazier and Summers 1984; Kim 2000; Payan and McFarland 2005) and sales (Brown 1990; Chakrabarty et al. 2010; McFarland et al. 2006; Plouffe et al. 2014; Spiro and Perreault 1979). For example, influence tactics have been examined with regards to buying centers (Farrell and Schroder 1999; Tellefsen and Eyuboglu 2002; Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995), channel relations (Frazier and Rody 1991; Keith, Jackson Jr., and Crosby 1990), channel conflict (Frazier and Rody 1991),

dependence (Gundlach and Cadotte 1994), power (Venkatesh et al. 1995), and end customers (McFarland et al. 2006). The notion of influence tactics was first introduced into the marketing literature by Frazier and Summers (1984). In their seminal piece, these authors propose influence tactics at the firm level, exclusively focusing on channels and inter-organizational relationships. In this context, influence tactics are "compliance-gaining tactics that channel members use to achieve desired actions from channel partners" (McFarland et al. 2006, p. 104). Specifically, Frazier and Summers (1984) provide a typology of six influence tactics: 1) information exchange, 2) recommendations, 3) requests, 4) threats, 5) promises, and 6) legalistic pleas.

These influence tactics can be further grouped into either coercive or noncoercive tactics (Frazier and Rody 1991; Johnson et al. 1993; Payan and McFarland 2005). On one hand, coercive influence tactics are based on the notion that one party exerts power over the other through controlling rewards and punishments, in what is known as source-controlled consequences (Frazier and Summers 1986). That is, coercive influence tactics consist of threats, promises, and legalistic pleas. On the other hand, non-coercive influence tactics rely on one party's ability to change the attitude, behavior, and perception of the other party by making the change seem desirable. These include information exchange, recommendations, and requests. More recently, Payan and McFarland (2005) have argued that rationality is a fourth noncoercive influence strategy.

In personal selling, social influence and the successful influence attempt is at the crux of salesperson performance and success (Evans et al. 2012; Plouffe et al. 2014). Thus, taking into consideration the nuances of personal selling, researchers have adapted, expanded, and modified the original Frazier and Summers (1984) typology to incorporate tactics that are germane to the micro level relationships between individual buyers and sellers. Here, researchers have

acknowledged and taken into consideration the emotional utilities involved in influencing behaviors that salespeople employ (Ahearne, Gruen, and Jarvis 1999; Brown et al. 1997; Crosby et al. 1990). In particular, scholars have insisted that salespeople utilize ingratiation and inspirational influence tactics in order to appeal to buyers' emotions and educing positive emotional reactions. Widely accepted in the organizational behavior literature, these approaches rely on the salesperson's ability to satisfy the psychological needs of customers (McFarland et al. 2006). Furthermore, it is argued that requests and legalistic pleas, as originally conceptualized by Frazier and Summers (1984), are not applicable in a personal selling context.

Fittingly, McFarland et al. (2006) describe "seller influence tactics" as consisting of information exchange, recommendations, threats, promises, ingratiation, and inspirational appeals. For a salesperson, the use of an information exchange influence tactic involves asking questions and communicating information, without explicitly making recommendations. Meanwhile, recommendations are overt arguments and statements that salespeople use to persuade customers of the value of their products and services. In a different vein, threats revolve around salespeople alluding to negative sanctions if the customer does not comply with the salesperson's request (Boyle et al. 1992; Boyle and Dwyer 1995). In contrast, salespeople who use promises provide customers with the assurance of a positive reward if they comply with the salesperson's request. Ingratiation incorporates salespeople building rapport with customers and getting them to "like" them (Kipnis and Schmidt 1988; Kipnis et al. 1980). Finally, salespeople use inspirational appeals by focusing on attracting to customer values, ideals, and aspirations in order to excite customers (Yukl and Tracey 1992).

It is widely accepted in the sales literature that salespeople use influence tactics in order to persuade customers. In the sales domain, an influence tactic is "the manner in which

salespeople use their bases of social power in customer-salesperson interactions" (Chakrabarty et al. 2010, p. 327). Sales scholars have assumed that salespeople exercise influence tactics derived from the power that they implicitly obtain from customers. According to theory and research, perceived customer dependence is one of the main factors that allow salespeople to have power over their customers, which, in turn, allows them to exert influence (Brown 1990; Chakrabarty et al. 2010; French Jr. and Raven 1959; Spiro and Perreault 1979). However, it is worth noting that in order to influence their customers, salespeople need to be cautious so that they do not exploit customer dependence by appearing opportunistic (Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp 1998).

Accordingly, Spiro and Perreault (1979) proposed five different influence tactics derived from power that sales people enact: 1) legitimate, 2) expert, 3) referent, 4) ingratiation, and 5) impression management. Legitimate influence is based on "the feelings of shared values" between salespeople and their customers, where power is derived from the existence of shared values. Expert influence consists of salespeople using their expertise and knowledge in order to satisfy customer needs. Specifically, salespeople derive power because their customers perceive them as having valuable knowledge, information, and skills that will benefit them. Referent influence refers to the salesperson's personal affiliation to their customer. Here, salespeople gain power when buyers identify with the salesperson (Harris and Spiro 1981). Ingratiation, as discussed, occurs when the buyer thinks favorably of the salesperson, resulting in the salesperson obtaining reward power. Finally, impression management involves the salesperson's manipulation of the impression that he or she creates in order to obtain a predetermined positive response from the buyer (Goffman 1959; Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma 1971).

Spiro and Perreault (1979) further describe salespeople by how they use influence tactics. They suggest that not all salespeople implement influence tactics the same way, or even in the

same combinations. Instead, they suggest that salespeople should be categorized by their use of influence strategy mixes as noninfluencers, direct influencers, business-focused influencers, combination influencers, open influencers, or closed influencers. Similarly, Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) use the extent to which people use influence tactics to classify them as either Shotgun, Tactician, Ingratiator, or Bystander. More recently, scholars have considered a salesperson's influence style as "the influence tactics used, their degree of use, and how effectively the salesperson applies those tactics to produce objective outcomes" (Plouffe et al. 2014, p. 142). Plouffe et al. (2014) emphasize that the notion of influence style is more representative of the individual-level differences between different salespeople and their performance. In their study, the authors were the first to be able to use objective data in order to provide empirical evidence that supports the relationship between salesperson use of influence tactics and ultimate performance. Furthermore, they delineate the effect of different influence tactics on performance and show that salespeople are more likely to use influence tactics within a category, as opposed to between categories.

Sales-specific Influence Tactics

Research on influence tactics has generally focused on the following outcomes: commitment, compliance, and resistance (Falbe and Yukl 1992). However, the majority of the research has focused on commitment and compliance. Research has seldom explored how individuals respond to resistance resulting from influence attempts, and how this resistance impacts subsequent influence attempts. This is especially relevant in sales, where it is inevitable that salespeople will face customer objections and should expect resistance in every sales presentation (Moncrief and Marshall 2005). Moreover, the literature on influence tactics has provided little guidance for sales specific influence tactics. Instead, the marketing literature has

heavily applied and relied on influence tactics that have originally been conceived for channel and intra-firm relationships. Furthermore, the organizational behavior literature on influence tactics has focused primarily on intra-firm relationships and has been emphasized in a "within the firm" domain. While these aforementioned tactics have provided significant knowledge to our understanding of salesperson influence tactics, there is still a need for more understanding of sales-specific influence tactics. As such, and with regards to persistence, the qualitative study in support of this dissertation, as discussed in Chapter Two, reveals that persistence should be treated as a form of influence. More specifically, salespeople use persistence tactics in response to hesitation from prospects and customers in an attempt to influence their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors. The qualitative study shows and reveals that salespeople enact two broad categories of persistence approaches: nurture-focused and closure-focused. Figure 5 illustrates the two types of persistence behaviors and their associated tactics.

On the one hand, *nurture-focused persistence* refers to the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at establishing the foundation for future exchange with a prospect. It consists of three different types of tactics, including: 1) maintain contact, 2) value-adding follow-up, and 3) giving the prospect space. *Maintain contact* is defined as the extent to which salespeople continue to follow-up on a regular basis with prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm. Here, the contact is not intrusive and is aimed at establishing presence with the hesitant prospect. Meanwhile, *value-adding follow-up* is defined as the extent to which salespeople focus on providing value in their follow-up interactions with prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm. In these instances, salespeople ensure that they present customers with worthwhile information every time they make contact with them. For example, a salesperson may follow-up

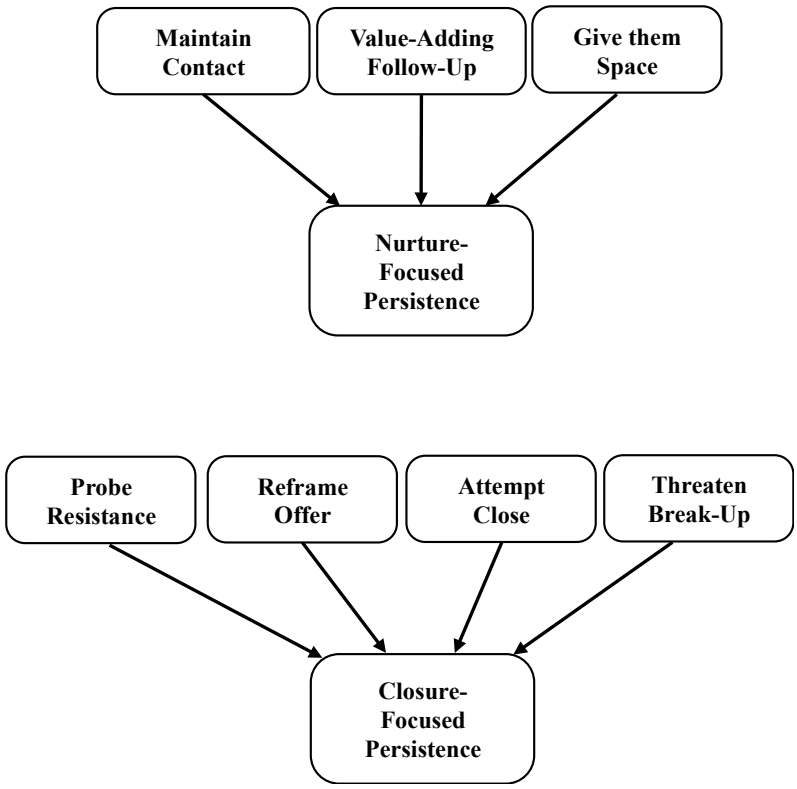


Figure 5 - Sales Persistence Approaches

with a hesitant prospect by sending them an industry-relevant article or an invite to a trade show. The chief concept with this type of persistence is that salespeople do not simply interact with the prospect for the sake of following-up (i.e., with no purpose). Instead, the purpose is to demonstrate usefulness to the customer. In other words, this highlights quality over quantity. The last tactic that is a component of nurture-focused persistence is *give them space*, which is defined as the extent to which salespeople decrease the frequency of their follow-up contact with prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm. As the definition implies, this tactic involves ratcheting down the intensity of persistence. However, this does not mean that a salesperson abandons the prospect altogether. Instead, this involves the salesperson being cognizant of the intensity of their persistence and deliberately decreasing their effort in an attempt to build goodwill with hesitant prospects by providing them with space.

On the other hand, *closure-focused persistence* refers to the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at bringing the sales process to a conclusion. It is important to stress here that this does not always mean that a salesperson converts a prospect or closes a sale. It could also be the case that a salesperson does not convert the sale, but he or she has purposefully terminated contact with a hesitant prospect after accepting the fact that they will not be able to close the prospect. The key here is that the salesperson persists in order to move towards receiving a clear indication of the prospect's true level of interest. As such, closure-focused persistence tactics include: 1) probe resistance, 2) reframe offer, 3) attempt close, and 4) threaten break-up.

Probe resistance is defined as the extent to which salespeople encourage hesitant prospects to articulate their objections to doing so. Here, salespeople persist by intentionally and continually asking prospects to explain their hesitations. Meanwhile, *reframe offer* is defined as the extent to which salespeople provide prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm with alternative offers aimed at inducing a purchase. With this, salespeople persist by providing a hesitant prospect with different offers in hopes of securing a purchase. *Attempt close* is defined as the extent to which salespeople directly ask prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm for their business. In this instance, salespeople explicitly ask hesitant prospects for an order. Finally, *threaten break-up* is defined as the extent to which salespeople convey to prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm that they will no longer be actively pursuing their business. In this case, salespeople pressure hesitant prospects to reveal their true intentions by signaling that they will discontinue contacting and interacting with them.

Part Two: Conceptual Model and Hypothesis Development

The previous literature review offers the theoretical and conceptual foundation for this study. The objective of this dissertation is to explore the nature of persistence and its impact on salesperson performance. More specifically, the research focuses on particular persistence tactics – viz. nurture-focused and closure-focused persistence behaviors – and their countervailing effects on salesperson productivity and, ultimately, their performance. Furthermore, it is argued that political skill moderates the link between persistence and salesperson productivity. Figure 6 depicts the full conceptual model; and a summary of the construct types and definitions is provided in Table 5. The following sections use social influence theory and draw on the literature review to provide the conceptual and theoretical justification for the study hypotheses.

The Effect of Persistence on Prospecting Productivity

Sales Performance

Within the sales literature, sales performance is a common dependent variable due to its managerial relevance (McMurrain and Srivastava 2009; Park et al. 2010; Singh and Das 2013; Verbeke, Dietz, and Verwaal 2011). For organizations, sales performance is crucial because the salesforce contributes directly to company revenues. In the literature, sales performance has been defined as "behavior that has been evaluated in terms of its contribution to the goals of the organization" (Walker et al. 1979, p. 33). Sales performance takes into account the execution of salesperson behaviors and the results associated with those behaviors, especially as they pertain to organizational objectives (Hyman and Sager 1999). For example, behaviors that salespeople are responsible for include prospecting for new customers, planning sales presentations,

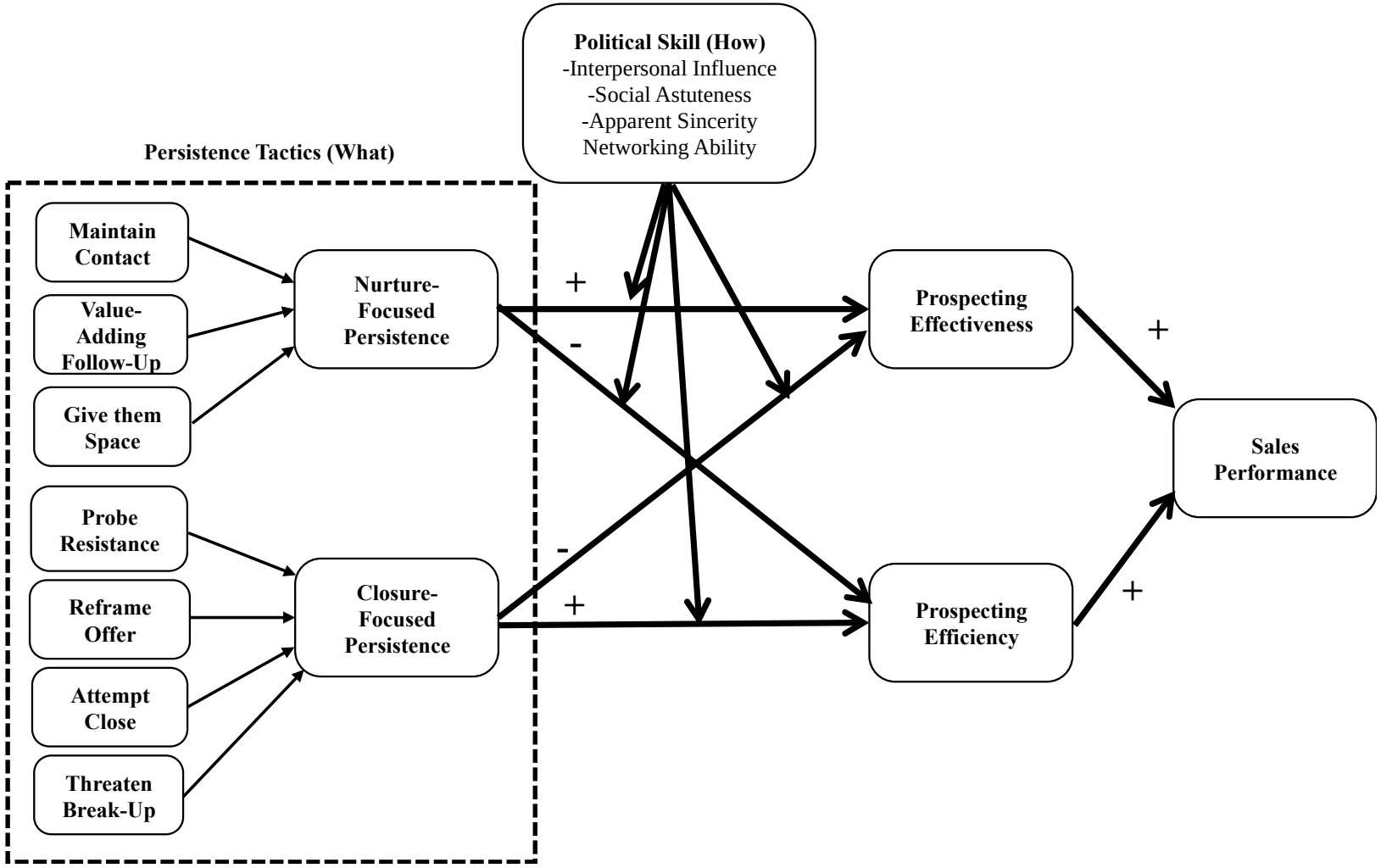


Figure 6 - Full Model

Table 5 - Construct Definitions

Construct	Type	Definition
Nurture-focused Persistence	Second-Order Formative	Continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at establishing the foundation for future exchange.
Maintain Contact	Dimension of Nurture-focused Persistence (Reflective)	Extent to which salespeople maintain regular contact with prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm.
Value-Adding Follow-Up	Dimension of Nurture-focused Persistence (Reflective)	Extent to which salespeople focus on providing value in their follow-up contacts with prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm.
Give the Space	Dimension of Nurture-focused Persistence (Reflective)	Extent to which salespeople decrease their frequency of follow-up contact with prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm
Closure-focused Persistence	Second-Order Formative	Continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at bringing the sales process to a conclusion
Probe Resistance	Dimension of Closure-focused Persistence (Reflective)	Extent to which salespeople encourage prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm to articulate their objections to doing so.
Reframe Offer	Dimension of Closure-focused Persistence (Reflective)	Extent to which salespeople provide prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm with alternative offers aimed at inducing a purchase.
Attempt Close	Dimension of Closure-focused Persistence (Reflective)	Extent to which salespeople directly ask prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm for their business.

Table 5 - Continued

Construct	Type	Definition
Threaten Break-Up	Dimension of Closure-focused Persistence (Reflective)	Extent to which salespeople convey to prospects that are hesitant to purchase from the firm that they will no longer be actively pursuing their business.
Political Skill	Second-Order Reflective (consists of social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity dimensions)	The ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives.
Prospecting Effectiveness	First-Order Reflective	Extent to which a salesperson has succeeded in generating new business for the firm when compared to other salespeople employed in the firm.
Prospecting Efficiency	First-Order Reflective	Level of resources a salesperson invests to close on a prospect when compared to other salespeople employed in the firm.
Sales Performance	Observed Variable (measured using archival data)	A salesperson's level of contribution to the effectiveness of the organization relative to other salespeople employed in the firm.

demonstrating products, overcoming objections, closing a sale, and building relationships with potential customers (Johlke 2006; Marshall et al. 2003).

Clearly, for personal selling to be meaningful to organizations, salespeople must effectively carry out the various personal selling tasks that they are assigned to do. On the flip side, salespeople who are unable to carry out the specific selling tasks successfully, fail to meet company objectives and sales goals. For instance, failure can come in the form of failing to meet quota, failing to meet a customer request, or even being late to appointments (Fine 2007). Collectively, this suggests that sales performance increases the more successful salespeople are at executing selling tasks (McMurrain and Srivastava 2009). Based on this, in this study, sales performance is defined as a salesperson's level of contribution to the goals of the organization as indicated by the level of sales revenue they generate.

Sales Productivity – Prospecting Effectiveness and Prospecting Efficiency

Generally, sales productivity encompasses salesperson effectiveness and efficiency (Ahearne et al. 2005; Robinson et al. 2002; Wilson and Hunt 2011). Sales effectiveness has been previously described as "the degree to which the preferred solutions of salespeople are realized across their customer interactions" (Weitz 1981, p. 91). It is important to highlight the differences between effectiveness and performance. Unlike performance, which has a normative component regarding what behaviors are deemed "good" or "bad," effectiveness denotes "some summary index of organizational outcomes for which an individual is at least partly responsible, such as sales volume, market share, or profitability of sales" (Churchill, Ford, and Walker Jr. 1990, p. 729). That is, effectiveness captures the extent to which salespeople are successful in performing sales tasks when interacting with customers (Plank and Reid 1994; Weitz 1981; Weitz et al. 1986). Consequently, others have described salesperson effectiveness as the extent to

which a salesperson has an effect on the customer's actual purchase decision and customer satisfaction following a purchase (Kim, Kim, and Johnson 2010).

While the literature has considered salesperson effectiveness holistically, in this dissertation, the focus is on prospecting effectiveness. This is because persistence tactics are especially crucial during the prospecting phase of the sales process, where salespeople are interacting with new customers and where resistance is more predominant. From this perspective and consistent with the literature, *prospecting effectiveness* is defined as the extent to which a salesperson is successful in generating new business for the firm. In contrast to salesperson effectiveness, the literature has also considered salesperson efficiency (Ahearne, Hughes, and Schillewaert 2007; Bush et al. 2007; Hall, Ahearne, and Sujan 2015; Jackson et al. 2010). The key difference between effectiveness and efficiency is that the latter exclusively focuses on the level of resources (e.g., number of calls) that a salesperson uses in order to obtain a desired outcome (e.g., close a sale). As such, efficiency describes a ratio estimated by dividing the output by the input (Ahearne et al. 2007; Brinkerhoff and Dressler 1990; Goldenberg 1996). Consequently, a higher ratio indicates a higher level of efficiency. For example, scholars have used this approach to define "call productivity" as the ratio of the number of sales calls a salesperson makes over the number of hours worked during a particular period (Ahearne et al. 2007; Brinkerhoff and Dressler 1990). Similarly, focusing here on prospecting specifically, *prospecting efficiency* is defined as the level of resources a salesperson invests to close on a typical prospect.

The Influence of Nurture-Focused Persistence on Prospecting Effectiveness and Efficiency

Nurture-focused persistence, the continued pursuit of a prospect in the face of resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at establishing the foundation for future exchange,

involves tactics that tend to be more passive in nature, and are aimed at preserving the relationship with a prospect. From a social influence theory perspective, this persistence approach is best viewed as an "omega strategy" (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Fennis and Stel 2011; Knowles et al. 2001; Knowles and Linn 2004). Omega strategies are persuasion attempts enacted in response to influence resistance and are predicated on avoidance forces, where individuals employ "soft" tactics that are not perceived as being overt influence attempts by their targets. Instead, individuals using omega strategies emphasize collaboration and cooperation, and take on the role of consultants whose primary goal is to help the influence target achieve his or her goals. As such, omega strategies attempt to minimize the natural resistance that a person feels by sidestepping the reactance that results from overt influence attempts (Knowles and Linn 2004). In a sales setting, omega strategies are manifest in behaviors that help establish the foundation for future (rather than immediate) exchange between parties (Guenzi, Pardo, and Georges 2007). Accordingly, salespeople that enact omega strategies tend to adopt less aggressive, or "hard," persuasion tactics and adopt an orientation that is more cooperative and communicative. They use "soft" tactics and behave as consultants focused on finding creative solutions to resolve customer problems (Weitz and Bradford 1999). In this way, the salesperson creates value for the customer by going "above-and-beyond," which is appreciated by the customer, and, subsequently, results in the consummation of exchange.

In addition, nurture-focused persistence tactics are also likely to be perceived as non-coercive, which generally result in positive exchange outcomes (Payan and McFarland 2005). Salespeople using nurture-focused persistence foster a sense of friendship and mutual gain with their prospects by taking an outward-focused approach. They maintain contact and preserve the possibility of future exchange with hesitant prospects. Moreover, nurture-focused persistence

tactics are also likely to be construed as open influence attempts by prospects. That is, from the perspective of the prospect, salespeople that engage in nurture-focused persistence tactics appear to be friendly, considerate, dependable, and honest. In this way, prospects do not perceive that they are being influenced and are more likely to be willing to buy from the salesperson; especially since prospect reactance is minimized (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004). In sum, based on the preceding exposition grounded in social influence theory, it is argued here that salespeople who employ nurture-focused persistence tactics are highly effective at creating value for prospects and, by extension, at converting customers into prospects.

H1: Increasing nurture-focused persistence increases prospecting effectiveness.

While nurture-focused persistence, as an omega strategy, improves prospecting effectiveness, it is also a resource intensive approach that requires significant time commitments (Giacobbe et al. 2006; Guenzi et al. 2007). Hence, depending on prevailing conditions, the costs associated with employing nurture-focused persistence may exceed its benefits. Salespeople may inefficiently overcommit "inputs" into the pursuit of a prospect in hopes of building the foundation for future exchange, but that prospect may never be converted into a paying customer. Furthermore, since salespeople enacting these persistence tactics are outward focused, they may be reluctant to ask the customer for the order and push the prospect towards the sale. They may be concerned that doing so might destroy the trust that has been established through the nurturing behaviors. That is, they may err on the side of being overly conservative and passive, in an attempt to preserve contact with the prospect and to "keep alive" the possibility of future business. Moreover, they may avoid directly asking for an order and may not immediately pursue the sale. According to social influence theory, salespeople who employ nurture-focused persistence tactics are in essence sidestepping resistance and pushing the choice into the future

(Knowles and Linn 2004). Moreover, not all prospects can be converted. As such, people employing nurture-focused persistence may spend a considerable amount of resources (e.g., time, effort) in order to convert a prospect that is not interested in doing business with the firm. Thus, the use of nurture-focused persistence may be counter-productive in that it encourages over-investment in prospects that will never provide a return.

H2: Increasing nurture-focused persistence decreases prospecting efficiency.

The Influence of Closure-Focused Persistence on Prospecting Effectiveness and Efficiency

In contrast to nurture-focused persistence, closure-focused persistence describes the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance that is characterized by behaviors aimed at bring the sales process to a conclusion. Per social influence theory, closure-focused persistence is an "alpha" persuasion strategy (Cialdini 2001; Fennis and Stel 2011; Knowles and Linn 2004). Alpha strategies are persuasion attempts that are implemented in direct response to influence resistance and are characterized by the activation of approach forces. In particular, this approach relies on "increasing people's motivation toward a goal by making the offer or request more attractive" (Fennis and Stel 2011, p. 806) through the use of "hard" tactics (Brown 1990; Spiro and Perreault 1979). Stated differently, alpha strategies are predicated on the idea that influence can be achieved by building a more compelling argument, and thus rely on hard tactics to achieve desired goals. Hard tactics generally lead to lower levels of customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (Hawes, Strong, and Winick 1996; Strutton, Pelton, and Tanner 1996). Indeed, hard tactics are generally deemed to be less effective than "soft" (e.g., consultation, rational persuasion) tactics (Falbe and Yukl 1992; Yukl and Tracey 1992). This may be due to the fact that prospects are aware that they are the target of an influence attempt and interpret the salesperson as being deceitful and manipulative. They may feel that they are

being “pushed” in a direction. In response, they may take retaliatory punitive actions and opt-out from future exchange with a potential partner (Chakrabarty et al. 2010; Kumar et al. 1998). Consequently, salespeople enacting closure-focused persistence may be seen as being coercive. Coercive influence tactics have been found to damage exchange relationships (Boyle et al. 1992; Frazier and Rody 1991). These salespeople may also be perceived as having exploitive or hostile intentions (Borders 2006). Furthermore, hesitant prospects may view closure-focused persistence as high-pressure selling and eventually perceive the salesperson as being too pushy (Peterson, Albaum, and Ridgway 1989; Raymond and Tanner Jr. 1994). As a result, closure-focused persistence tactics may induce customer reactance (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004), limiting the possibility of both immediate and long-term exchange, and ultimately hindering prospecting effectiveness.

Moreover, consistent with social influence theory, repeatedly using closure-focused persistence tactics may result in the forfeit of the salesperson being perceived as credible, appealing, sincere, and likeable. This may contribute to the salesperson developing the wrong reputation, whether intentional or not (Liu et al. 2007). Here, the salesperson may inadvertently create an unfavorable impression and may be construed as not being legitimate (Brown 1990). Prospects immediately realize the salesperson’s motives and intentions as being self-centered. This persistence approach may be perceived as being abrasive and will turn certain prospects off. Moreover, the use of closure-focused persistence may also make the prospect suspicious of the salesperson and make them feel like they are the target of an influence attempt (Wright 1986). Additionally, the use of closure-focused persistence may be perceived as dominance. Dominance incorporates aggressiveness, persuasiveness, and controlling the interaction (Brammer and MacDonald 2003; Burgoon and Hale 1984). As such, salespeople may appear as being forceful

and intimidating (Whitaker and Dahling 2013). Thus, these attributions that prospects make about the salesperson's behavior undermine the effectiveness of influence attempts (Brown 1990). That is, the use of closure-focused persistence will result in lower prospecting effectiveness.

H3: Increasing closure-focused persistence decreases prospecting effectiveness.

In contrast, due to the aggressive and explicit nature of this persistence tactic, it is posited that closure-focused persistence improves prospecting efficiency. Salespeople who adopt such tactics are able to use their resources more wisely by minimizing time and effort investments. They do so by trying to close on a prospect sooner, rather than later, and by pushing the prospect to reveal their true interest in doing business with the firm. This allows the salesperson to determine, very early on in the sales cycle, whether they should maintain contact with the prospect, or terminate the sales process. Stated differently, as an alpha strategy that focuses on providing prospects with a compelling reason to buy, closure-focused persistence enables salespeople to quickly uncover whether a prospect is truly interested in engaging in exchange or whether the prospect should be abandoned. This, in turn, enables salespeople to minimize resource investments in prospects that are unlikely to be converted, and to focus their effort on other prospects. In sum, closure-focused tactics contribute to salesperson efficiency by enabling salespeople to calibrate their level of investment in a prospect given the ultimate likelihood of success.

H4: Increasing closure-focused persistence increases prospecting efficiency.

The aforementioned literature review and discussion indicates that the use of influence tactics ultimately impacts sales performance. Increasing sales performance, particularly sales revenue, is a function of two main avenues: growing existing business and/or bringing in new

business. As such, sales performance is a function of behaviors that focus on both immediate transactions and future transactions (Cannon and Perreault 1999; Ganesan 1994; Singh and Koshy 2010). In particular, how salespeople use influence tactics determines sales performance (Plouffe et al. 2014). Indeed, salesperson use of influence tactics does predict subjective sales performance (Churchill et al. 1985; Franke and Park 2006; Vinchur et al. 1998) and objective sales performance (Plouffe et al. 2014). In this study, it is suggested that the effect of persistence tactics on performance is mediated by productivity, specifically prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency. This is because bringing in a new business impacts sales performance directly and existing business indirectly. For instance, low prospecting efficiency may indicate that salespeople are not taking care of existing customers and sacrificing business in pursuit of a hesitant prospect. Thus, productively converting prospects is vital to salesperson performance. Surely, higher levels of sales productivity lead to higher levels of sales performance (Ahearne et al. 2007; Zoltners, Sinha, and Lorimer 2008). Accordingly, it is posited that prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency predict sales performance. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H5: Increasing prospecting effectiveness increases sales performance.

H6: Increasing prospecting efficiency increases sales performance.

The Moderating Effect of Political Skill

In this study, political skill is posited to be the key interpersonal influence style and skill that enables salespeople to enact successful influence attempts. Political skill has been characterized as "both a social interaction ability and a proficiency at applying situationally appropriate behavior and tactics to influence others, especially in particularly uncertain or

ambiguous work settings" (Kolodinsky et al. 2007, p. 1748). The body of literature in political skill has suggested that political skill describes the "how" of influence attempts, which taken in tandem with influence tactics, provides a deeper understanding of the success and failure of influence tactics (Ferris et al. 2002a; Ferris et al. 2005b). As such, political skill takes into consideration the salesperson's choice of particular influence tactics, as well as the proficiency at implementing these tactics. Unlike salespeople who lack political skill, salespeople who are politically skilled make more accurate decisions with regards to which influence attempts to implement, and subsequently, have stronger social influence success (Blass and Ferris 2007; Ferris et al. 2007; Ferris et al. 2002b). Furthermore, salespeople who are politically skilled are able to strategically exploit the most effective tactic based on customer feedback and social cues (Ferris et al. 2007). This is because politically skilled individuals have the ability to mask the negative connotations associated with influence tactics, disguise their motives, and appear less self-serving. As such, customers do not perceive the salesperson as being manipulative or opportunistic. Instead, the salesperson is thought to be prosocial in nature and more concerned with the needs of the customer (Ferris et al. 2002a).

In a similar vein, salespeople who are politically skilled display a calm sense of self-confidence and personal security that makes customers comfortable around them (Liu et al. 2007). These salespeople are outward focused, which allows them to constantly monitor and gauge the situation around them (Ferris et al. 2005b). In turn, they know precisely what to do in different social situations and how to do it in a non-threating manner. In the eyes of their customers, they appear genuine and sincere, with no ulterior motives. Accordingly, the politically skilled are able to form more favorable impressions and reputations, and consequently, are seen as more legitimate, competent, and trustworthy (Blass and Ferris 2007;

Bromley 1993; Tsui 1984). Therefore, due to the savvy and soothing nature of the politically skilled salesperson, customers feel at ease when interacting with the salesperson and do not feel pressured.

Furthermore, literature has shown that political skill moderates the relationship between various influence tactics and employee performance (Ferris et al. 2007; Harris et al. 2007; Kolodinsky et al. 2007). For instance, a study by Harris et al. (2007) revealed that employees with high political skill who used high levels of different influence tactics – namely, intimidation, exemplification, ingratiation, self-promotion, and supplication – were found to have higher supervisory ratings. Given that political skill is comprised of perceptiveness, control, affability, and active influence, it is posited that salespeople who are politically skilled are able to effectively choose the persistence tactic that is appropriate for different prospects. Political skill allows the salesperson to more appropriately employ persistence tactics to match the reactions of the hesitant prospect. Accordingly, political skill allows a salesperson to offset the negative consequences associated with persistence tactics, while enhancing the positive impact of persistence tactics. Specifically, political skill positively moderates the relationships between persistence behaviors and sales productivity. More formally,

> **H7:** The positive influence of nurture-focused persistence on prospecting effectiveness is stronger (weaker) when political skill is high (low).
>
> **H8:** The negative influence of nurture-focused persistence on prospecting efficiency is weaker (stronger) when political skill is high (low).
>
> **H9:** The negative influence of closure-focused persistence on prospecting effectiveness is weaker (stronger) when political skill is high (low).
>
> **H10:** The positive influence of closure-focused persistence on prospecting efficiency is stronger (weaker) when political skill is high (low).

CHAPTER FOUR – STUDY TWO RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to specify the methodology and research design used in the second study of the dissertation. Specifically, a general overview is discussed, the sampling plan is defined, the survey administration is described, the measures and measure development procedures are detailed, and the data analysis is charted.

Study Overview

This study builds on the findings that emerged from the qualitative study in Chapter Two and tests the model proposed in Chapter Three. In particular, this study directly examined the impact of sales persistence on sales performance. It aimed to answer the research questions: do persistence behaviors differ in their effects on salesperson effectiveness and efficiency, and, by extension, sales performance? And, to what extent are the effects of persistence contingent on salesperson abilities? Specifically, a survey methodology was employed in order to examine the effects of persistence strategies (i.e., nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence) on sales performance, by way of prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency. Additionally, the survey was designed to investigate the moderating effect of political skill. A summary of the hypotheses tested in study two is provided in Table 6.

Survey methodology is common in marketing strategy and sales research. It falls underneath the traditions of modern empiricists (Hunt 2002). This approach involves using structured questions in order to uncover information about desired variables (Frankel et al. 2005; Malhotra 2004). In particular, surveys are a useful vehicle for revealing insight on sociological and psychological constructs and tend to concentrate on "people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations, and behavior" (Kerlinger and Lee 2000, p. 600).

Table 6 - Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Description
H1	Increasing nurture-focused persistence increases prospecting effectiveness.
H2	Increasing nurture-focused persistence decreases prospecting efficiency.
H3	Increasing closure-focused persistence decreases prospecting effectiveness.
H4	Increasing closure-focused persistence increases prospecting efficiency.
H5	Increasing prospecting effectiveness increases sales performance.
H6	Increasing prospecting efficiency increases sales performance.
H7	The positive influence of nurture-focused persistence on prospecting effectiveness is stronger (weaker) when political skill is high (low).
H8	The negative influence of nurture-focused persistence on prospecting efficiency is weaker (stronger) when political skill is high (low).
H9	The negative influence of closure-focused persistence on prospecting effectiveness is weaker (stronger) when political skill is high (low).
H10	The positive influence of closure-focused persistence on prospecting efficiency is stronger (weaker) when political skill is high (low).

Moreover, surveys provide the opportunity to generalize about desired large populations (e.g., salespeople) by utilizing a random sample. Furthermore, data collected from the field survey provides the empirical information needed to test the proposed conceptual model and qualitative findings. Accordingly, and given the focus of this dissertation on salespeople and persistence behaviors, a field survey methodology is deemed to be a plausible approach.

Sampling Plan

This dissertation exclusively considers professional business-to-business salespeople as the primary population of interest. The business-to-business context is the focus and scope of this study, and provided an appropriate setting for testing the proposed model. Prospecting is especially important in business-to-business contexts where salespeople are predominately responsible for finding and securing new business. Additionally, professional salespeople are responsible for a sales quota and are evaluated objectively by their firms. Plus, facing resistance and objections is a normal part of their profession. As such, these salespeople may employ both nurture-focused and closure-focused persistence approaches as they move towards attaining sales goals. Therefore, persistence in sales is extremely prevalent in a business-to-business setting.

In order to make the data collection process manageable, interpretable, and reliable, it was necessary to locate a research site where individual salespeople vary in the persistence behaviors they enact. Further, to make meaningful comparisons and to avoid spurious effects, it was desirable to sample salespeople within the same organization and industry. This also provides an opportunity to isolate the effects of persistence behaviors on performance. Also, the use of archival company records is more suitably matched and aligned when making comparisons across salespeople.

As such, prior to any data collection, it was important to identify a site in the field that

would be suitable for executing the survey. In particular, careful attention was paid to identifying an organization that would sponsor this research and provide access to their salesforce, while also willing to share company archival records (for objective performance measures). In selecting a sponsoring firm, it was important that the organization had a large salesforce. This is a necessary prerequisite for conducting rigorous statistical analysis, which is predominately predicated on the assumption of large sample sizes (Hair et al. 2010). The target sample size for this study was 200 salespeople. Accordingly, only organizations with a sizable salesforce were considered. This is also necessary when taking into account a low response rate. In addition to the size of the salesforce, the selection of a cooperating firm needed to take into consideration the frequency of prospecting by the organization's salesforce. Since the emphasis of this study is on the prospecting phase of the sales cycle, this was an essential condition. Collectively, this ensures that the sample comprises of salespeople with varying persistence behaviors and performance. To summarize, the advantages of partnering with a sponsoring firm, as opposed to a standard cross-sectional approach, was to allow for better isolation of effects, avoid spurious and random effects, maximize response rates, and obtain access to corporate archival records for individual salespeople.

Several organizations were identified as potential partners for this research. Formal proposals were sent to each of these organizations, outlining the research opportunity, the details of the partnership, research requests, and proposed deliverables to the organization. For one of the identified organizations, the researcher and one of the advisors met with the potential sponsoring firm to discuss in detail the collaborative opportunity. After several meetings with this firm, the management team at this organization had agreed to participate. The partnering firm is a large public corporation in the flooring industry, which is headquartered in the

southeastern region of the United States. The company was founded in 1946 with $5 billion sales worldwide, has multiple divisions, and currently employs more than 22,000 employees.

Survey Administration

Due to the lack of research on persistence in the sales literature, it was necessary to create new survey items for the main constructs of interests – namely, nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence. A series of initial survey items where created for the various dimensions of nurture- and closure- focused persistence (i.e., maintain contact, value-adding follow-up, give them space, probe resistance, reframe offer, attempt close, and threaten-break up) by leveraging insights gained from the qualitative study. For each facet, a minimum of four new items was created. Since the literature does not include existing scales for prospecting productivity, new items were also created for prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency.

Given the reliance on new measures, it was necessary to undergo scale development processes (Churchill 1979; Hinkin 1995). Moreover, in order to ensure reliability and validity of the items, it was important to examine and test the survey prior to the main data collection. Hence, several preemptive steps were taken, which included multiple survey administrations. First, a broad review of the literature occurred in an attempt to identify well-established scales, in accordance with the appropriate theoretical foundation, for the constructs in the conceptual model. Second, extensive pretesting of the questionnaire took place. Specifically, an expert opinion exploratory test, pretest one, and pretest two were conducted prior to formal data collection.

Exploratory Pre-Test

To minimize data collection time and costs, an exploratory pre-test was first conducted. The objective was to obtain exploratory and initial reactions to the survey questions from practitioners. In particular, face validity and readability was sought from business experts, who were able to provide confirmation of the face content validity of the constructs in the study (Rossiter 2002). Seven professional salespeople and sales managers, from different industries, reviewed the questionnaire and provided feedback regarding the appropriateness, clarity, interpretability, relevance, and meaning of the survey items. Specifically, these participants provided responses to open-ended questions (e.g., "Think about the set of survey questions you just responded to. Are there any particular questions you would change or exclude from the survey and, if so, why?"). They also rated the survey questions on a sliding scale from unclear to clear, difficult to understand to easy to understand, and boring to interesting.

Feedback from these experts provided the opportunity to include missing measures, exclude inapplicable measures, and the modification of confusing items. In addition to the feedback obtained, the expert opinion exploratory test was used to assess the suitability of the survey length. While the majority of the feedback was recorded in Qualtrics, there was some feedback received by email. Based on the feedback, all seven sales experts deemed that the overall language of the questionnaire was clear, understandable, and relevant. There were some recommendations regarding the wording on certain items that resulted in a minor refinement of some items, but none that involved a complete redevelopment of any of the survey measures. With regards to the length of the survey, these experts indicated that the time to complete the survey was adequate and manageable. The average time to complete the survey was approximately ten minutes.

Pre-Test 1

The survey was next administered to a wider sample. The focus was on assessing the validity and reliability of the measures by obtaining responses from business-to-business salespeople across a variety of industries. Accordingly, the survey was executed using Qualtrics and an online panel of compensated research participants. The sample consisted of 100 salespeople, who were carefully screened in order to ensure that they met the prerequisites of the study population (i.e., involved in business-to-business sales and in prospecting activities). Pre-test one results were used to inform a second measure development pre-test as described below.

Pre-Test 2

To further refine and validate the persistence measures, the questionnaire was next administered to a single cooperating firm. This firm is independent of the sponsoring firm that was used for the main field survey. This particular firm is a member of the Product Development and Management Association and is in the healthcare industry. There are fifty-one salespeople in this organization who are responsible for prospecting. Prior to launching the survey, the Vice President of Sales reviewed the survey and provided feedback. Based on this, some of the wording in the survey was updated to match the company and industry specific terminology. The survey was then administered online using Qualtrics. In order to encourage participation, the Vice President of Sales in the organization personally contacted the sales team to explain the importance of the research. This pre-test provided useful insight for crafting the survey for the main study.

Main Field Survey

The main data collection took place with the principal sponsoring firm. The survey was hosted online via Qualtrics. The survey included a cover page, which provided the instructions

and a question about the agreement to participate in the study. Participants received a unique URL that directed them to Qualtrics. All responses were obtained and stored via Qualtrics.

Participants received a separate email, addressed to them specifically, that provided details about the project, ensured confidentiality, and a request to complete the survey. To ensure higher response rates, follow-up emails were sent one week after the original email and a second follow-up email was sent two weeks after the original email to those who had not yet responded. Additionally, the researcher also communicated and worked with the sponsoring firm in order to obtain a maximum response rate.

Survey Biases

As is generally the case, the possibility for measurement error and biases in survey research is always a concern (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2012). Biases can be due to common method variance, which occurs when the variance in the survey responses is "attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent" (Podsakoff et al. 2003, p. 879). Hence, it was important to address the different sources of survey biases; otherwise, they can individually and collectively bring to question the validity of the instrument, ultimately compromising final conclusions drawn from the results. In particular, specific interest was paid to common method bias and non-response bias.

There were several sources of common method bias that needed to be addressed in this study. One source of biases may be the respondents themselves, often referred to as common rater effects, which are prevalent in single respondent studies and is the result of the same respondent providing responses to both independent and dependent variables. For example, acquiescence biases, also known as "yea-saying" and "nay-saying," refer to extreme responses by respondents in which they tend to agree or disagree with survey items regardless of content.

Biases may also be attributed to the actual survey items, known as item characteristic effects. For instance, item ambiguity occurs when the items are unclear, resulting in random and systematic responses. Another source of bias may be the item context effects, or a respondent's likelihood to interpret an item based on the other items in the survey instrument. An example of this includes item priming effects, which is the inherent predisposition that may occur due to the positioning of the items for the independent variables and the dependent variables.

There are several remedies – both procedural and statistical – that have been suggested to address the concerns associated with common method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2003; Podsakoff et al. 2012). First, and perhaps most importantly, different sources were used for obtaining measures for the independent and dependent variables in this study. The independent variables were measured using primary data sources (e.g., salespeople), while the dependent variable was assessed using archival data (e.g., company records) available from the sponsoring firm. Another important remedy taken was the extensive effort towards improving scale items to eliminate ambiguity. First, practitioners reviewed the survey during the expert opinion exploratory test providing critical feedback. Second, pretest one was employed with a hundred sales people to validate the instrument. Third, a second pretest was conducted with an independent company in order to further refine the survey items, with a special focus on refinement and purification of the new persistence scales, which there is no precedent in the extant literature. With regards to statistical approaches for assessing the impact of common method variance, the Harman's single-factor test was employed. Harman's single-factor test involves conducting a principal component factor analysis (PCA) on all measures to determine if the majority of the variance can be accounted for by one general factor.

Another significant type of bias associated with surveys is non-response bias (Armstrong

and Overton 1977). In order to address this issue, it is possible to perform statistical tests in order to rule out any effects related to non-response. A well-established technique in the literature is to compare early respondents with late respondents to confirm that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups. In this case, the assumption is that late respondents are likely to respond similarly to non-respondents. In this study, early respondents were grouped as those that responded prior to any follow-up email effort, while those that responded after a managerial follow-up email were grouped as late respondents. From here, an independent samples t-test was used to compare the differences between the two groups to rule out any effects of non-response bias.

Measures and Measure Development

The measurement of eleven different constructs was required in order to test the relationships in the proposed conceptual model. In order to do so, it was necessary to operationalize the theoretical meaning of the constructs using scale-items (Bagozzi 1980). In order to measure these constructs, multi-item, Likert-type scales were developed for new constructs. When possible, existing scales were used and adapted (Bruner 2003). The only existing scale that could be used in this study was for political skill. Due to the infancy of persistence research in the sales domain, existing measures were non-existent for nurture-focused persistence – including the dimensions of maintain contact, value-adding follow-up, and give them space – and closure-focused persistence – which includes the dimensions of probe resistance, reframe offer, attempt close, and threaten break-up. Additionally, since the focus of the study is on prospecting, there are no existing measures for prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency either. During the two pre-tests discussed earlier, the development of scales for these constructs followed the well-established guidelines in the literature (Churchill

1979; Gerbing and Anderson 1988; Hinkin 1995; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The pre-tests results are discussed in Chapter Five.

The items for the new constructs relied on findings from the qualitative study and an extensive literature review. Accordingly, the measures for nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence were specified as formative indexes. The dimensions of each of the persistence tactics – i.e., maintain contact, value-adding follow-up, give them space, probe resistance, reframe offer, attempt close, and threaten break-up – were denoted as reflective scales. It is noteworthy to discuss the differences between reflective scales and formative indexes (see Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001). Reflective scales indicate that the latent variable of interest, or construct, has an effect on the measurement items used (Bagozzi and Fornell 1982; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Conversely, formative indexes assume that the measurement items cause the construct. The use of these contrasting approaches dictates the measurement development process. A list of the final measures, incorporating the results of the two pre-tests, is next provided. The complete survey items and measures can be found in Appendix B.

Sales Performance

Given the criticality and direct impact of salespeople to organizational performance, firms are more likely to evaluate the performance of salespeople more objectively than other types of employees (Spiro, Stanton, and Rich 2003). Accordingly, scholars have used both objective (e.g., achievement of sales quotas) and subjective measures (e.g., managerial ratings) to capture sales performance (Babakus et al. 1996; Cravens et al. 1993; Levy and Sharma 1993; Singh and Koshy 2010). In this study, sales performance was viewed as an outcome-based measure and was operationalized as an individual salesperson's total sales. These data were provided by the sponsoring firm and came from company archival records.

Nurture-focused Persistence

Nurture-focused persistence measures the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance and is characterized by behaviors aimed at establishing the foundation for future exchange. This construct emerged from the qualitative interviews. From the qualitative data, it was discovered that this type of behavior consists of three distinct tactics: maintain contact, value-adding follow-up, and give them space. Accordingly, nurture-focused persistence was specified as a formative index. Therefore, in order to capture these dimensions, reflective measures were developed for each of the dimensions. The statement "Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year" prefaced the questions.

It is important to note that, for the purposes of measurement validation, formative constructs, unlike reflective measures, require an assessment of external validity. That is, the sub-facets that "add-up" to create the formative variable must be shown to truly "form" the construct of interest. As such, using established guidelines in the literature (Diamantopoulos, Riefler, and Roth 2008; Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001), reflective items were also created to measure nurture-focused persistence. The reflective measure of nurture-focused persistence consisted of 4-items, with responses ranging from 0 ("never") to 10 ("always"). A sample item includes, "I took a nurturing approach with them."

Maintain Contact

Maintain contact measures the degree to which salespeople maintain regular contact with hesitant prospects. This is a new measure that was captured using a 4-item Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 ("never") to 10 ("always"). A sample question is "I maintain contact with viable inactive customers to ensure that they would think of me when a future need arose."

Value-Adding Follow-Up

Value-adding follow-up refers to the level to which salespeople ensure that they provide value in their follow-up interactions with hesitant prospects. This is a new measure that was comprised of 4-items. The responses range from 0 ("never") to 10 ("always"). An example item is "When I followed-up with viable inactive customers I ensured I had something relevant to share."

Give Them Space

The extent to which salespeople monitor and reduce their frequency of follow-up with hesitant prospects represents give them space. The measurement consisted of four questions and was anchored between 0 ("never") and 10 ("always"). A sample item is "When dealing with viable inactive customers I reduced the intensity of my follow-up efforts with them so that they didn't feel like I was pushing them to make a decision."

Closure-focused Persistence

Closure-focused persistence represents the continued pursuit of a sales opportunity in the face of prospect resistance and is characterized by behaviors aimed at bringing the sales process to a conclusion. Emerging from the qualitative interviews, it was determined that this type of behavior consists of four unique tactics: probe resistance, reframe offer, attempt close, and threaten break-up. In accordance to this, closure-focused persistence was identified as a formative index. In order to capture this, reflective measures were developed for each of these dimensions. The statement "Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year" prefaced each set of questions.

Once again, it is necessary to stress that, for the purposes of measurement validation, formative constructs require an assessment of external validity. It must be shown that the sub-

facets that "add-up" to create the formative variable do indeed "form" the underlying construct. Accordingly, as suggested by extant literature (Diamantopoulos et al. 2008; Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001), reflective items were also created to measure closure-focused persistence. The reflective measure of closure-focused persistence consisted of 4-items, with responses ranging from 0 ("never") to 10 ("always"). An example question is "I pressed until I got a definitive answer from them."

Probe Resistance

The scale for probe resistance was developed to capture the degree to which salespeople directly urge hesitant prospects to express their objections. This was achieved by using a 4-item scale that ranged from 0 ("never") to 10 ("always"). One question from the scale includes "When dealing with viable inactive customers I pushed them to open-up about why they were unwilling to commit."

Reframe Offer

Reframe offer describes the level to which salespeople provide hesitant prospects alternative offers in an attempt to induce a purchase. This was a 4-item Likert-scale ranging from 0 ("never") to 10 ("always"). A representative item is "When dealing with viable inactive customers, I went back and provided them with a more compelling offer."

Attempt Close

The measure for attempt close was aimed at capturing the degree to which salespeople explicitly ask hesitant prospects for the sales order. In order to assess this, a 4-item scale was employed, with anchors of 0 ("never") and 10 ("always"). An example item is "When dealing

with viable inactive customers I asked them if they would consider doing business with our firm."

Threaten-Break Up

Threaten break-up denotes the extent to which salespeople communicate to hesitant prospects that they are no longer willing to actively pursue their business. This utilized a 4-item scale, with responses ranging from 0 ("never") to 10 ("always"). A sample statement is "When dealing with viable inactive customers, I let them know that the time may not be right for our firms to do business."

Prospecting Effectiveness

Prospecting effectiveness measures the extent to which a salesperson has succeeded in securing new business for the firm, when compared to other salespeople in the firm. In order to capture this, a 5-item scale was utilized. The leading question for the items was "when compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, how well did you perform within the last year as it relates to each of the following:" Response choices ranged from 0 ("much worse") to 100 ("much better"). A wide range was used in order to capture the nuances and variance between salespeople. A sample item is "landing viable inactive customer who were difficult."

Prospecting Efficiency

The amount of resources a salesperson invests in order to close on a prospect, when compared to other salespeople employed in the firm, describes prospecting efficiency. This was a new 5-item scale anchored from 0 ("much lower") to 100 ("much higher"). The large difference was a deliberate attempt to ensure variance between salespeople. The following statement prefaces the items, "when compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, describe your

performance within the last year as it relates to each of the following." The questions focused on the number of prospects closed, amount of resources invested, close ratio, revenue-to-resource ratio, and percentage of prospects pursued that were converted.

Political Skill

Political skill represents the salespersons ability to effectively understand prospects and how they use this knowledge to influence them in order to achieve personal and organizational goals. The well-established Political Skill Inventory (PSI) was used to measure this construct (Ferris et al. 2005b). This scale has been widely shown to have strong psychometric properties. For instance, a recent study of the political skill of NCAA recruiters demonstrates strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .88) of the PSI (Treadway et al. 2014). In another study by Blickle et al. (2013), the Cronbach's alpha for the PSI was found to be .91 for the sample of professionals, and .90 for the sample of non-professionals. The PSI is a self-report scale that consists of 18-items that comprises the different dimensions of political skill: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. The scale asks participants to indicate their level of agreement for each item. A sample item from the social astuteness dimension is "I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others." An example from the interpersonal influence dimension is "I am good at getting people to like me." A networking ability representative item is "I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen." An item capturing apparent sincerity is "when communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do."

Controls

In order to isolate the impact of the various variables and assess the relationships, controls are important in quantitative research to control background factors (Mentzer and Flint

1997). Consistent with the sales literature and research on political skill, participant sales experience was measured as a control factor. Additionally, since there are many predictors of sales performance, this study incorporated measures for the number of accounts the salesperson is responsible for, the size of a salesperson's account base in relation to other salespeople in the same organization, and whether they are based in Canada or the United States. 1-item measures were used to capture these variables.

Data Analysis

Prior to conducting any analysis, it was necessary to check the integrity of the data. That is, it was important to see if there were any discrepancies in the responses. This included evaluating for missing data (Kim and Curry 1977), outliers (Clark 1989), bias components in response styles (Greenleaf 1992), and extreme response bias (Greenleaf 1992b). These were assessed and remedied using established methods in the literature.

The data in this study was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), which is one of the most popular multivariate analysis techniques utilized in social sciences research (Hair et al. 2010). In marketing, SEM has become a "quasi-standard" technique in research (Babin, Hair, and Boles 2008; Hair et al. 2012). The strength of SEM lies in its ability to examine multiple structural relationships simultaneously in a true test of complete theories and concepts, going beyond simple regression analysis, making it a potent tool for explaining complex relationships among multiple variables. SEM also accounts for measurement error in the estimation process when estimating the multiple and interrelated relationships in the theoretical model. In particular, SEM allows for the indirect measurement of latent, or unobservable, variables at the observation level, which in turn allows for the testing of the multiple and interrelated relationships in the theoretical model (Baumgartner and Homburg 1996).

The essence of SEM is predicated on factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, making it a two-step approach. These steps involve the examination of a measurement model (or "outer" model), which focuses at the observational and item level, and a structural model (or "inner" model), which considers the model constructs at the theoretical level. It is important to mention that the evaluation of the structural/inner model (second step) is contingent on the success of the analysis of the measurement/outer model (first step). That is, the structural model should only be considered upon completion and validation of the measurement model (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). During the first step, the measurement model is estimated and assessed using criteria for reliability and different types of validity (e.g., convergent and discriminant). The second step in SEM involves assessing the structural model, allowing the opportunity to test the hypotheses of the study. It is important to emphasize that the literature has predominantly differentiated between covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) and partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) (see Hair et al. 2012; Reinartz, Haenlein, and Henseler 2009). At this point, a discussion on the differences between CB-SEM and PLS-SEM is warranted.

Commentary on CB-SEM and PLS-SEM

It is first necessary to stress the CB-SEM and PLS-SEM should not be viewed as rival approaches, but instead should be treated as complementary approaches (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2011; Hair et al. 2012; Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics 2009; Jöreskog and Wold 1982). That is, one approach is not necessarily more superior to the other, but instead there are instances where one technique is more appropriate to use. In fact, research has shown that under proper specification and theoretical soundness, both CB-SEM and PLS-SEM produce similar results (see Hair et al. 2011). As such, it is important that the correct approach is selected in order to avoid improper findings, interpretations, and conclusions.

PLS-SEM was initially established as an alternative to CB-SEM. The underlying difference between CB-SEM and PLS-SEM is that the former is aimed at theory testing and confirmation, while the latter focuses on prediction and theory development (Hair et al. 2011). Accordingly, PLS-SEM should be used when the objective of the research is on exploration as opposed to confirmation. This is especially the case when exploration of the relationships between theoretical constructs is yet to be determined and when there is a lack of well-established theory.

Mathematically speaking, CB-SEM tries to estimate model parameters by minimizing the discrepancy between the estimated and sample covariance matrices. Meanwhile, PLS-SEM attempts to maximize the explained variance in endogenous variables while also considering the quality of the data at the observational and measurement model level (Hair et al. 2011). In essence, PLS-SEM is analogous to using a series of multiple regression analyses. As such, an advantage of PLS-SEM is that it allows for the relaxation of multivariate normality assumptions, which are pre-requisites for CB-SEM (Dijkstra 2010). Additionally, PLS-SEM tends to have high levels of statistical power (Reinartz et al. 2009). In short, PLS-SEM is an appropriate technique where the strong assumptions and restrictions of CB-SEM cannot be fully satisfied.

An important issue in SEM is the types of measures – namely formative or reflective – of the latent variables used in the model (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer 2001; Jarvis, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2003). As such, another important distinction between the two SEM approaches is the assumption in CB-SEM that the indicators used to measure the latent variables in the model are primarily reflective in nature (Chin 1998). Under very specific conditions and constraints, CB-SEM does allow for formative indicators, however this often goes against theoretical considerations (Bollen and Davis 2009; Diamantopoulos 2011). In contrast, PLS-

SEM is much more versatile in its ability to unconditionally handle both reflective and formative measures (Hair et al. 2012). Thus, PLS-SEM provides a feasible alternative in situations where formative indexes are present.

In summary, both SEM approaches provide practical value in their own and unique way. The strengths of one approach are the weaknesses of the other and vice versa (Hair et al. 2012). The choice of SEM technique should be a function of the research objective, data characteristics, and model development (Gefen, Straub, and Rigdon 2011; Hair et al. 2012). In this dissertation, PLS-SEM was utilized, which has also been extensively used in the marketing literature and has appeared in premier marketing journals (see Table 1 in Hair et al. 2012). Within the sales domain, PLS-SEM has been widely adopted by well-established scholars (Ahearne et al. 2010a; Ahearne et al. 2010b; Lam et al. 2010; Plouffe, Sridharan, and Barclay 2010; Rapp et al. 2010a; Rapp, Trainor, and Agnihotri 2010b). For example, in a study of team planning and virtual sales teams, Rapp et al. (2010a) use PLS-SEM in order to test the formative and reflective constructs in their model. Similarly, Ahearne et al. (2010a) cite PLS-SEM's flexibility to handle both formative and reflective constructs as a reason for their analytical strategy in examining consensus and sales team performance. Accordingly, due to the complexity of the structural model (i.e., six first order constructs and ten path relationships) in this dissertation, and the fact that the study utilized various formative and reflective constructs, PLS-SEM was the preferred approach for model estimation (Hair et al. 2011).

CHAPTER FIVE – STUDY TWO RESULTS

This chapter reports study two's results and consists of five parts. In the first section, the results of the measure development pre-tests are provided. In the second section, the sample characteristics and response rates for the main study are presented. The third section documents the results of the measurement (i.e., "outer") model of the main study. The fourth section is dedicated to presenting the findings of the structural (i.e., "inner") model used to test the study hypotheses. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the hypothesis tests and research results.

Measure Development Pre-Tests

Prior to carrying out the main study, two pre-tests where undertaken for measure development purposes. The first pre-test focused on evaluating the validity and reliability of the measures. The second pre-test was used to further refine the items and arrive at shorter scales for measuring the persistence dimensions. The results of these pre-tests are presented next.

Pre-Test 1

After receiving feedback from practitioners regarding the wording and face validity of the items, a pre-test was conducted with a sample of 100 business-to-business sales professionals drawn from an online survey panel managed by Qualtrics. Given that the scale for political skill is well established in the literature, the pretest focused on the validation of the newly developed measures for salesperson persistence and prospecting productivity (i.e., prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency). Participants were screened to ensure that those included in the sample worked as business-to-business salespeople and were responsible for engaging in

prospecting activities. Panelists were also excluded from participation if their responses to attention screening questions revealed that the respondent was not adequately engaged with the survey. The resulting sample is almost evenly split among males and females, with the latter accounting for 45% of all respondents. A vast majority (80%) of the respondents indicated that they hold at least a 4-year college degree. Participants reported an average of 10.8 years of sales experience (s.d. 9.3 years), and having worked at their companies for an average of 6.2 years (s.d. 5.6 years). Respondents reported that, on average, they were responsible for managing 58 customer accounts (s.d. 9.6) at their current firm. Table 7 offers a summary of the descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations for the pre-test one constructs.

Consistent with the findings from the qualitative interviews that provided the foundation for this research, this study conceptualized nurture-focused and closure-focused persistence as higher-order formative constructs (1st order reflective, 2nd order formative; see Figure 7 for a graphical depiction of the formative measurement model). More specifically, the persistence constructs are conceptualized as reflective-formative type II models (Becker, Klein, and Wetzels 2012). In such models, the lower order constructs, or the sub-facets of persistence (e.g., maintain contact, probe resistance), are reflectively measured and combined to "form a general concept that fully mediates the influence on subsequent endogenous variables" (Becker et al. 2012, p. 364). In other words, each reflectively measured sub-dimension is part of the higher order construct and collectively, the sub dimensions add up to "form" the construct of interest. Therefore, this pretest assessed the quality of the three reflectively measured sub-dimensions that form nurture-focused persistence; the four reflectively measured sub-dimensions that form closure-focused persistence, and the two reflectively measured productivity constructs (prospecting efficiency and prospecting effectiveness) that serve as intervening variables in the

Table 7 - Pre-Test 1 Correlation Matrix (N = 100)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Attempt Close	7.59	1.84	1.00										
2. Probe Resistance	7.90	1.92	.72	1.00									
3. Reframe Offer	7.47	1.94	.70	.75	1.00								
4. Threaten Break-Up	5.28	3.22	.26	.20	.35	1.00							
5. Closure-Focused Persistence (Reflective)	6.63	2.50	.69	.64	.69	.51	1.00						
6. Maintain Contact	8.49	1.62	.40	.47	.28	-.01	.17	1.00					
7. Value-Adding Follow-Up	7.42	1.81	.60	.67	.75	.28	.50	.62	1.00				
8. Give Them Space	7.30	1.69	.35	.38	.52	.44	.30	.33	.50	1.00			
9. Nurture-Focused Persistence (Reflective)	8.33	1.25	.45	.58	.42	-.08	.29	.65	.55	.45	1.00		
10. Prospecting Effectiveness	67.81	16.55	.43	.44	.25	.17	.45	.18	.24	.13	.31	1.00	
11. Prospecting Efficiency	55.73	20.37	.26	.28	.29	.39	.45	.03	.31	.29	.17	.52	1.00

Notes: Correlation values equal to or greater than |.20| are significant at $p < .05$. Variables 5 and 9 are used to test the validity of the formative indexes.

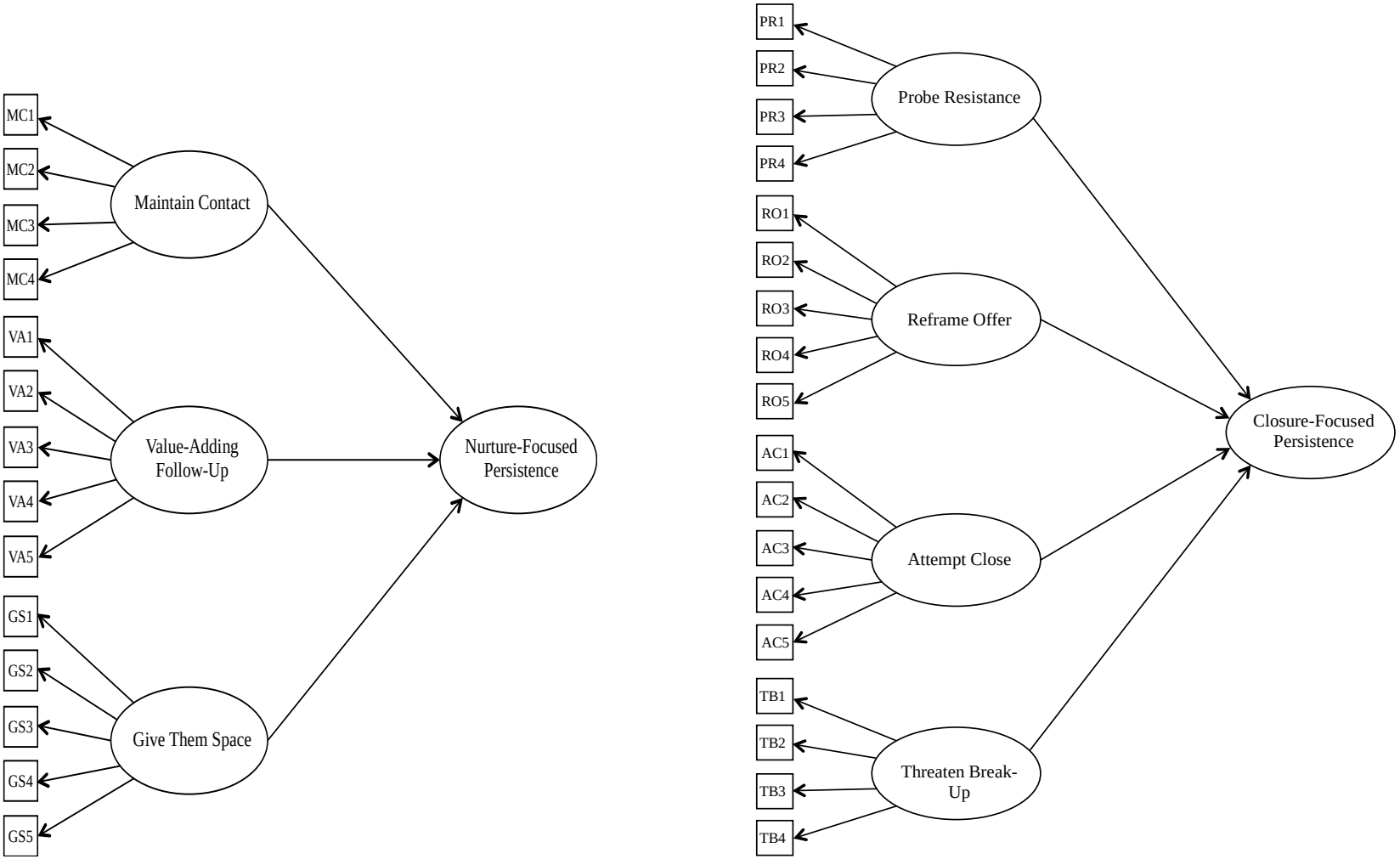


Figure 7 - First Order Reflective, Second Order Formative Persistence Constructs

proposed model. In addition, and as is explained below, the pre-test included two reflectively specified constructs that were used to assess the adequacy of the formative structure that underlies the persistence constructs (these constructs are overall measures of nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence operationalized using a reflective logic).

The measurement testing and validation approach consisted of two stages. The first stage focused on assessing the quality of the reflective constructs and dimensions using the guidelines put forth by Churchill (1979). According to Churchill, the quality of the proposed measures can be judged by using the (1) coefficient alpha, (2) average inter-item correlations, and (3) item-to-total correlations of the measures to initially purify the set of measurement items (these analyses were performed here using SPSS 23). Out of these criteria, arguably the most important or sensitive is the item-to-total correlations, which serve as a proxy for the factor loadings commonly derived from confirmatory factor analyses, or CFAs (DeVellis 2012). Consistent with standards applied to CFAs (Hair et al. 2010), average item-to-total correlations above .70 are considered to be indicative of adequate measures (because they correspond, roughly, to an average variance extracted – AVE – of 50%). Per Churchill (1979) items retained based on this initial analysis are then subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis in order to gain insight into the adequacy of the proposed factor structure (this analysis was performed using Mplus 7.1).

The second stage of the measurement analysis focused on establishing the validity of the formative structures that underlie the persistence constructs. This analysis was performed using the software package SmartPLS 3.2.1 following the guidelines offered by Hair et al. (2013). Specifically, validation of the formative constructs was performed by (1) assessing the convergent validity of the formative measurement models, (2) assessing the formative measurement models for multicollinearity issues, and (3) assessing the significance and

relevance of the formative indicators.

Stage 1: Validation of the Reflective Measures using the Churchill (1979) Approach

As discussed in the previous section, purification of the reflective measures began with the estimation of the coefficient alpha, inter-item correlations, and item-to-total correlations for all the reflective constructs or sub-dimensions in the model. As shown in Table 8, the coefficient alpha for all proposed measures meets or exceeds established standards (i.e., greater than .7), thus suggesting that the measures are reliable. The average inter-item correlations for items belonging to the same construct were generally "high" (above a .7) and lower than correlations with items belonging to other constructs. However, the minimum inter-item correlation for items belonging to the "value-adding follow-up" (.27) and "attempt close" (.28) dimensions were relatively low, which suggests potential problems with specific items in each of those scales. Finally, the average item-to-total correlations for all but three of the nine constructs (value-adding follow-up = .59; give them space = .65, and attempt close = .62) were above .7, a finding which suggests that the measures likely capture more trait than error variance (i.e., all constructs likely have AVE's that exceed or are close to 50%). Given that the preceding findings suggest that most of the items are likely to tap the intended domains, they were all retained and subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Specifically, the measurement items were subjected to a CFA using Mplus 7.1. In order to preserve an adequate observation to parameter ratio, the measurement items were evaluated in three separate CFAs; one for the nurture-focused dimensions, one for the closure-focused dimensions, and one for the prospecting productivity constructs. The adequacy of the proposed measurement models was assessed using the Hu and Bentler (1999) combinatorial rule which suggests that an SRMR $\leq$ .08 and either a CFI $\geq$ .95 or RMSEA $\leq$ .06 indicates that the model

Table 8 - Pre-Test 1 Assessment of Measurement Quality

Persistence Dimension

		Inter-Item Correlation				
	No. Items	Mean	Min	Max	Avg. Item-to-Total Corr.	α
Maintain Contact	4	.82	.77	.87	.88	.95
Value-Adding Follow-Up	5	.46	.27	.69	.59	.81
Give Them Space	5	.53	.44	.73	.65	.85
Probe Resistance	4	.70	.57	.80	.76	.89
Reframe Offer	5	.69	.53	.86	.79	.92
Attempt Close	5	.49	.28	.59	.62	.83
Threaten Break-Up	4	.76	.63	.88	.83	.93
Prospecting Effectiveness	7	.58	.49	.77	.72	.91
Prospecting Efficiency	6	.57	.40	.78	.71	.89

provides a good fit to the data. Items with standardized loadings of less than .70 were sequentially removed from the model, so long as they resulted in an improvement in model fit statistics. In addition, a series of measurement quality metrics derived from the CFA, including average variance extracted, composite reliability, and largest shared variance, were estimated to assist in the evaluation of the refined measurement models.

The initial fit statistics for CFA1 (nurture-focused dimensions) indicate that the model does not provide a good fit to the data (χ^2 = 235.2, 74 df, $p < .01$; CFI = .84, SRMR = .097). After sequentially removing a total of four items with loadings less than .70, the resulting model provides a very good fit to the data (χ^2 = 57.7, 32 df, $p < .01$; CFI = .95, SRMR = .043). The results also indicate that all item loadings are significant ($p < .01$), with all but one having a standardized loadings of .70 or better (see Table 9 for a listing of CFA item loadings). Moreover, the measures exhibit high composite reliabilities (.95 for maintain contact, .85 for value-adding follow-up, and .79 for give them space) and average variances extracted in excess of 50% (82% for maintain contact, 65% for value-adding follow-up, and 56% for give them space), both of which support the conclusion that the measures are reliable and possess convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, the AVEs for each of the constructs are larger than their shared variance with any of the other constructs, a finding that supports the conclusion that the measures possess discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

The initial fit statistics for CFA2 (closure-focused dimensions) indicate that the model provides an adequate fit to the data (χ^2 = 219.3, 129 df, $p < .01$; CFI = .904, SRMR = .079). After sequentially removing a total of two items with loadings less than .70, the resulting model provides a very good fit to the data (χ^2 = 147.5, 98 df, $p < .01$; CFI = .94, SRMR = .071). The

Table 9 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis Loadings

Measurement Item	Standardized Loadings	
	Original	Retained
Maintain Contact		
- I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant so they remember me in the future.	.87	.87
- I maintain contact with hesitant prospects so they think of me when a future need arises.	.93	.93
- I maintain contact with hesitant prospects to ensure that our firm is always on their mind.	.91	.91
- I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant to ensure they think of our firm when a future need arises.	.92	.92
Value-Adding Follow-Up		
- I follow-up with hesitant prospects only when I have something new to share with them.	.41	--
- I ensure that I have a new "value add" to share when I follow-up with a hesitant prospect.	.68	.73
- I focus on sharing new product or service information when I follow-up with hesitant prospects.	.80	.87
- I share new information when I follow-up with prospects who are hesitant.	.87	.81
- In my follow-up contacts with hesitant prospects, I communicate information about new price promotions.	.64	--
Give Them Space		
- When prospects are hesitant, I pursue them in a less aggressive fashion.	.76	.57
- I moderate the intensity of my follow-up efforts when I notice a prospect is hesitant.	.70	.87
- I temper the frequency of my follow-up contacts with hesitant prospects.	.70	.78
- I give prospects that are hesitant more space so they feel less pressure.	.81	--
- I back off from hesitant prospects so they have more time to evaluate their alternatives.	.65	--

Table 9 - Continued

Measurement Item	Standardized Loadings	
	Original	Retained
Probe Resistance		
- I engage with hesitant prospects to understand why they are unwilling to close on the deal.	.72	.73
- I encourage hesitant prospects to express their concerns.	.80	.81
- I push hesitant prospects to open-up about why they are unwilling to commit.	.85	.85
- I ask hesitant prospects to explain what aspects of our offer do not "work" for them.	.90	.90
Reframe Offer		
- When dealing with hesitant prospects, I go back and provide them with a more compelling offer.	.86	.86
- I reposition an offer so that it is more attractive to hesitant prospects.	.90	.90
- When prospects are hesitant, I make the offer more appealing to them.	.93	.93
- I find different ways to pitch an offer to a prospect who is hesitant.	.71	.72
- I change the terms of an offer so that it is more convincing to prospects who are hesitant.	.77	.77
Attempt Close		
- I ask hesitant prospects for their business.	.64	--
-I ask hesitant prospects what it would take to "close the deal."	.76	.70
-I ask hesitant prospects if they would consider doing business with our firm.	.66	--
- I strongly encourage hesitant prospects to give our firm a try.	.81	.75
-I don't let hesitant prospects walk-away without first making them an offer.	.65	.73
Threaten Break-Up		
- I inform hesitant prospects that I will no longer be contacting them if I don't hear back from them.	.90	.90
- I let hesitant prospects know that if they want to continue the conversation, it's up to them to follow-up with me.	.97	.97
- I let prospects who are hesitant know that I will not be contacting them again unless they let me know they have some interest in working with our firm.	.91	.91
- I let hesitant prospects know that the time may not be right for our firms to do business.	.71	.71

Table 9 - Continued

Measurement Item	Standardized Loadings	
	Original	Retained
Prospecting Effectiveness		
- Ability to land prospects.	.75	.75
- Success converting leads into customers.	.84	.84
- Bringing in new business to the firm.	.84	.84
- Landing prospects that stay with the firm a long time.	.78	.78
- Bringing in new customers that are an especially good fit for the firm.	.71	.71
- Landing difficult prospects.	.73	.73
- Converting prospects that others have failed to close on.	.70	.70
Prospecting Efficiency		
- Number of visits required to close on a prospect.	.84	.85
- Number of hours invested in closing on a prospect.	.86	.87
- Amount of effort invested for every prospect closed.	.73	.72
- Monthly close ratio (number of prospects closed in a month compared to number of prospects visited in a month)	.78	.76
Number of prospects contacted in a typical week.	.56	--
- Amount of time spent during a typical visit with a prospect.	.77	.76

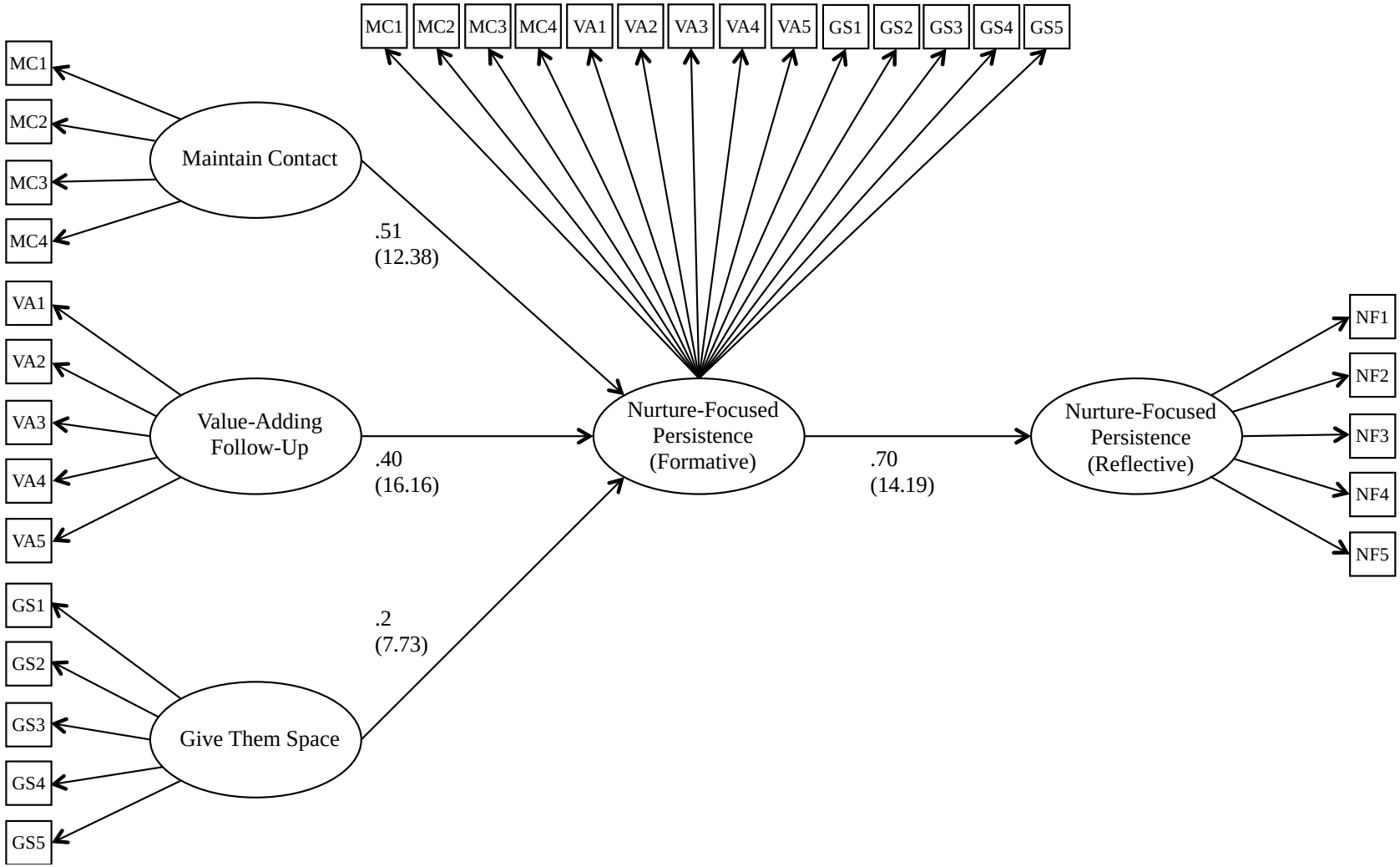
results also indicate that all item loadings are significant ($p < .01$), with standardized loadings in excess of .70. Moreover, the measures exhibit high composite reliabilities (.89 for probe resistance, .92 for reframe the offer, .77 for attempt close, and .93 for threaten break-up) and average variances extracted in excess of 50% (68% for probe resistance, 71% for reframe the offer, 53% for attempt close, and 77% for threaten break-up), both of which support the conclusion that the measures are reliable and possess convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, a comparison of the AVEs for each of the constructs to their largest shared variance with other model constructs revealed a potential discriminant validity problem between probe resistance and attempt close because the constructs exhibited a shared variance of 76% and had AVEs substantially lower than that (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Threaten break-up and reframe offer did not suffer the same problem as their AVEs were higher than their largest shared variance with other model constructs.

The initial fit statistics for CFA3 (prospecting productivity constructs) indicate that the model provides a good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 86.3$, 64 df, $p < .01$; CFI = .961, SRMR = .064). After removing a total of one item with a loading less than .70, the fit of the resulting model improved marginally ($\chi^2 = 77.7$, 53 df, $p < .01$ CFI = .961, SRMR = .062). The results also indicate that all item loadings are significant ($p < .01$), with standardized loadings in excess of .70. Moreover, the measures exhibit high composite reliabilities (.91 for prospecting effectiveness and .90 for prospecting efficiency) and average variances extracted in excess of 50% (59% for prospecting effectiveness and 63% for prospecting efficiency), both of which support the conclusion that the measures are reliable and possess convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, a comparison of the two constructs' AVEs to their shared variance (27%) suggests that the measures possess discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Stage 2: Validation of the Formative Persistence Constructs using PLS

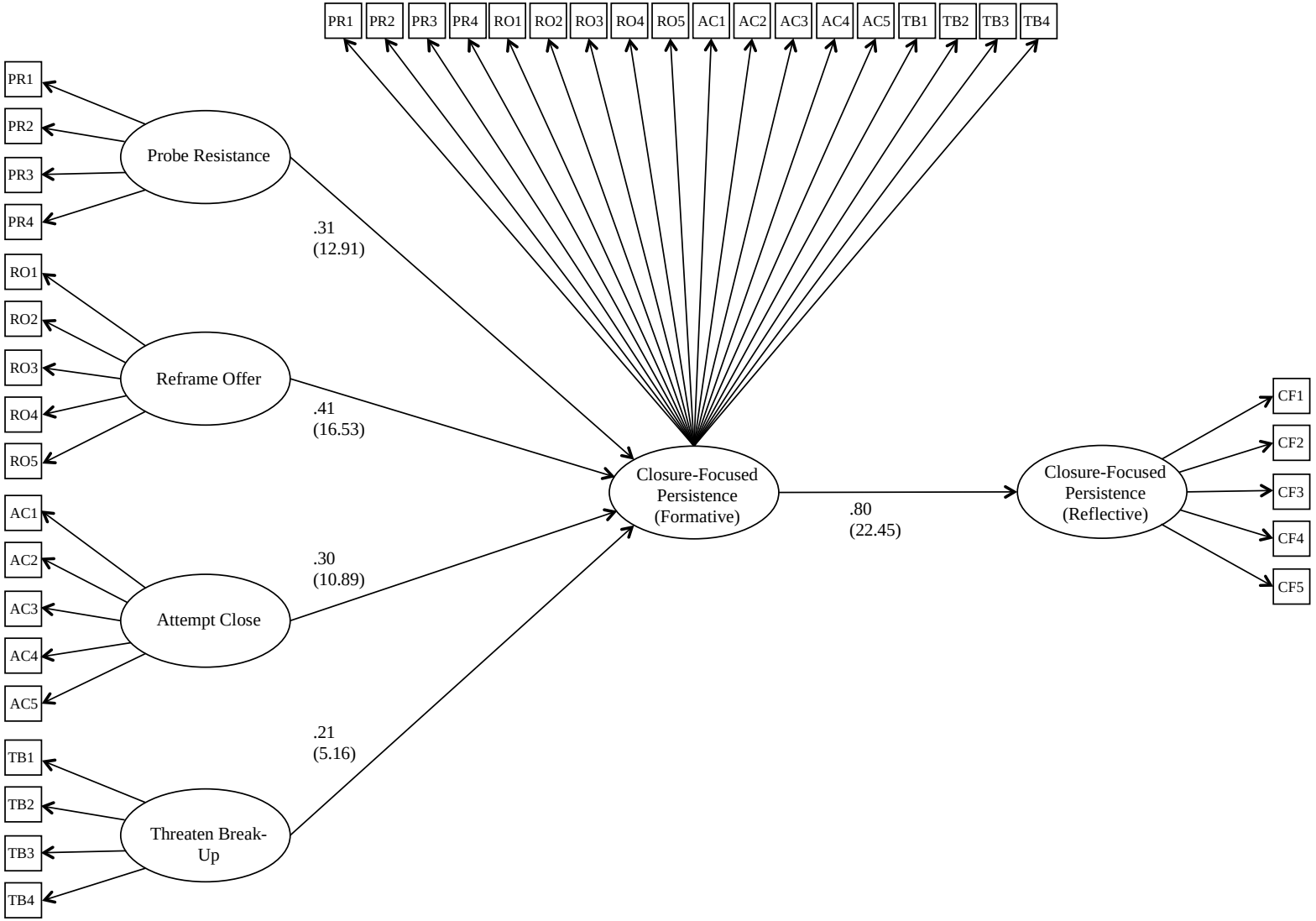
As noted earlier, Hair and colleagues' (2013) three-step process was used to assess the validity of the formative structure that is proposed to underlie the nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence constructs. The analysis began with a test for convergent validity that was performed using redundancy analysis (Chin 1998). This test entails examining the relationship between the formatively measured construct and a reflective measure that approximates the same construct. More specifically, as depicted in Figure 8 and Figure 9, the test requires that the formatively measured construct be specified as an exogenous variable that predicts an endogenous variable of the same construct operationalized using a reflective scale. Ideally, the magnitude of the path coefficient between these two variables should be .80 or above, although coefficients of such large magnitude are not the norm in this type of testing because finding an ideal set of reflective indicators is often challenging (Chin 1998). The results of this analysis (summarized in Figure 8 and Figure 9) offer evidence in support of the convergent validity of the formative closure-focused persistence ($\beta = .80$), and nurture-focused persistence ($\beta = .70$) constructs. While the coefficient for nurture-focused persistence is slightly below the desired threshold, the path indicates a strong enough relationship between the formative and reflective operationalization of the construct to support the conclusion of convergent validity.

The second step for validating the formative measures involves a test of multicollinearity. In the case of formative constructs, a high correlation between its indicators (in this case, the persistence sub-dimensions) is undesirable and may actually cause model estimation problems (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw 2006). Multicollinearity is assessed by estimating the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) for each indicator. The tolerance value of a particular



Note: Number within () is the t-statistic. Value greater than or equal to 1.96 is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 8 - Higher Order Formative Validation for Nurture-Focused Persistence



Note: Number within () is the t-statistic. Value greater than or equal to 1.96 is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Figure 9 - Higher Order Formative Validation for Closure-Focused Persistence

indicator refers to that indicator's variance that is not explained by the other indicators. VIF is simply the inverse of tolerance. Accordingly, higher values of tolerance (> .20) and lower VIF values (< 5) are desirable (Hair et al. 2011). The results in Table 10 suggest that multicollinearity is not an issue as tolerance values range from .36 to .86 and VIF values range from 1.16 to 2.76.

The last step in the Hair et al. (2013) process for assessing the validity of formative measures focuses on an evaluation of the significance and relevance of the formative indicators. That is, it requires an evaluation of the weights (e.g., standardized coefficients) and significance of the paths from the reflective sub-dimensions to their respective formative construct. Examining the weights of each dimension on the underlying construct thus compares the relative contribution of each indicator (in this case, sub-dimension) to the overall formative construct. As is illustrated in Figure 8, the results for nurture-focused persistence indicate that all three dimensions contribute to the higher-order formative construct. "Maintain contact" is a stronger contributor to the formative construct than the other sub-dimensions ($\beta = .51$), but all sub-dimensions are found to contribute to nurture-focused persistence. As is indicated in Figure 9, similar results were obtained for the closure-focused persistence construct, with "reframing the offer" ($\beta = .41$) being the strongest contributor to the formative construct. In order to evaluate the significance of the indicators (or sub-dimensions), PLS utilizes a bootstrapping procedure (Henseler et al. 2009). Here, bootstrapping entails a random draw and a continuous resample, based on the original data, until a large enough random subsample has been created. This produces, by using the parameter estimates, the standard error estimates based on the standard deviation in the original data. This results in a computation of t-statistics associated with each path, which can then be use to assess statistical significance. As shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9, all paths are strongly significant ($p < .01$), a finding which supports the proposed formative

Table 10 - Assessment of Multicollinearity of Formative Constructs

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Nurture-Focused Persistence		
1. Maintain Contact	.62	1.61
2. Value-Adding Follow-Up	.51	1.96
3. Give Them Space	.74	1.36
Closure-Focused Persistence		
1. Attempt Close	.43	2.32
2. Probe Resistance	.37	2.70
3. Reframe Offer	.36	2.76
4. Threaten Break-Up	.86	1.16

specification of the constructs.

Beyond facilitating the test of the formative models, the PLS analyses also provide information regarding the validity of the reflectively specified sub-dimensions. In general, and consistent with the results of the stage 1 analyses, the results indicate that the newly developed measures are both reliable and valid (see Table 11). In particular, Cronbach's alpha scores, ranging from .81 to .95, and composite reliabilities, ranging from .87 to .96, suggest that the measures are reliable. Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) for the constructs range from 59% to 87%, a finding that provides evidence that the measures are reliable (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Gerbing and Anderson 1988). AVE was also used to examine whether the measures possess discriminant validity (Chin 2010; Chin 1998). In particular, each construct's AVE was compared to its shared variance with other constructs in the model. This analysis revealed that the AVE for each construct was greater than its shared variance with any other construct in the measurement model (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Additionally, discriminant validity was confirmed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) test (Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2015). The HTMT refers to the average of the heterotrait-heteromethod correlations (i.e., the correlations of indicators across constructs measuring different phenomena) relative to the average of the monototrait-heteromethod correlations (i.e., the correlations of indicators within the same construct). According to this test, ratios below .90 provide support for discriminant validity (Henseler et al. 2015). As such, results of the pre-test indicate that the measures possess discriminant validity as the largest HTMT ratio (.87) is below the established standard.

Finally, the convergent validity of the reflective measures was also assessed in PLS by examining factor loadings of each of the items (Anderson and Gerbing 1982; Anderson and

Table 11 - Pre-Test 1 Measures of Quality Using PLS

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability	AVE	Largest Shared Variance	Meet Fornell Larcker?	Largest HTMT*	Discriminant Validity?
1. Attempt Close	.83	.88	59%	52%	Yes	.82 (5)	Yes
2. Probe Resistance	.89	.92	75%	56%	Yes	.82 (6)	Yes
3. Reframe Offer	.92	.94	76%	56%	Yes	.82 (5)	Yes
4. Threaten Break-Up	.93	.95	82%	26%	Yes	.52 (3)	Yes
5. Closure-Focused Persistence (Reflective)	.95	.96	82%	48%	Yes	.74 (6)	Yes
6. Maintain Contact	.95	.96	87%	42%	Yes	.72 (4)	Yes
7. Value-Adding Follow-Up	.81	.87	58%	56%	Yes	.87 (6)	Yes
8. Give Them Space	.85	.89	61%	27%	Yes	.52 (8)	Yes
9. Nurture-Focused Persistence (Reflective)	.88	.91	67%	42%	Yes	.75 (16)	Yes
10. Prospecting Effectiveness	.91	.93	64%	27%	Yes	.67 (12)	Yes
11. Prospecting Efficiency	.89	.92	65%	27%	Yes	.52 (12)	Yes

*Note: The heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations refers to the average of the heterotrait-heteromethod correlations (i.e., the correlations of indicators across constructs measuring different phenomena), relative to the average of the monotrait-heteromethod correlations (i.e., the correlations of indicators within the same construct.) HTMT ≥ .90 suggests lack of discriminant validity.

Gerbing 1988). All items exhibited significant loadings on their respective constructs ($p < .05$). Moreover, as depicted in Table 12, most of the measurement items loaded strongly (> .70) on their corresponding constructs. These results strongly support the conclusion that the measures possess convergent validity (Chin 2010).

Hence, unlike the results derived from the CB-SEM CFA analysis, the PLS-SEM results support the conclusion that all the proposed measures possess discriminant validity. Given that PLS measurement results are specific to the model in which they were tested (and thus measures that appear to be valid in one model may not be in another model), an additional pre-test (pre-test two) was conducted in which new measurement items were developed and tested for the constructs that exhibited the weakest psychometric properties in pre-test one. The results of this additional pre-test are presented next.

Pre-Test 2

The purpose of this pre-test was to leverage the insights gained from pre-test one to further refine the items used to measure the persistence constructs. In addition, this second pre-test made it possible to test the measures in a context more similar to that of the main study than the one employed in pre-test one. As such, a revised questionnaire (based on the results in pre-test one) was administered to a single cooperating firm. A total of forty-eighty salespeople (94% of the salesforce) attempted the survey, but only forty-three (84% of the salesforce) provided full information. The mean age of participants was 43 (s.d. 11.1 years), with the sample skewed towards males (61% of respondents). On average, salespeople in the sample achieved 108% (s.d. 50%) of their sales quota in the preceding fiscal year. Finally, participants in the sample had worked at the company for an average of 6.3 years (s.d. 11.0 years). Table 13 offers a summary of the descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations for the constructs included in the pretest.

Table 12 - Pre-Test 1 Construct Loadings using PLS-SEM

Scale	Indicator	Item	Loadings
Maintain Contact			
(Never=0, Always=10)	MC1	- I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant so they remember me in the future.	.91
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	MC2	- I maintain contact with hesitant prospects to ensure that our firm is always on their mind.	.94
	MC3	- I maintain contact with hesitant prospects so they think of me when a future need arises.	.94
	MC4	- I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant to ensure they think of our firm when a future need arises.	.93
Value-Adding Follow-Up			
(Never=0, Always=10)	VA1	- I ensure that I have a new "value add" to share when I follow-up with a hesitant prospect.	.43
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	VA2	- I focus on sharing new product or service information when I follow-up with hesitant prospects.	.80
	VA3	- I follow-up with hesitant prospects only when I have something new to share with them.	.88
	VA4	- In my follow-up contacts with hesitant prospects, I communicate information about new price promotions.	.89
	VA5	- I share new information when I follow-up with prospects who are hesitant.	.68

Table 12 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Loadings
Give Them Space			
(Never=0, Always=10)	GS1	- When prospects are hesitant, I pursue them in a less aggressive fashion.	.79
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	GS2	- I give prospects that are hesitant more space so they feel less pressure.	.84
	GS3	- I moderate the intensity of my follow-up efforts when I notice a prospect is hesitant.	.80
	GS4	- I temper the frequency of my follow-up contacts with hesitant prospects.	.81
	GS5	- I back off from hesitant prospects so they have more time to evaluate their alternatives.	.67
Probe Resistance			
(Never=0, Always=10)	PR1	- I engage with hesitant prospects to understand why they are unwilling to close on the deal.	.82
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	PR2	- I encourage hesitant prospects to "air" their concerns.	.86
	PR3	- I push hesitant prospects to open-up about why they are unwilling to commit.	.88
	PR4	- I ask hesitant prospects to explain what aspects of our offer do not "work" for them.	.91

Table 12 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Loadings
Reframe Offer			
(Never=0, Always=10)	RO1	- When dealing with hesitant prospects, I go back and provide them with a more compelling offer.	.89
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	RO2	- I reposition an offer so that it is more attractive to hesitant prospects.	.91
	RO3	- When prospects are hesitant, I make the offer more appealing to them.	.930
	RO4	- I find different ways to pitch an offer to a prospect who is hesitant.	.78
	RO5	- I change the terms of an offer so that it is more convincing to prospects who are hesitant.	.83
Attempt Close			
(Never=0, Always=10)	AC1	- I ask prospects who are hesitant for their business.	.73
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	AC2	- I ask hesitant prospects what it would take to "close the deal."	.83
	AC3	- I ask hesitant prospects if they would consider doing business with our firm.	.71
	AC4	- I strongly encourage hesitant prospects to give our firm a try.	.85
	AC5	- I don't let hesitant prospects walk-away without first making them an offer.	.73

Table 12 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Loadings
Threaten Break-Up			
(Never=0, Always=10)	TB1	- I let hesitant prospects know that the time may not be right for our firms to do business.	.94
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	TB2	- I inform hesitant prospects that I will no longer be contacting them if I don't hear back from them.	.96
	TB3	- I let hesitant prospects know that if they want to continue the conversation, it's up to them to follow-up with me.	.94
	TB4	- I let prospects who are hesitant know that I will not be contacting them again unless they let me know they have some interest in working with our firm.	.77
Nurture-Focused Persistence (Validation)	NF1	- I try to build a relationship with hesitant prospects.	
(Never=0, Always=10)			.82
Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?	NF2	- I take a nurturing approach with prospects who are hesitant.	.81
	NF3	- I try to show prospects who are hesitant how establishing a relationship with our firm can benefit them.	.84
	NF4	- I take a long-term perspective with hesitant prospects.	.77
	NF5	- I am patient when working with hesitant prospects.	.83

Table 12 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Loadings
Closure-Focused Persistence (Validation) (Never=0, Always=10) *Think of a typical prospect you consider a good fit for your firm and view as a good opportunity for new business. How often do you engage in the following behaviors when you find that such a prospect is hesitant to agree to the deal after interacting with you on multiple occasions?*	CF1	- When prospects are hesitant, I probe until I get a definitive signal about their true level of interest.	.87
	CF2	- When prospects are hesitant, I press-on until I close the deal.	.90
	CF3	- When I interact with hesitant prospects, I am focused on bringing the sales process to a conclusion (by making the sale or moving on).	.89
	CF4	- I persist with hesitant prospects until I get a definitive answer from them.	.93
	CF5	- I press hesitant prospects to ensure they arrive at a decision sooner rather than later.	.93
Prospecting Effectiveness (Much Worse=0, Much Better=100) *When compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, how well did you perform within the last year as it relates to each of the following:*	EFECT1	- Ability to land prospects.	.79
	EFECT2	- Success converting leads into customers.	.84
	EFECT3	- Bringing in new business to the firm.	.84
	EFECT4	- Landing prospects that stay with the firm a long time.	.80
	EFECT5	- Bringing in new customers that are an especially good fit for the firm.	.77
	EFECT6	- Landing difficult prospects.	.79
	EFECT7	- Converting prospects that others have failed to close on.	.76

Table 12 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Loadings
Prospecting Efficiency			
(Much Worse=0, Much Better=100)	EFICN1	- Number of visits required to close on a prospect.	.86
	EFICN2	- Number of hours invested in closing on a prospect.	.86
When compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, describe your performance within the last year as it relates to each of the following:	EFICN3	- Amount of effort invested for every prospect closed.	.79
	EFICN4	- Monthly close ratio (number of prospects closed in a month compared to number of prospects visited in a month)	.83
	EFICN5	- Number of prospects contacted in a typical week.	.64
	EFICN6	- Amount of time spent during a typical visit with a prospect.	.83

Table 13 - Pre-Test 2 Correlation Matrix (N = 43)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Attempt Close	6.20	2.54	1.00								
2. Probe Resistance	8.99	1.14	.31	1.00							
3. Reframe Offer	5.86	2.24	.40	.14	1.00						
4. Threaten Break-Up	2.35	2.30	-.04	-.07	.05	1.00					
5. Maintain Contact	7.59	1.82	.23	.14	-.08	.02	1.00				
6. Value-Adding Follow-Up	8.64	1.12	-.04	.27	.05	.08	.23	1.00			
7. Give Them Space	5.11	1.79	.03	-.08	.22	.21	-.40	-.03	1.00		
8. Prospecting Effectiveness	54.49	24.63	.19	.14	.16	-.09	.20	.35	.11	1.00	
9. Prospecting Efficiency	54.31	23.14	.13	.08	.07	.05	-.10	.09	.07	.64	1.00

Notes: Correlation values equal to or greater than |.30| are significant at $p < .05$.

In order to assess the adequacy of the measurement items, the approach outlined by Churchill (1979) was once again employed (see pre-test one, stage 1 analysis for details). However, given that the usable sample size for pre-test two is only forty-three, a CFA was not performed on this data. As explained by Hair et al. (2010), the absolute minimum sample size requirement for factor analysis is 50.

The results of pre-test two are largely consistent with those of pre-test one, but do suggest that further refinements to the measurement scales are possible. As shown in Table 14, the coefficient alpha for all proposed measures meets or exceeds established standards (i.e., greater than .7), thus suggesting that the measures are reliable. However, the average inter-item correlations for items belonging to the same construct were somewhat lower (not at the .7 level) than those in pre-test one, but still significantly lower than the correlations between items belonging to other constructs. Furthermore, the average item-to-total correlations for three of the nine constructs were .60 or lower (the lowest was .49), a finding that suggests that those measures may capture more trait than error variance (i.e., those constructs are likely to have AVE's that are below 50% if subjected to a traditional confirmatory factor analyses). Consequently, guided by item-to-total correlations, measurement items were sequentially removed from each of the scales to arrive at psychometrically sound scales that are more manageable in terms of their length.

As is illustrated in Table 15, this procedure resulted in the retention of 30 (out of an initial pool of 45) measurement items to measure the 9 proposed constructs (7 persistence dimensions and 2 prospecting productivity constructs). With the exception of the "probe resistance" dimension, three or more items were retained for each construct. Additional items for the "probe resistance" construct were included in the main study to ensure that all study

Table 14 - Pre-Test 2 Assessment of Measurement Quality

Persistence Dimension	Original Scale						Refined Scale					
		Inter-Item Correlation						Inter-Item Correlation				
	No. Items	Mean	Min	Max	Avg. Item-to-Total Corr.	α	No. Items	Mean	Min	Max	Avg. Item-to-Total Corr.	α
Maintain Contact	4	.93	.90	.99	.95	.98	4	.93	.90	.99	.95	.98
Value-Adding Follow-Up	6	.48	.12	.78	.60	.85	3	.76	.72	.78	.81	.90
Give Them Space	5	.55	.19	.75	.68	.86	4	.59	.52	.71	.69	.85
Probe Resistance	4	.47	.24	.78	.58	.78	2	.78	.78	.78	.78	.88
Reframe Offer	5	.62	.41	.76	.74	.89	4	.71	.67	.76	.79	.91
Attempt Close	4	.62	.40	.80	.72	.87	3	.77	.74	.80	.82	.91
Threaten Break-Up	5	.64	.49	.73	.62	.90	4	.67	.56	.73	.76	.89

Table 15 - Measurement Items Retained on Pre-Test 2 Analysis

Measurement Item	Item-Total Correlation	
	Original	Retained
Maintain Contact		
- I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant so they remember me in the future.	.94	.94
- I maintain contact with hesitant prospects so they think of me when a future need arises.	.97	.97
- I maintain contact with hesitant prospects to ensure that our firm is always on their mind.	.92	.92
- I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant to ensure they think of our firm when a future need arises.	.97	.97
Value-Adding Follow-Up		
- I ensure I have something useful to share with hesitant prospects before contacting them again.	.63	-
- I ensure I have something relevant to share when I follow-up with hesitant prospects.	.62	.80
- I check-in with hesitant prospects to ask them if there is anything new on their end.	.38	-
- I leverage common interests to engage in relevant follow-up conversations with hesitant prospects.	.53	-
- I identify meaningful ways to continue my interactions with hesitant prospects.	.81	.79
- I leverage information that is relevant to hesitant prospects to promote continued interaction with them.	.65	.83
Give Them Space		
- When prospects are hesitant, I pursue them in a less aggressive fashion.	.72	.69
- I reduce the intensity of my follow-up efforts with hesitant prospects so they don't feel I am pushing them to make a decision.	.80	.79
- I reduce the frequency of my follow-up contacts with hesitant prospects.	.78	.67
- I give prospects that are hesitant more space so they feel less pressure.	.59	.63
- I back-off from hesitant prospects so they have more time to evaluate their alternatives.	.50	-

Table 15 - Continued

Measurement Item	Item-Total Correlation	
	Original	Retained
Probe Resistance		
- I engage with hesitant prospects to understand why they are unwilling to close on the deal.	.56	.78
- I encourage hesitant prospects to express their concerns.	.61	.78
- I push hesitant prospects to open-up about why they are unwilling to commit.	.47	-
- I ask hesitant prospects to explain what aspects of working with our firm do not appeal to them.	.67	-
Reframe Offer		
- When dealing with hesitant prospects, I go back and provide them with a more compelling offer.	.79	.81
- I reposition an offer so that it is more attractive to hesitant prospects.	.80	.77
- When prospects are hesitant, I make the offer more appealing to them.	.81	.81
- I find different ways to pitch an offer to a prospect who is hesitant.	.54	-
- I change the terms of an offer so that it is more convincing to prospects who are hesitant.	.75	.76
Attempt Close		
- I ask hesitant prospects for their business.	.67	.82
- I ask hesitant prospects if they would consider doing business with our firm.	.72	.84
- I ask prospects that are hesitant if they are ready to begin working with our firm.	.71	.80
- I attempt to close the deal with prospects that are hesitant.	.34	-
Threaten Break-Up		
- I inform hesitant prospects that I will no longer be contacting them if I don't hear back from them.	.71	.74
- I let hesitant prospects know that if they want to continue the conversation, it's up to them to follow-up with me.	.82	.79
- I let prospects who are hesitant know that I will not be contacting them again unless they let me know they have some interest in working with our firm.	.81	.81
- I let hesitant prospects know that the time may not be right for our firms to do business.	.71	.70
- I let hesitant prospects know they should contact me when the time for doing business is right for them.	.69	-

constructs are measured by at least three indicators. Finally, as Table 13 indicates, the largest correlation between any of the persistence constructs is .40, a finding that indicates that the scale refinements performed in pretest two were effective in reducing the high levels of shared variance between specific persistence sub-dimensions evidenced in pretest one. Table 16 offers a list of the items that were used to measure each of the constructs in the study.

Main Study

This section describes the analyses and results of the main field survey study of the dissertation. In particular, after describing the sample, the results of the measurement model, test for common method bias, test for nonresponse bias, structural model, hypotheses testing, and post-hoc analyses are presented.

Sample Characteristics

The division in the sponsoring firm provided an email list of 412 employees, including sales managers and sales support staff. The list also included several salespeople in other divisions who were not responsible for product sales in the current division, but had a history of selling products in this division. It is imperative that the eligible sample only includes field salespeople, as this is the focus of the study. Accordingly, removing both regional and executive managers from the list reduced the sampling frame down to 370 potential respondents. Next, removing sales support, salespeople in other divisions, and other sales employees not directly responsible for sales (e.g., those responsible for getting product specified by end users) further reduced the sampling frame down to 264 employees. Finally, in order to ensure that it was possible to make meaningful inferences regarding the study hypotheses, it was important to remove from the sampling frame salespeople for whom objective sales performance (net sales)

Table 16 - List of Final Measurement Items

Measurement Item
Maintain Contact - I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant so they remember me in the future. - I maintain contact with hesitant prospects so they think of me when a future need arises. - I maintain contact with hesitant prospects to ensure that our firm is always on their mind. - I maintain contact with prospects who are hesitant to ensure they think of our firm when a future need arises.
Value-Adding Follow-Up - I ensure I have something relevant to share when I follow-up with hesitant prospects. - I identify meaningful ways to continue my interactions with hesitant prospects. - I leverage information that is relevant to hesitant prospects to promote continued interaction with them.
Give Them Space - When prospects are hesitant, I pursue them in a less aggressive fashion. - I reduce the intensity of my follow-up efforts with hesitant prospects so they don't feel I am pushing them to make a decision. - I reduce the frequency of my follow-up contacts with hesitant prospects. - I give prospects that are hesitant more space so they feel less pressure.
Probe Resistance - I engage with hesitant prospects to understand why they are unwilling to close on the deal. - I encourage hesitant prospects to express their concerns.
Reframe Offer - When dealing with hesitant prospects, I go back and provide them with a more compelling offer. - I reposition an offer so that it is more attractive to hesitant prospects. - When prospects are hesitant, I make the offer more appealing to them. - I change the terms of an offer so that it is more convincing to prospects who are hesitant.
Attempt Close - I ask hesitant prospects for their business. - I ask hesitant prospects if they would consider doing business with our firm. - I ask prospects that are hesitant if they are ready to begin working with our firm.
Threaten Break-Up - I inform hesitant prospects that I will no longer be contacting them if I don't hear back from them. - I let hesitant prospects know that if they want to continue the conversation, it's up to them to follow-up with me. - I let prospects who are hesitant know that I will not be contacting them again unless they let me know they have some interest in working with our firm. - I let hesitant prospects know that the time may not be right for our firms to do business.

Table 16 - Continued

Measurement Item
Prospecting Effectiveness - Ability to land prospects. - Success converting leads into customers. - Bringing in new business to the firm. - Landing prospects that stay with the firm a long time. - Bringing in new customers that are an especially good fit for the firm. - Landing difficult prospects. - Converting prospects that others have failed to close on.
Prospecting Efficiency - Number of visits required to close on a prospect. - Number of hours invested in closing on a prospect. - Amount of effort invested for every prospect closed. - Monthly close ratio (number of prospects closed in a month compared to number of prospects visited in a month) - Number of prospects contacted in a typical week. - Amount of time spent during a typical visit with a prospect.

would not be available (e.g., because they had been at the firm for less than one year). This resulted in the elimination of an additional 48 salespeople from the sampling frame. Taken together, the final sampling frame included 216 eligible salespeople. Of those, 172 responded to the survey, for a usable response rate of 80%.

Among the 172 respondents, the vast majority was male (83%). The average age reported was 44.8 years (s.d. 12.6 years). On average, respondents indicated sales experience of 18.1 years (s.d. 10.6 years) and company experience of 9.8 years (s.d. 7.0 years). Participants also reported various levels of education achieved, including 7% high school, 21% some college (no degree), 61% college (undergraduate degree), 2% some graduate school (no degree), 8% graduate school (graduate degree), and 1% other (community college, diploma of certification and leadership, health, and wellness certification).

With regards to customer accounts, participants claimed to have an average of 77.64 accounts (s.d. 46.14). The average salary of participants was $46,363.07 (s.d. $12,219.00) and the average commission $43,917.70 (s.d. $19,053.38). Finally, actual performance data reveals that the average net sales, within the last year, for participants were $1,542,449.20 (s.d. $1,176,526.70) with an average gross margin of $345,506.45 (s.d. $265,067.67). Table 17 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics and the inter-item correlations for the main study constructs.

Note on Main Study Measurement Items

While extensive work was completed in pre-test 1 and pre-test 2 to develop and validate all measurement items for the dimensions of nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence, as well as prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency, it is noteworthy to mention at this point that the items used in the main study had slight modifications. As a result of

Table 17 - Main Study Correlation Matrix (N = 172)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Attempt Close	8.32	1.71	1.00										
2. Probe Resistance	7.73	1.71	.50	1.00									
3. Reframe Offer	6.70	1.72	.33	.41	1.00								
4. Threaten Break-Up	.70	1.51	.11	.09	.21	1.00							
5. Maintain Contact	7.78	1.66	.10	.29	.17	-.07	1.00						
6. Value-Adding Follow-Up	8.34	1.53	.46	.47	.32	-.05	.28	1.00					
7. Give Them Space	5.40	1.92	.12	.09	.18	.27	-.09	.10	1.00				
8. Political Skill	6.20	.51	.35	.37	.25	.04	.13	.37	.03	1.00			
9. Prospecting Effectiveness	63.60	17.00	.19	.22	.12	-.07	.17	.24	-.10	.25	1.00		
10. Prospecting Efficiency	55.90	20.40	.11	.15	.05	-.06	.20	.25	-.10	.18	.55	1.00	
11. Sales Performance	1,542,449	1,176,527	.12	.03	-.17	-.12	-.04	.04	.04	.03	.06	.12	1.00

Notes: Correlation values equal to or greater than |.15| are significant at $p < .05$.

using a single sponsoring firm for data collection, it was imperative that the survey items were relevant and meaningful to the sampled salesforce. As sales managers shared during informal conversations, this is especially important because different industries and organizations have separate interpretations of the terminology used in the selling process. For instance, the term "prospecting" may imply the broad activity of gathering a list of all and any customers (not necessarily qualified) in one's market that are currently doing zero business with the organization. In another instance, this same term may indicate a more narrow activity of pursuing only qualified leads that are supplied by the organization.

In this dissertation, the focus is on "prospects" that are considered to be a potentially legitimate new business opportunity that salespeople have had actual interaction with. While the pretests results were generalizable and did not lead to any concern with using the word "prospects" in the measurement items, conversations with the sponsoring firm suggested that it would be advisable to use firm-specific terminology that the salesforce would better relate to. Thus, in order to enhance the quality of the survey responses, the researcher participated in a couple of "ride-alongs" with members of the sponsoring organizations salesforce. During the ride-alongs, the researcher shadowed the salesperson in order to gain a better sense of the specific selling practices while also inquiring about the best language to use for the measurement items. In order to capture any unique differences, this was done with different salespeople from both a large market and a small market.

The conversations with managers at the sponsoring organization and the ride-alongs coalesced towards best using the term "viable inactive accounts" to identify or describe prospective customers in the measurement items. In order to make this explicit and clear to all participants, the survey provided the following description from the outset: "The questions

presented in the following pages use the term “viable inactive account.” For purposes of this survey, the term is used to refer to a customer assigned to you that is: 1) currently not buying any [division specific] products, 2) hesitant to buy [division specific] products after multiple interactions with you, and 3) a potentially good opportunity for new business.”

Measurement Model

In addition to the exhaustive development and validation of measures in pre-test 1and pre-test 2, the first part in SEM analysis involves direct examination of latent variable (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). This involves subjecting the variables and related items to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to assess model fit. This process also allows for further assessment of the validity and reliability of the measures. For this stage of the analysis, Mplus 7.1 was used.

Given the number of measurement items and constructs in this study, it was necessary to conduct separate CFA models in order to avoid any issues with observation to parameter ratios (Hair et al. 2010). More specifically, two distinct CFAs were evaluated; one that included the different persistence construct dimensions (e.g., maintain contact, probe resistance), and another that considered the constructs for prospecting effectiveness, prospecting efficiency, and political skill dimensions. In order to gauge the adequacy of the measurement models, Hu and Bentler’s (1999) combinatorial rule was used. That is, the model was judged to provide good fit to the data if it has an SRMR $\leq .08$ and either a CFI $\geq .95$ or RMSEA $\leq .06$. An overview of the measurement model fits for both the persistence constructs and other constructs (i.e., prospecting effectiveness, prospecting efficiency, and political skill) are provided in Table 18. Factor loadings were also assessed and items were removed from the model if standardized loadings were substantially less than .70, and if doing so enhanced model fit statistics. The results are summarized in Table 19. Additionally, CFA provided values that were used to estimate average

Table 18 - Main Study Measurement Model Fit

Measure	Persistence Constructs		Other Constructs*	
	Model 1 Fit	Model 2 Fit	Model 1 Fit	Model 2 Fit
Chi-square (df)	550.31 (329)	377.13 (254)	404.87 (260)	291.10 (215)
P-value	.00	.00	.00	.00
CFI	.92	.95	.92	.95
TLI	.91	.94	.91	.95
RMSEA	.06	.05	.06	.05
SRMR	.062	.049	.060	.059

* Other constructs includes prospecting effectiveness, prospecting efficiency, and political skill dimensions (networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness, and apparent sincerity)

Table 19 - Main Study Confirmatory Factor Analysis Factor Loadings

Scale	Indicator	Item	Original	Retained
Maintain Contact				
(Never=0, Always=10)	MC1	- Our firm was always on their mind.	.80	.80
	MC2	- They would think of me when a future need arose.	.97	.97
I maintained contact with	MC3	- They would think of our firm when a future need arose.	.97	.97
viable inactive customers to	MC4	- They remember me in the future.	.88	.88
ensure that...				
Value-Adding Follow-Up				
(Never=0, Always=10)	VA1	- I ensure I had something relevant to share.	.71	.70
	VA2	- I leveraged common interests to engage in relevant follow-up conversations with them.	.82	.82
When I followed-up with viable				
inactive customers...	VA3	- I identified meaningful ways to continue my interactions with them.	.93	.94
	VA4	- I leveraged information relevant to them in order to promote continued interaction.	.89	.89
Give Them Space				
(Never=0, Always=10)	GS1	- I gave them more space so they felt less pressure.	.79	.78
	GS2	- I pursued them in a less aggressive fashion.	.76	.75
When dealing with viable	GS3	- I reduced the intensity of my follow-up efforts with them so		
inactive customers…		they didn't feel like I was pushing them to make a decision.	.89	.90
	GS4	- I reduced the frequency of my follow-up contacts with them.	.52	-
Probe Resistance				
(Never=0, Always=10)	PR1	- I engaged with them to understand why they were unwilling to close on the deal.	.66	.65
When dealing with viable	PR2	- I encouraged them to express their concerns.	.79	.78
inactive customers…	PR3	- I pushed them to open-up about why they were unwilling to commit.	.78	.79
	PR4	- I asked them to explain what aspects of working with our firm did not appeal to them.	.80	.81

Table 19 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Original	Retained
Reframe Offer				
(Never=0, Always=10)	RO1	- I went back and provided them with a more compelling offer.	.84	.84
When dealing with viable inactive customers…	RO2	- I made the offer more appealing to them.	.81	.81
	RO3	- I changed the terms of an offer so that it was more convincing to them.	.85	.85
	RO4	- I repositioned our offer so that it was more attractive to them.	.91	.91
Attempt Close				
(Never=0, Always=10)	AC1	- I asked them for their business.	.71	.63
	AC2	- I asked them if they were ready to begin working with our firm.	.80	.83
When dealing with viable inactive customers…	AC3	- I asked them if they would consider doing business with our firm.	.79	.83
	AC4	- I attempted to close the deal with them.	.70	-
Threaten Break-Up				
(Never=0, Always=10)	TB1	- I let them know that the time may not be right for our firms to do business.	.52	-
When dealing with viable inactive customers…	TB2	- I informed them that I would no longer be contacting them if I didn't hear back from them.	.89	.88
	TB3	- I let them know that if they wanted to continue the conversation, it was up to them to follow-up with me.	.74	.74
	TB4	- I let them know that I would not be contacting them again unless they let me know they had some interest in working with our firm.	.90	.92

Table 19 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Original	Retained
Prospecting Effectiveness (Much Worse=0, Much Better=100) *When compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, how well did you perform within the last year as it relates to each of the following:*	EFECT1	- Landing viable inactive customers who were difficult.	.83	.83
	EFECT2	- Converting viable inactive customers that were anxious about making a change.	.75	.75
	EFECT3	- Converting viable inactive customers others had failed to close on.	.75	.75
	EFECT4	- Converting challenging viable inactive customers.	.84	.84
Prospecting Efficiency (Much Worse=0, Much Better=100) *When compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, describe your performance within the last year as it relates to each of the following:*	EFICN1	- Close ratio (number of viable customers closed within the last year compared to the number of viable inactive customers you visited within the last year)	.78	.78
	EFICN2	- Revenue-to-resource ratio (amount of revenue generated from new customers within the last year compared to the amount of time, money, and effort invested in pursuing new business with the last year)	.74	.74
	EFICN3	- Percentage of the viable inactive customers you pursued that were converted into customers within the last year.	.85	.85
Networking Ability (Strongly Disagree=0, Strongly Agree=7) *Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement about yourself.*	NA1	- I spend a lot of time and effort networking with others.	.59	-
	NA2	- I am good at building relationships with influential people.	.70	.70
	NA3	- I know a lot of important people and am well connected.	.84	.85
	NA4	- I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen.	.87	.87
	NA5	- I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.	.73	.72

Table 19 - Continued

Scale	Indicator	Item	Original	Retained
Interpersonal Influence (Strongly Disagree=0, Strongly Agree=7) *Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement about yourself.*	II1	- I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me.	.79	.78
	II2	- I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others.	.76	.76
	II3	- It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people.	.84	.84
	II4	- I am good at getting people to like me.	.83	.84
Social Astuteness (Strongly Disagree=0, Strongly Agree=7) *Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement about yourself.*	SA1	- I understand people very well.	.75	.75
	SA2	- I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others.	.77	.77
	SA3	- I have good intuition and savvy about how to present myself to others.	.76	.76
	SA4	- I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others.	.77	.77
	SA5	- I pay close attention to people's facial expressions.	.66	.66
Apparent Sincerity (Strongly Disagree=0, Strongly Agree=7) *Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement about yourself.*	AS1	- When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.	.75	.76
	AS2	- It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do.	.61	-
	AS3	- I try to show a genuine interest in other people.	.68	.64
	AS4	- I try to be sincere when I deal with others.	.84	.87

variance extracted, composite reliability, and largest shared variance in order to evaluate the refined measurement models.

The initial CFA run for the persistence constructs (nurture-focused and closure-focused dimensions) yielded satisfactory fit statistics (χ^2 = 550.31, 329 df, p = .00; CFI = .92, SRMR = .062). A close examination of the standardized factor loadings for each item reveals that two particular items (GS4 = .52 and TB1 = .52) were less than the well-established threshold. There was also an issue with cross loading for one item (AC4 loading on maintain contact). These items were thus removed sequentially from the model and additional CFA models were specified and tested. Removing these items resulted in a model that provides a very good fit to the data (χ^2 = 377.13, 254 df, p = .00; CFI = .95, SRMR = .049). The standardized factor loadings were also shown to be significant ($p < .01$), with all but two items having loadings of .70 or better. Additionally, the results demonstrate that the items posses great reliability and validity (see Table 20 for a summary). More specifically, the measures indicate both high composite reliabilities (.81or higher for all constructs) and average variance extracted greater than 50% (58% is lowest AVE for any of the constructs), which confirm the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Moreover, discriminant validity is confirmed by the fact that the AVEs for each of the constructs are indeed larger than their shared variance with any other constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

The initial CFA run for other constructs (prospecting effectiveness, prospecting efficiency, and political skill dimensions) once again indicates an acceptable model fit to the data (χ^2 = 404.87, 260 df, p = .00; CFI = .92, SRMR= .060). A further inspection of each standardized factor-loading shows that a total of three items have a value of less than .70 (NA1 = .59, AS2 =.61, and AS3 = .68). The items for NA1 and AS2 were thus deleted. The item for AS3 (“I try to

Table 20 - Main Study Assessment of Measurement Quality

Construct	Composite Reliability	AVE	Largest Shared Variance	Meet Fornell Larcker?	Discriminant Validity?
1. Attempt Close	.81	59%	34%	Yes	Yes
2. Probe Resistance	.84	58%	34%	Yes	Yes
3. Reframe Offer	.91	72%	21%	Yes	Yes
4. Threaten Break-Up	.88	72%	7%	Yes	Yes
5. Maintain Contact	.95	82%	12%	Yes	Yes
6. Value-Adding Follow-Up	.91	71%	28%	Yes	Yes
7. Give Them Space	.85	66%	7%	Yes	Yes
8. Prospecting Effectiveness	.87	63%	39%	Yes	Yes
9. Prospecting Efficiency	.84	63%	39%	Yes	Yes
10. Networking Ability	.87	62%	24%	Yes	Yes
11. Interpersonal Influence	.88	65%	53%	Yes	Yes
12. Social Astuteness	.86	55%	53%	Yes	Yes
13. Apparent Sincerity	.81	58%	21%	Yes	Yes

show a genuine interest in other people") was retained as it was close to the threshold and believed to be an essential element of the construct apparent sincerity. Sequentially, a second CFA was completed. After removal of the offending items, fit statistics suggest the model provides a very good fit to the data (χ^2 = 291.10, 215 df, p = .00; CFI = .95, SRMR = .059). The results also show that all item loadings are significant ($p < .01$), with standardized loadings in excess of .70 (except for AS3, which has a loading of .64).

Moreover, there is evidence to support the conclusion that the measures are both reliable and valid. In particular, the measures display good composite reliabilities (.81 is once again the lowest composite reliability of any of the constructs). With regards to convergent validity, the average variance extracted for each construct is greater than 50% (with 55% being the lowest AVE of any of the constructs) (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Lastly, a comparison between each construct's average variance extracted and largest shared variance indicates that there are no issues with discriminant validity, as the AVE for each construct is indeed larger than the squared correlations between any of the other constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Assessment of Common Method Bias

In order to mitigate the potential effects of common method variance, several suggested procedural steps were judiciously implemented (Podsakoff et al. 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff 2012). First, the study relied on distinctive sources of data sources for the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables were comprised of primary data, which was provided by individual salespeople. Meanwhile, archival data provided by the sponsoring firm was used for the dependent variable. As another procedural precaution, different anchors (e.g., "never" and "always," "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree") were used for

survey items throughout the instrument in order to prevent yea-saying, nay-saying, and straight-line responses. Moreover, due diligence was paid to the organization of the survey in order to minimize priming effects, social desirability effects, and demand cues (Hocking, Stacks, and McDermott 2003). Additionally, the survey was hosted online (via Qualtrics) and self-administered so that participants were not effected by cues from the researcher or other participants (Nederhof 1985). Finally, it was also very important to stress that the survey responses would be kept anonymous and confidential (Podsakoff et al. 2003).

In addition to procedural processes, statistical tests were used to confirm that common method bias is not an issue. Specifically, Harmon's single factor test was conducted in SPSS 23 (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Here, an exploratory unrotated factor analysis (EFA) is conducted, where all items are fixed to extract into a single factor. An issue arises with common method bias when a single factor emerges that explains a majority of the variance, or more than 50% of all the variance. The results of this test reveal that the highest percent of variance explained by one factor is 14.29, considerably below the suggested threshold, suggesting that common method bias is not an issue. In short, the procedural safeguards taken and the subsequent statistical analysis insinuates that common method bias is of no concern with these data.

Assessment of Nonresponse Bias

Despite conducting the study with a sponsoring firm that worked with the researcher to ensure maximum response rates, the potential impact of nonresponse bias was statistically assessed. In particular, procedures recommend by Armstrong and Overton (1977) were undertaken. Accordingly, early respondents were compared with late respondents, where it is assumed that late respondents are more likely to respond similarly to non-respondents. In order to divide the responses, participants were coded as early respondents if they completed the

survey prior to any reminders by the sponsoring firm. Conversely, late respondents were those who completed the survey once an executive at the sponsoring firm sent out a reminder email. Given this standard, 137 participants were identified as early respondents, whereas 35 respondents were deemed late responders.

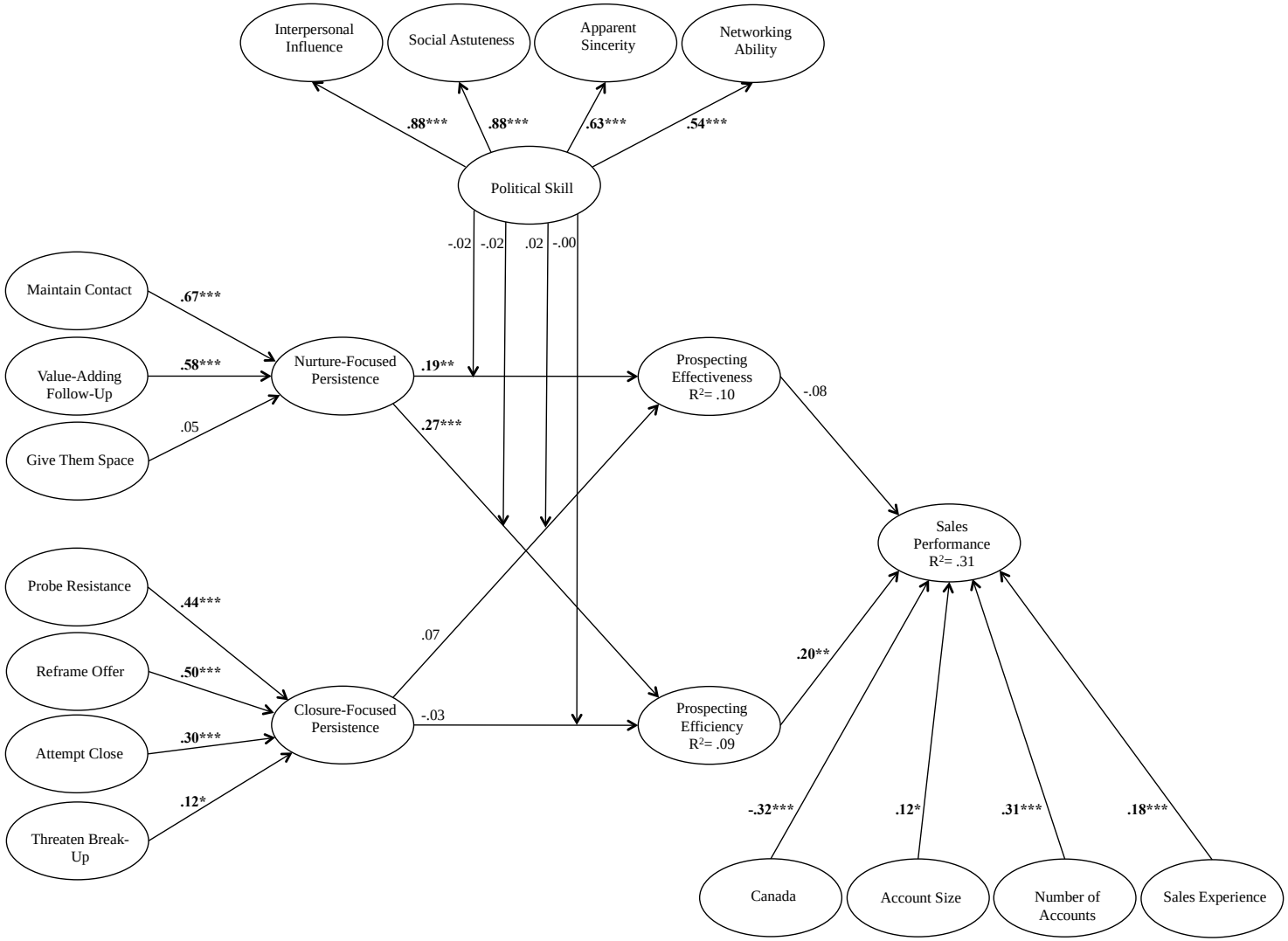
Next, an independent t-test was conducted using SPSS 23 in order to establish whether differences exist in the mean responses of early versus late responders on the main study constructs. The results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences ($p > .10$) in the mean responses of the two groups across any of the variables tested. In sum, given this result and the relatively high response rate (80%), nonresponse bias is not considered to be an issue for these data.

Structural Model

Given the acceptable and satisfactory results produced by the measurement model analyses, the second step in SEM is to evaluate the structural (termed the "inner model" in PLS-SEM) model. The main objective is to evaluate and test the study hypotheses (Figure 10 offers a pictorial summary of the model tested). For this analysis, SmartPLS version 3.2.1, which is a graphical interface software, was used to depict and examine the proposed path model because the study's independent variables are higher-order, formative constructs (Ringle, Wende, and Will 2005). The results for the dimensions of persistence strategies, control variables, hypothesis testing, and ad-hoc analyses are presented next.

Dimensions of Persistence Strategies

With regards to the formative structure of persistence strategies, the results provide strong support for two of the three dimensions of nurture-focused persistence and for the four dimensions of closure-focused persistence. More specifically, the results indicate that nurture-



* Path is significant at the .10 level ** Path is significant at the .05 level *** Path is significant at the .01 level

Figure 10 - Structural Model Hypotheses Results

focused persistence is comprised of maintain contact (β = .67, $p < .01$) and value-adding follow-up (β = .58, $p < .01$). There was no support provided for the dimension of give them space (β = .05, $p > .10$). Meanwhile, the results suggest that closure-focused persistence consists of maintain contact (β = .44, $p < .01$), reframe offer (β = .50, $p < .01$), and attempt close (β = .30, $p < .01$). Marginal support was provided for the closure-focused persistence dimension of threaten break-up (β = .12, $p < .10$).

Control Variables

To better isolate the impact of the various variables and their relationships, four particular control variables were included in the model. In particular, sales experience, the number of accounts a salesperson is responsible for, the typical account size for the salesperson in relation to other territories, and whether the salesperson is based out of Canada were built in. These variables were treated as independent predictors of sales performance. The results indicate that sales experience does indeed lead to sales performance (β = .18, $p < .01$). The number of accounts a salesperson is responsible for in his or her territory is also a highly significant (β = .31, $p < .01$) predictor of sales performance. The typical account sizes for each salesperson, which may be viewed as an indication of market potential, was found to be marginally significant (β = .13, $p < .10$). Finally, sales performance was lower among Canadian salespeople (β = -.32, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis Testing

In order to test the study hypotheses, two models were specified and tested (Reinartz et al. 2009). The first model (model 1) is a linear effects model, which acts as the baseline model that does not include the interactions. This allows the opportunity to examine the linear relationships proposed. The second model (model 2) includes the interactive effects and

constitutes the hypothesized model. More specifically, in addition to the linear relationships in model 1, interaction terms are created (by multiplying the standardized scores of the linear terms) to test the paths for nurture-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting effectiveness, nurture-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting efficiency, closure-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting effectiveness, and closure-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting efficiency. Table 21 offers the results of the structural equation analyses including both the linear-effects model and the hypothesized model.

It is important to emphasize that PLS looks to maximize the explained variance for the dependent variables and is unlike other structural equation modeling approaches in this regard (Hair et al. 2011). That is, interpretation of PLS results does not involve direct examination of goodness-of-fit measures (e.g., χ^2, RMSEA, CFI). Instead, the structural model is assessed through the regression weights and t-statistics for each path, as well as R^2, in order to determine predictive significance (Chin 2010). Accordingly, paths with a t-statistic equal to or greater than 1.96 (equivalent to a p-value of .05) are considered to be significant. In order to test the hypotheses and determine significance, Chin (1998) suggests using bootstrapping as the resampling procedure (500 runs) to estimate the sampling distribution of a statistic.

Hypothesis 1 stated that nurture-focused persistence has a positive relationship with prospecting effectiveness, such that the more a salesperson enacts nurture-focused persistence tactics the higher their prospecting effectiveness. Results indicate that there is a positive significant relationship between nurture-focused persistence and prospecting effectiveness (β = .18, $p < .05$) lending support for H1. This implies that salespeople that enact more nurture-focused persistence tactics have increased levels of prospecting effectiveness.

Hypothesis 2 mentioned that nurture-focused persistence has a negative relationship with

Table 21 - Results of Structural Equation Analyses

Hypothesized Path	*Standardized Estimate*				Conclusion
	Linear-effects Model		**Hypothesized Model**		
	β	t-value	β	t-value	
Prospecting Effectiveness					
H1: Nurture-focused persistence → prospecting effectiveness	.18	1.96*	.18	2.00*	Supported
H3: Closure-focused persistence → prospecting effectiveness	.08	.91	.06	.69	Not supported
H7: Nurture-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	.01	.11	Not supported
H9: Closure-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-.02	.22	Not supported
Prospecting Efficiency					
H2: Nurture-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency	.27	2.79**	.27	3.09**	Opposite direction
H4: Closure-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency	-.03	.29	-.04	.58	Not supported
H8: Nurture-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-.00	.07	Not supported
H10: Closure-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-.02	.21	Not supported
Sales Performance					
H5: Prospecting effectiveness → sales performance	-.08	.95	-.08	.91	Not supported
H6: Prospecting efficiency → sales performance	.20	2.34*	.20	2.30*	Supported

* Path is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed) ** Path is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

prospecting efficiency, such that the more a salesperson enacts nurture-focused persistence tactics the lower their prospecting efficiency. Findings show that there is a positive significant relationship between nurture-focused persistence and prospecting efficiency ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$). Therefore, H2 is not supported. However, there is statistical support for the relationship between nurture-focused persistence and prospecting efficiency in the opposite direction of H2. That is, salespeople that enact more nurture-focused persistence tactics have higher levels of prospecting efficiency.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that closure-focused persistence has a negative relationship with prospecting effectiveness, such that the more a salesperson enacts closure-focused persistence tactics the lower their prospecting effectiveness. Results reveal that there is a non-significant relationship between closure-focused persistence and prospecting effectiveness ($\beta = .06$, $p > .10$). Hence, H3 is not supported.

Hypothesis 4 posited that closure-focused persistence has a positive relationship with prospecting efficiency, such that the more a salesperson enacts closure-focused persistence tactics the lower their prospecting efficiency. Results indicate that there is a non-significant relationship between closure-focused persistence and prospecting efficiency ($\beta = -.04$, $p > .10$). Thus, H4 is not supported.

Hypothesis 5 postulated that prospecting effectiveness has a positive relationship with sales performance. Results disclose that there is a non-significant relationship between prospecting effectiveness and sales performance ($\beta = -.07$, $p > .10$). Therefore, H5 is not supported.

Hypothesis 6 suggested that prospecting efficiency has a positive relationship with sales performance. Results demonstrate that there is a positive significant relationship between

prospecting efficiency and sales performance (β = .20, $p < .05$) providing support for H6. Thus, it can be inferred that sales people with higher levels of prospecting efficiency experience increased sales performance.

Hypothesis 7 through hypothesis 10 explored the moderating effect of political skill. Specifically, hypothesis 7 claimed that political skill positively moderates the relationship between nurture-focused persistence and prospecting effectiveness, or alternatively, the positive relationship between nurture-focused persistence and prospecting effectiveness increases as political skill increases. The results indicate that there is a non-significant interaction (β = .01, $p > .10$) providing no support for H7. Hypothesis 8 stated that political skill positively moderates the relationship between nurture-focused persistence and prospecting efficiency. The results reveal that there is a non-significant interaction (β = -.00, $p > .10$) providing no support for H8. Hypothesis 9 posited that political skill positively moderates the relationship between closure-focused persistence and prospecting effectiveness. Findings show that there is a non-significant interaction (β = -.02, $p > .10$) offering no support for H9. Finally, hypothesis 10 indicated that political skill positively moderates the relationship between closure-focused persistence and prospecting efficiency. Findings indicate that there is a non-significant interaction (β = -.02, $p > .10$). In sum, the results provide no statistical support for any moderating effects posited by H7 through H10.

Post-Hoc Analyses

In addition to testing the main hypotheses of the dissertation, post-hoc analyses were conducted in order to test for any additional significant paths not hypothesized. Specifically, direct effects from nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused on sales performance were entered into the hypothesized model. Moreover, a model with an alternative position for political

skill was examined. That is, post-hoc analysis was undertaken to assess the moderating effect of political skill on the direct relationships between 1) prospecting effectiveness and sales performance and 2) prospecting efficiency and sales performance. Post-hoc analyses were also run in order to explore the moderating effects of the specific dimensions of political skill – namely, social astuteness, interpersonal influence, apparent sincerity, and networking ability – in the hypothesized model. The different post-hoc analyses are discussed next.

Direct Effects Model

In addition to the hypothesized model and in order to test the direct effects from nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence to sales performance, two separate models were estimated and compared (Reinartz et al. 2009). The first model (model 1) was used to establish a baseline model and does not include any interactions. The second model (model 2) incorporates the direct effects, interactive effects, and the remaining paths in the hypothesized model. Table 22 offers the results of the post-hoc analyses.

The results of this analyses reveals that there is continued support for H1 (nurture-focused support persistence → prospecting effectiveness) and H5 (prospecting effectiveness → sales performance). While there is no direct support for H2, the results show that there is support for the opposite direction (positive relationship between nurture-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency). With regards to direct effects, the results show that there is no significant support for the relationship between nurture-focused persistence and sales performance ($\beta = -.00$, $p > .10$). The results also reveal that there is no significant relationship between closure-focused persistence and sales performance ($\beta = .03$, $p > .10$).

Table 22 - Results of Post-Hoc Analyses

Hypothesized Path	*Standardized Estimate*							
	Model 1: Direct Effects (Baseline)		**Model 2: Direct Effects**		**Model 3: Alternative Interaction (Baseline)**		**Model 4: Alternative Interaction**	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Prospecting Effectiveness								
H1: Nurture-focused persistence → prospecting effectiveness	.18	2.00*	.18	2.02*	.21	2.16*	.21	2.17*
H3: Closure-focused persistence → prospecting effectiveness	.06	.73	.06	.74	.12	1.42	.12	1.46
H7: Nurture-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	.01	.12	-	-	-	-
H9: Closure-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-.02	.24	-	-	-	-
Prospecting Efficiency								
H2: Nurture-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency	.28	3.29**	.27	3.00**	.29	3.50**	.29	3.22**
H4: Closure-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency	-.04	.52	-.04	.57	-.01	-.07	-.01	.07
H8: Nurture-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-.00	.07	-	-	-	-
H10: Closure-focused persistence x political skill → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-.02	.21	-	-	-	-
Sales Performance								
H5: Prospecting effectiveness → sales performance	-.09	1.00	-.09	.94	-.08	.91	-.08	.85
H6: Prospecting efficiency → sales performance	.20	2.35*	.20	2.33*	.20	2.24*	.20	2.11*
(Additional path) Nurture-focused persistence → sales performance	-.00	.00	-.00	.01	-	-	-	-
(Additional path) Closure-focused persistence → sales performance	.03	.39	.03	.37	-	-	-	-
(Additional path) Prospecting effectiveness x political skill → sales performance	-	-	-	-	-	-	.02	.25
(Additional path) Prospecting efficiency x political skill → sales performance	-	-	-	-	-	-	.05	.55

* Path is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed) ** Path is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Alternate Interaction: Political Skill x Salesperson Productivity

An alternative to the hypothesized model that looked at the interaction between political skill and salesperson productivity (prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency) was also examined. This analysis involved developing and comparing two models (Reinartz et al. 2009). The first model (model 3) involved the main-effects model and was used to create a baseline model. The second model (model 4) adds the interactive effects. Table 22 offers the results of the post-hoc analyses.

The results indicate that there is sustained support for H1 (nurture-focused support persistence → prospecting effectiveness) and H5 (prospecting effectiveness → sales performance). While there is no direct support for H2, the results show that there is support for the opposite direction (positive relationship between nurture-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency). However, there is no support for an interaction for prospecting effectiveness political skill → sales performance ($\beta = .02$, $p > .10$). There is also no significant support for an interaction for prospecting efficiency x political skill → sales performance ($\beta = .05$, $p > .10$).

Political Skill Dimensions

The four dimensions of political skill (social astuteness, interpersonal influence, apparent sincerity, and networking ability) were also individually explored to determine if any one facet of political skill behaved as a moderator in the hypothesized model. In order to examine these effects, eight separate (two for each dimension of political skill) models were estimated. For each dimension of political skill, a pair of models was used to directly look at the moderating effect on the paths between persistence approaches (nurture-focused and closure-focused) persistence → sales productivity (prospecting effectiveness and prospecting efficiency). The first model was used to establish a baseline model and did not include any of the interactions. The second model

took into account the interactive effects and allowed for a comparison with the baseline model. Table 23 presents the results of the analyses.

The results indicate that there is additional support for H1 (nurture-focused support persistence → prospecting effectiveness) and H5 (prospecting effectiveness → sales performance). While no direct evidence for H2 is found, the results demonstrate that there is support for the opposite direction (positive relationship between nurture-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency). With regards to the individual components of political skill, the results do not provide any statistical support for any interactive effects ($p > .10$).

Table 23 - Results of Post-Hoc Analyses (Political Skill Dimensions)

Path	*Standardized Estimate*															
	Social Astuteness Model (Baseline)		**Social Astuteness Model**		**Interpersonal Influence Model (Baseline)**		**Interpersonal Influence Model**		**Apparent Sincerity Model (Baseline)**		**Apparent Sincerity Model**		**Networking Ability Model (Baseline)**		**Networking Ability Model**	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Prospecting Effectiveness																
Nurture-focused persistence → prospecting effectiveness	.20	2.15*	.19	2.02*	.18	2.02*	.19	1.98*	.19	1.98*	.20	2.06*	.20	2.20*	.20	2.26*
Closure-focused persistence → prospecting effectiveness	.09	1.05	.08	.88	.09	1.01	.09	1.16	.10	1.18	.09	1.14	.07	.79	.07	.85
Prospecting Efficiency																
Nurture-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency	.29	3.36**	.28	3.34**	.27	3.16**	.27	3.01	.27	3.10**	.29	3.13**	.28	3.08**	.28	3.25**
Closure-focused persistence → prospecting efficiency	-.01	.09	-.02	.20	-.03	.35	-.03	.32	-.02	.22	-.03	.36	-.05	.70	-.05	.68
Sales Performance																
Prospecting effectiveness → sales performance	-.08	.89	-.08	.94	-.09	1.00	-.09	1.06	-.08	.97	-.08	.94	-.08	.911	-.08	.90
Prospecting efficiency → sales performance	.20	2.30*	.20	2.29*	.20	2.17*	.20	2.35*	.20	2.41	.20	2.26*	.20	2.20*	.20	2.19*

Table 23 - Continued

Path	*Standardized Estimate*															
	Social Astuteness Model (Baseline)		**Social Astuteness Model**		**Interpersonal Influence Model (Baseline)**		**Interpersonal Influence Model**		**Apparent Sincerity Model (Baseline)**		**Apparent Sincerity Model**		**Networking Ability Model (Baseline)**		**Networking Ability Model**	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Interactions																
Social Astuteness																
Nurture-focused persistence x social astuteness → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-.01	.15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closure-focused persistence x social astuteness → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-.02	.27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nurture-focused persistence x social astuteness → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-.00	.10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closure-focused persistence x social astuteness → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-.04	.49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal Influence	-	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nurture-focused persistence x Interpersonal influence → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	.01	.14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 23 - Continued

Path	*Standardized Estimate*															
	Social Astuteness Model (Baseline)		**Social Astuteness Model**		**Interpersonal Influence Model (Baseline)**		**Interpersonal Influence Model**		**Apparent Sincerity Model (Baseline)**		**Apparent Sincerity Model**		**Networking Ability Model (Baseline)**		**Networking Ability Model**	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Closure-focused persistence x Interpersonal influence → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	.06	.76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nurture-focused persistence x interpersonal influence → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.01	.09	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closure-focused persistence x interpersonal influence → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	-	.02	.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Apparent Sincerity																
Nurture-focused persistence x Apparent sincerity → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.04	.37	-	-	-	-
Closure-focused persistence x Apparent sincerity → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.02	.20	-	-	-	-

Table 23 - Continued

Path	*Standardized Estimate*															
	Social Astuteness Model (Baseline)		**Social Astuteness Model**		**Interpersonal Influence Model (Baseline)**		**Interpersonal Influence Model**		**Apparent Sincerity Model (Baseline)**		**Apparent Sincerity Model**		**Networking Ability Model (Baseline)**		**Networking Ability Model**	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Nurture-focused persistence x Apparent sincerity → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.04	.40	-	-	-	-
Closure-focused persistence x apparent sincerity → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.07	.76	-	-	-	-
Networking Ability																
Nurture-focused persistence x Networking ability → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.07	.74
Closure-focused persistence x Networking ability → prospecting effectiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.06	.65
Nurture-focused persistence x Networking ability → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.01	.08

Table 23 - Continued

Path	*Standardized Estimate*															
	Social Astuteness Model (Baseline)		**Social Astuteness Model**		**Interpersonal Influence Model (Baseline)**		**Interpersonal Influence Model**		**Apparent Sincerity Model (Baseline)**		**Apparent Sincerity Model**		**Networking Ability Model (Baseline)**		**Networking Ability Model**	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Closure-focused persistence x Networking ability → prospecting efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.02	.22

* Path is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed) ** Path is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

CHAPTER SIX – DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS

This chapter offers a discussion on the findings discovered in the dissertation. In particular, links are made to existing literature and theory. Additionally, plausible explanations are provided for unexpected results. After the discussion of the findings, both theoretical and managerial implications are presented, limitations of the dissertation are mentioned, and avenues for future research are suggested. The chapter ends with a conclusion statement intended to offer a final perspective on this research.

Discussion

The ultimate goal of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of persistence in a sales context. As such, this dissertation began by seeking to explore the role of persistence in sales, and subsequently, its effects on performance. Particularly, the dissertation examined the behavioral manifestations of salesperson persistence, the effects of these behaviors on salesperson performance vis-à-vis productivity (effectiveness and efficiency), and whether persistence is contingent on salesperson abilities.

In order to address these questions, two studies were employed. The first study entailed individual interviews with thirty-one sales professionals and grounded theory techniques in order to establish different ways salespeople persist. The second study consisted of a field survey combined with archival data in order to directly examine and test the study hypotheses that revolved around the effects of sales persistence approaches on sales productivity, and, ultimately sales performance, as well as the moderating effect of political skill.

Behavioral Manifestations of Salesperson Persistence

The qualitative interviews and resulting analyses reveals that persistence in sales may be categorized as a social influence process (Jones 1990; Levy et al. 1998). This is consistent with past research on social influence theory, where it is posited that all interpersonal relationships involve some form of social influence that is characterized by an "infinite cycle" of communication between people who are seeking to influence each other (Barrick et al. 2009; Cialdini and Trost 1998). This finding also elaborates on extant research on persistence, which has mainly considered goal theory to explain and describe why individuals persist (Locke and Latham 2006). Thus, it can be inferred that salespeople enact persistence behaviors as a means to elicit desired responses. The findings suggest that salespeople will use persistence to gain commitment from hesitant prospects or to uncover true prospect intentions. To the extent that this is true, persistence can be viewed as a social persuasion process that consists of salespeople trying to convince and persuade hesitant prospects to explicitly articulate their true motives.

The findings from the interviews also reveal that there is more than one way for salespeople to persist – nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence – when dealing with hesitant prospects. Within each of these approaches, salespeople may enact distinct persistence tactics. On the one hand, nurture-focused persistence is concerned with behaviors that are aimed at preserving the prospect and opportunity, and consists of maintain contact, value-adding follow-up, and give them space as tactics. These tactics are predicated on behaviors that are aimed at laying the foundation for future exchange. More so, this approach involves taking more of long-term orientation with prospects, while also being more passive and less obtrusive in hopes of remaining "top of mind." On the other hand, closure-focused persistence takes into account behaviors that are designed to bring the sales process to a conclusion, which

includes probe resistance, reframe offer, attempt close, and threaten break-up as specific tactics. Under this approach, salespeople are primarily concerned with receiving an explicit response from the prospect, whether it is a commitment or a definitive "no."

The findings of different persistence approaches are most consistent with, and may be linked to, a particular niche of research on social influence. Specifically, research in social influence theory has identified two separate strategies that individuals use when they face resistance (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Fennis and Stel 2011; Knowles and Linn 2004). Alpha strategies are predicated on approach forces and rely on persuasion in order to make the influence attempt more attractive. For example, a salesperson may use additional incentives to entice hesitant prospects. Meanwhile, omega strategies consist of avoidance forces that are aimed at reducing the target's motivation to move away from the goal through cooperation and collaboration. Here, a salesperson may sidestep resistance and indirectly address it by maintaining contact with the prospect without explicitly asking or referencing the offer. In this way, closure-focused persistence is viewed as an alpha strategy, while nurture-focused persistence is considered to be an omega strategy. These findings are also consistent with research in sales, which has found that salespeople use different influence styles to persuade customers (McFarland et al. 2006; Plouffe et al. 2014; Spiro and Perreault 1979). In sum, it was found that the behavioral manifestations of salesperson persistence consist of two complimentary approaches, with each one containing a set of individual tactics.

Nurture-Focused Persistence and Prospecting Productivity

Two of the study hypotheses considered the direct effect of nurture-focused persistence on two components of prospecting productivity, namely, effectiveness and efficiency. These posited that there is a countervailing effect, where nurture-focused persistence has a positive

relationship on prospecting effectiveness (H1) and a negative relationship on prospecting efficiency (H2).

Strong support was found for H1, which indicates that a salesperson enacting nurture-focused persistence may experience increased success in generating new business for the firm. This finding is consistent with existing research in relationship marketing, which has suggested that salespeople who adopt a relational approach, as opposed to a transactional approach, tend to gain a competitive advantage by creating value for customers (Autry, Williams, and Moncrief 2013; Boles et al. 2000; Luthy 2000; Paparoidamis and Guenzi 2009). Taking a cooperative and collaborative approach results in customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment (Crosby et al. 1990; Palmatier et al. 2006). In doing so, salespeople that employ nurture-focused persistence opt for a more passive and indirect form of influence as they work towards initiating and establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with hesitant prospects. The tactics associated with nurture-focused persistence (maintain contact, value-adding follow-up, and maintain space) can also be considered forms of "soft" influence tactics (Atuahene–Gima and Li 2000; Higgins, et al. 2003). Unlike "hard" tactics that use position power and authority, soft tactics involve power sharing. Thus, salespeople that use nurture-focused persistence don't appear as opportunistic (Kumar et al. 1998). Instead, they are viewed as being genuinely concerned about the prospect and non-coercive. This finding is also consistent with past research on salesperson influence tactics (McFarland et al. 2006; Plouffe et al. 2014; Spiro and Perreault 1979). According to this line of research, salespeople employ different influence styles in an attempt to persuade customers, and that ultimately, these influence tactics contribute to sales success. Notably, approaches that are perceived as being non-coercive (i.e., nurture-focused persistence in this context) have been found to have positive exchange outcomes (Payan and McFarland 2005).

While there was no direct support for H2, the results did support an effect in the opposite direction. That is, there is a strong statistically significant positive relationship between nurture-focused persistence and prospecting efficiency. In contrast to the original rationale that nurture-focused persistence encourages over-investment in prospects that may never provide a return, the findings suggest that salespeople enacting nurture-focused persistence are actually quite efficient. That is, salespeople are quite proficient in managing and minimizing the resources needed to close on a prospect. This may be the result of salespeople "working smarter, not harder" as is suggested in the literature (Sujan 1986; Sujan et al. 1994; Sujan, Weitz, and Sujan 1988). One of the main premises of this research is that salesforce productivity is enhanced when salespeople work smarter during and across interactions with customers. In particular, salespeople use adaptive selling in order to better understand and gauge the prospect. An underlying assumption in adaptive selling is the salesperson's ability to recognize and interpret both customer verbal and nonverbal behavior (Byron et al. 2007). That is, by doing so, salespeople are able to determine whether they need to invest more or less resources in pursuing a hesitant prospect.

If the essence of nurture-focused persistence is to lay the foundation for a future exchange, or establish a relationship with a prospect, a salesperson will want to avoid overstepping their bounds and overcommitting to a prospect in hopes of not disturbing the possibility of future exchange. Similarly, adaptive selling aims to bolster the relationship between the salesperson and the customer and is best utilized when customers are diverse with ever-changing needs (Giacobbe et al. 2006; Román and Iacobucci 2010). If this indeed is the case, it may suggest that salespeople that enact nurture-focused persistence exhibit high levels of

adaptive selling during their persistence efforts, which may explain why salespeople are efficient in how they utilize their resources.

Another possible explanation is that salespeople who are nurture-focused are accepting of ambiguity and thus do not feel the need to overcommit resources on any one prospect in order to obtain immediate closure (i.e., gain commitment or uncover true prospect motive). Instead, they may commit the same amount of resources to each prospect in order to avoid having to commit any excess resources to any one prospect. They understand that laying the foundation for future exchange is going to take time and a steady effort. This may be even more the case in situations where there is a longer sales cycle and that the purchase decision is more complex.

Closure-Focused Persistence and Prospecting Productivity

Complimentary to the impact of nurture-focused persistence on prospecting productivity, the dissertation also explored the effect of closure-focused persistence on prospecting effectiveness and efficiency. In contrast to the proposed effects of nurture-focused persistence, it was postulated that closure-focused persistence has a negative relationship with prospecting effectiveness (H3) and a positive relationship with prospecting efficiency (H4). Surprisingly, and counter to social influence theory, the results show non-significant relationships implying that there is no support for these hypotheses. From this, it can only be inferred from the data that closure-focused persistence does not have any effect on prospecting productivity.

These unexpected results could be a direct consequence of the data source used. Participants reported that, on average, they spent 65% of their time making calls on active accounts, whereas they only spent 14% of their time pursuing new prospects (the remaining 21% was spent on other job tasks). From this, it may be inferred that the sponsoring firm is structured so that there is a heavy focus on key account management (Birkinshaw, Toulan, and Arnold

2001; Guenzi and Storbacka 2015; Homburg, Workman Jr., and Jensen 2002; Swoboda et al. 2012). Under this configuration, accounts that are deemed of strategic importance receive special attention, dedicated support, and additional services (e.g., customized products, dedicated sales teams), while those not classified as key accounts receive little support (Bradford et al. 2012; Salojärvi, Sainio, and Tarkiainen 2010). So, while an organization might claim that they want to grow their business through the acquisition of new customers, they may in actuality dedicate their main resources (e.g., salesforce) to calling on and managing key accounts, where the majority of their sales come from (Pardo 1997). In an industry such as flooring, neglecting to provide additional support, taking a transactional "need to know now" mentality, and enacting closure-focused persistence may not be as applicable given that prospects are seeking long term, mutually beneficial, and collaborative relationships (Ryals and Humphries 2007; Tzempelikos and Gounaris 2015). As such, a consultative selling approach, which nurture-focused persistence is more attuned to, is perhaps more appropriate in this context, especially when considering the fact that there is a middleman between the selling organization and the end user of the product. This would imply that more time is required to establish and nurture a relationship in order to lay the foundation for future exchange and that a salesperson should be less aggressive in an attempt to gain commitment or to unmask true motives when they persist with prospects in such an industry.

Another possible explanation for why closure-focused persistence does not have any effect on prospecting productivity is that the salesperson's need for closure (Bélanger et al. 2016; Kruglanski and Webster 1996; Lalwani 2009) may inhibit additional value-related behaviors that are necessary for sales success. This is consistent with research that has shown that the need for closure has a varying impact on interpersonal phenomenon (for a review, see Kruglanski 2004).

Considering that closure-focused persistence is predicated on bringing the sales process to a conclusion, it is only appropriate that the need for closure describes a motivation where an individual has a "desire for a definitive answer on some topic, any answer as opposed to confusion and ambiguity" (Kruglanski 1989, p. 14). As such, it is reasonable to assume that salespeople employing closure-focused persistence strategies become so fixated on obtaining an immediate answer from hesitant prospects, without any concern for the future, that they neglect other important value-related behaviors that are necessary for sales success. For example, Terho et al. (2012) propose that value-based selling behavior consists of adaptive selling, agility selling, consultative selling, customer-oriented selling, partnering oriented behaviors, and relationship selling. Under this presumption, it is likely that closure-focused persistence completely halts a salesperson from undertaking some of these behaviors. As another example, Boles, Barksdale, and Johnson (1996) provide a customer perspective on what customers seek in salespeople. The top two categories they identify are long-term perspective and honesty. Conversely, salesperson failure has been linked to poor listening skills, failure to focus on top priorities, a lack of sufficiency effort, and an inability to determine customer needs (Ingram, Schwepker Jr., and Hutson 1992; Virtanen, Parvinen, and Rollins 2015).

Given that the nature of closure-focused persistence may or may not capture some these elements, as well as being aggressive, "inward-looking," and short-term focused, it would appear that this approach would nullify the potential for success. Thus, salespeople that use closure-focused persistence may be perceived by prospects as not providing any value as they are thought to be self-centered resulting in poor customer satisfaction and ultimately pushing customers away. In this way, it is quite possible that closure-focused persistence "cancels" out any potential opportunity associated with a particular prospect.

It is also possible that closure-focused persistence didn't influence salesperson productivity in this context because of high levels of customer-company identification in this industry (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Gruen 2005; Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Haumann et al. 2014; Homburg, Wieseke, and Hoyer 2009). Prospects may have a feeling of connection or sense of belonging with another company (Mael and Ashforth 1992), making them more immune to closure-focused persistence. Customer-company identification leads to company loyalty, company promotion, customer recruitment, resilience to negative information, and strong claim on the company (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Elbedweihy et al. 2016; Hibbard et al. 2001). It is possible that prospects in the hardwood industry exude high levels of loyalty and really require due diligence and strong relationship building before considering a switch to another provider. Customer-company identification is prevalent under certain context characteristics, such as importance of company offering to the customer, distinctiveness of comparison set, frequency of customer company interaction, and the frequency of product usage (Ahearne et al. 2005).

To the extent that this is true, it could imply that prospects are not as readily available to switch providers and a closure-focused persistence approach is unsuitable because these customers are looking for a relationships or partnership with a firm, which a closure-focused approach does not lend itself well to. That is, a closure-focused approach does not allow a salesperson to truly penetrate the deep and committed relationship that customers may have with other competitors. The challenge is also apparent in the fact that salespeople have difficulty in attracting highly identified customers, where defection rates are low and barriers are high (Haumann et al. 2014).

Prospecting Productivity and Sales Performance

At the backend of the model, two hypotheses revolved around the impact of prospecting productivity and sales performance. These speculated that there is a positive relationship between productivity and sales performance. More explicitly, it was projected that prospecting effectiveness has a positive relationship on sales performance (H5) and that prospecting efficiency has a positive relationship on sales performance (H6). While the data did not support H5, the results provide strong support for H6 indicating that only prospecting efficiency contributes to salesperson performance.

There are a couple of possible of explanations for why no relationship was found between prospecting effectiveness and sales performance, both predicated on the notion of salesperson time allocation (Bommer, O'Neil, and Sethna 1994; Jaramillo, Mulki, and Locander 2006; Weeks and Kahle 1990). In industries that are characterized by longer sales cycles and the formation of relationships, it can be assumed that prospecting effectiveness, or the extent to which a salesperson has succeeded in generating new business, is time and resource-laden. That is, in order for a salesperson to be successful in converting prospects, they have to be willing to commit a certain amount of time and resources in order to develop and maintain relationships with these prospects. Consistent with resource allocation theory, resources are considered scarce and there exists a limitation in how they are used, which impacts different parts of a work role (Hockey 1997; Schmidt and Dolis 2009). This implies that salespeople have restricted resources (e.g., time) that they are tasked with allocating to different aspects of their job, such as what prospect to call on and which one to pass on. So, salespeople have opportunity costs that they constantly juggle (Beuk et al. 2014). Even employees with great time management skills are faced with a constant trade-off (Claessens et al. 2007; Macan 1994; Rapp, Bachrach, and Rapp

2013). Along these lines, salespeople with high levels of prospecting effectiveness had to take resources (i.e., time) that could have been used elsewhere in order to close particular prospects. This could be to the detriment of other potential viable prospects, which may have actually been greater opportunities for larger sales. Here, the salesperson may inadvertently misallocate his or her time to prospects that are not as fruitful, while neglecting prospects that are more worthwhile. Hence, it cannot be assumed that all prospects are created "equal" and that generating new business does not always equate to sizeable business. Another misallocation of resources by the salesperson occurs when he or she over emphasizes prospects at the expense of existing customers. In this scenario, salespeople dedicate more of their time to new prospects when they should have been spending more time on existing accounts, especially those that are generating significant revenue for them. Here, salespeople may miss out on opportunities within their existing account bases because they are focused on generating business through prospects instead of servicing and calling on their established accounts, where they already have an existing relationship.

The finding that prospecting efficiency is positively associated with sales performance is consistent with research that has found that higher levels of sales productivity lead to higher levels of sales performance (Ahearne et al. 2007; Zoltners et al. 2008). This would indicate that, when considering the ratios of output divided by input, salespeople that are efficient in their conversion of prospects experience greater overall sales success. Accordingly, salespeople that are able to minimize the number of resources needed to close on a prospect are able to pursue additional business opportunities. That is, salespeople that are highly resourceful are able to make more customer calls in the same amount of time as their peers (Brinkerhoff and Dressler 1990; Brown and Peterson 1994). To this end, it can be inferred that salespeople that exhibit high

levels of prospecting efficiency experience greater "returns on their investments." High levels of prospecting efficiency may also mean salespeople are not over committing resources in the pursuit of prospects and instead dedicating adequate time to servicing existing accounts which results in higher levels of customer satisfaction and additional business (Weeks and Kahle 1990). Here, salespeople are better allocating their time and resources to meaningful tasks (Cummings 2004; Johnston and Marshall 2013). They do not waste their time with unproductive activities (Brashear et al. 1997; Jaramillo et al. 2006). Instead they are very strategic, and as a result reap the benefits associated with enhanced sales performance.

Moderating Effect of Political Skill

The proposed conceptual model included moderating effects between the different persistence approaches and sales productivity, such that relationships between persistence and productivity are contingent on salesperson political skill. Broadly, it was theorized that political skill would have a positive impact on these relationships, where relationships were enhanced (in positive cases) or attenuated (in negative cases). More specifically, H7 predicted that the positive influence of nurture-focused persistence on prospecting effectiveness is stronger (weaker) when political skill is high (low). H8 stated that the negative influence of nurture-focused persistence on prospecting efficiency is weaker (stronger) when political skill is high (low). H9 postulated that the negative influence of closure-focused persistence on prospecting effectiveness is weaker (stronger) when political skill is high (low). Lastly, H10 posited that the positive influence of closure-focused persistence on prospecting efficiency is stronger (weaker) when political skill is high (low). At odds with these predictions and social influence theory, the results unexpectedly did not provide any support for any of the proposed interactions. This would imply that political skill has no effect with regards to persistence and sales productivity. The lack of support for this

could be due to the fact that salesperson persistence approaches and the associated impact on sales productivity is not a function of individual salesperson ability, and instead is contingent on external factors (e.g., products, market).

As one possible explanation for this, it is likely that effects of a salesperson's persistence efforts on productivity are contingent on the actual company they work for or the brand they represent. That is, it may instead be a function of the corporate image or corporate reputation (Brown and Dacin 1997; Fombrun and Shanley 1990). As such, prospects may instantly recognize a company that has a positive reputation, perhaps due to its culture, climate, skills, competitive position, and product offerings (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). In these instances, it is possible that the product or company reputation has significant impact as prospects may be inclined to gravitate towards these companies in order to grow their own businesses. In order to be associated with these companies, and regardless of salesperson skill, prospects may be more forgiving or receptive to salesperson persistence efforts. Here, brand image or corporate reputation might enhance the positive impact of persistence approaches, while attenuating the negative effects. For example, a salesperson that works for a well reputable organization may feel like they can enact closure-focused persistence without concern of upsetting a prospect because they are confident about the company trustworthiness (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Here, a prospect may be more forgiving of any perceived aggressiveness, as they are already satisfied with the salesperson's company and products. Likewise, a salesperson that uses nurture-focused persistence might have enhanced effects on productivity if they are part of a well-recognized organization. It is important to note that for the sample used in study two, the sponsoring organization is considered one of the top brands in the industry and has recently been

voted the number one flooring company in the three leading industry trade journals (to protect the identity of the organization, the names of these journals are not provided).

Another possible explanation for the lack of any interaction in the data takes into account market characteristics (Auh and Menguc 2005; Carbonell and Rodriguez 2006; Jaworski and Kohli 1993). In particular, the impact of salesperson persistence efforts on productivity may depend on competitive intensity, market uncertainty, and market potential. Competitive intensity, or the degree of competition in a market place, can impact salesperson behavior (Homburg, Müller, and Klarmann 2011; Schwepker Jr. 1999). It is possible that the level of competition in a market will dictate which behaviors a salesperson will enact. For instance, highly competitive markets may require a salesperson to employ nurture-focused persistence in order to preserve opportunities and foster relationships, especially where competition may be cutthroat. In contrast, markets that do not have much competition may give a salesperson more freedom to seek a definitive response from prospects through the use of closure-focused persistence.

Similarly, market uncertainty can also influence decision-making (Anderson 1985; Read et al. 2009). Salespeople that are uncertain about the future direction or stability of their markets might be inclined to adopt closure-focused persistence as they have a short-term orientation. Meanwhile, salespeople who are confident about the future may enact nurture-focused persistence as they know that their company or product will be available and in demand. In a similar vein, market potential can also have an effect on a salespersons selection of persistence behaviors (Lucas Jr., Weinberg, and Clowes 1975). Salespeople who perceive many opportunities in the marketplace may be more likely to use closure-focused persistence, whereas those who perceive few may rely on nurture-focused persistence. This line of thought is also consistent with research that has considered salesperson territory characteristics as being

potential drivers of success (Babakus et al. 1999; Pilling, Donthu, and Henson 1999; Raju and Srinivasan 1996).

Implications

Theoretical

This research makes several key contributions to the literature and to theory. The main contribution of this dissertation is that it introduces the notion of persistence in a sales context, where persistence is considered to be a key success factor. Up to this point, persistence in sales has been virtually unexamined. In fact, there is only one empirical study that has even considered persistence (Avila and Fern 1986). However, this particular study used the label of tenacity for persistence, treating it as a personality trait, and found mixed results. Respectively, this dissertation really takes a step towards understanding the meaning of persistence in this important domain by taking a behavioral approach. In order to do so, qualitative and quantitative approaches were undertaken. The use of qualitative research specified a first-hand perspective and "thick descriptions" on the meaning and behavioral manifestations of persistence (Geertz 1973). Additionally, a survey-based study provided quantifiable evidence of various relationships between salesperson persistence approaches and prospecting productivity, ultimately impacting sales performance.

Another contribution is that this research offers insight into the complex nature of persistence and demonstrates how persistence impacts salesperson performance. More specifically, this research identifies two complementary persistence approaches (i.e., nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence) as the critical behaviors that have different effects on salesperson productivity. The dissertation suggests that nurture-focused persistence is

more likely to have positive effects on both prospecting effectiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, this contributes directly to the broad body of research on the positive consequences of persistence (e.g., Fischer et al. 2007; Gal and McShane 2012; Bowles and Flynn 2010; Patel and Thatcher 2014) by providing specific instances where persistence may impact performance in interpersonal interactions.

The dissertation also contributes directly to social influence theory (Jones 1990; Levy et al. 1998). Specifically, the notion of nurture-focused persistence and closure-focused persistence adds to the underexplored aspects of social influence theory that focuses on the influence strategies (i.e., alpha and omega strategies) that individuals use in the face of resistance (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Fennis and Stel 2011; Knowles and Linn 2004). This study expands on the understanding of these strategies by providing additional insights about their roles. Furthermore, unlike past research, this dissertation takes into consideration both strategies and empirically juxtaposes them. So, within certain contexts, it is likely that a particular influence strategy (i.e., omega) is more predictive of individual performance.

This study also contributes to the literature stream on sales influence by advancing a set of sales-specific persistence tactics that complement existing, channel-based influence tactics explored in prior sales research (Brown 1990; Chakrabarty et al. 2010; McFarland et al. 2006; Plouffe et al. 2014; Spiro and Perreault 1979). Notably, this research directly responds to the statement by Plouffe et al. (2014) that "there is no real theory to suggest which tactics salespeople are likely to use to create certain styles or how salespeople differ in their ability to effectively use tactics" (p. 144). The notion of two distinct persistence approaches – nurture-focused and closure-focused – and their respective tactics (e.g., maintain contact, probe resistance) provide detail regarding how different salespeople may go about influence tactics.

Finally, this research contributes to the scant literature on political skill in sales (Blickle et al. 2011a; Blickle et al. 2010a; Blickle et al. 2010b; Bolander et al. 2015). This dissertation considers political skill as an important individual salesperson ability that may shape the effectiveness of their persistence efforts. Within a particular industry and context, it may be likely that political skill may not actually have the positive consequences that it has been widely shown to have (Bing et al. 2011; Ferris et al. 2008; Gentry et al. 2012; Munyon et al. 2015). Accordingly, researchers may want to control and take into account important contextual characteristics when considering the role of political skill.

Managerial

This research offers managers with several key insights and prescriptions with regards to training, coaching, and advising of their salesforce. One of the main insights that emerged from this study is that there is more than one way for salespeople to persist, and managers should be cognizant of these approaches. While salespeople are generally advised to "persist," they may not always be given clear direction in what this entails. When you consider that persistence may have different connotations to different managers and salespeople, it is reasonable to assume that they are not always on the same wavelength. Managers that are aware of the differences between nurture-focused and closure-focused persistence are in a better position to provide specific instructions to their salesforce, as they minimize any doubt or uncertainty ensuring that everyone is on the same page.

Managers can also benefit by having a keen understanding of the effects of various persistence behaviors on sales performance. This study suggests that nurture-focused persistence, which may be counterintuitive to the common perception of what persistence entails (i.e., closure-focused persistence), does a better job of predicting prospecting effectiveness and

efficiency. In fact, it is quite possible that closure-focused persistence does not even produce any results in certain situations. This would imply that managers are wise to not always push their salesforce to embark on different closure-focused persistence behaviors – probe resistance, reframe offer, attempt close, and threaten-break up. Instead of pressuring salespeople to provide regular updates on where different prospects stand, which may lure salespeople to seek closure with hesitant prospects, managers should encourage maintaining contact and value-adding follow-up in hopes of laying the foundations for future exchange. So, managers can focus on monitoring these behaviors and ensuring that salespeople are enacting them in lieu of being fixated on the status of the prospect. By doing so, managers can expect to see improved sales results.

Along these lines, managers can use insights gleaned from this research to better coach and mentor salespeople during the prospecting phase of the sales process (Corcoran 1995). To the extent that managers understand the complimentary approaches to persistence and how they impact productivity, they can develop more effective coaching strategies (e.g., Rich 1998; Shannahan, Bush, and Shannahan 2012). Here, sales coaching can be especially valuable when managers have a deep understanding of persistence and their potentially positive and negative consequences. In this way, managers can offer meaningful coaching to aid salespeople with how to respond to hesitant prospects. This also allows managers to provide custom feedback to each salesperson on a case-by-case basis. For instance, it may be appropriate in one circumstance for a salesperson to maintain contact with a prospect but not probe any resistance or attempt to close. In another circumstance, it may be more appropriate to give prospects space and not reframe the offer. Taken together, managers can use these insights to coach for success.

In a similar vein, managers can use these insights to design targeted training programs that develop and enhance certain critical persistence behaviors, while also making salient what behaviors to avoid. The findings of this research indicate that only nurture-focused persistence can have an effect on performance, so sales managers can train salespeople how to maintain contact with a prospect by not explicitly asking for an order, providing value-add follow-up, and being comfortable with providing hesitant prospects with space. For example, in order to enact value-adding follow-up behaviors, salespeople can be advised to only follow-up with prospects when they have something meaningful to provide, such as relevant press releases, invitations to upcoming trade shows, or industry-specific news. This type of training may also provide salespeople with the mechanisms (e.g., where to find industry-specific news) necessary to successfully enact nurture-focused persistence behaviors. Sales managers can also train sales people to have a long-term orientation in order to limit salespeople from focusing on optimizing short-term outcomes (Beuk et al. 2014). Other trainings that may be of relevance for managers include those associated with adaptive selling (Spiro and Weitz 1990), agility selling (Chonko and Jones 2005), consultative selling (Liu and Leach 2001), customer oriented selling (Saxe and Weitz 1982), partnering oriented behaviors (Weitz and Bradford 1999), and relationship selling (Crosby et al. 1990). Here, the main premise is on value-based selling behavior, which can contribute to laying the foundation for future exchange with hesitant prospects.

Finally, managers can use insights from this research to more effectively design compensation plans (Coughlan and Sen 1989; John and Weitz 1989; Mantrala and Raman 1990; Menguc and Barker 2003; Rubel and Prasad 2015). If managers want to promote nurture-focused persistence behaviors, it is recommended that they use compensation plans that encourage and reward these behaviors. That is, managers can build into compensation plans additional metrics

that revolve around the success of nurture-focused persistence. As an example, research has suggested incorporating customer satisfaction into salesperson incentive plans (Sharma 1997; Sharma and Sarel 1995). Managers can also use short-term incentives or bonuses to promote persistence behaviors during the different stages in the selling process, especially when salespeople are dealing with hesitant prospects. This is consistent with a recent suggestion in the literature that calls for sales managers to implement additional bonuses (e.g., cash vs. noncash incentives) during different business cycles (Madhani 2014).

Limitations and Future Research

While this study breaks new grounds in marketing and sales, it does have several noteworthy limitations. Specifically regarding the qualitative study, the major limitation is that the interviews relied on retrospective data. Participants had to reflect on past experiences and situations in order to describe the nature of persistence. It would have been more ideal to witness and speak with these participants "live and in action." Moreover, these interviews were primarily conducted by phone as opposed to face-to-face in the participants' natural setting (Morrison et al. 2012). Additionally, the participants in the study were based in the United States and worked for domestic-based organizations. Exclusively regarding the survey study, the main limitation is the use of a single firm. While this furnished the opportunity to collect rich data and obtain archival data, it does limit the ability to generalize the results (Virtanen et al. 2015). Moreover, the use of a cross-sectional survey minimizes the degree to which causal relationships can be deduced. It would have certainly been preferable to use longitudinal data here in order to better isolate the causal effects of persistence behaviors on sales productivity, and ultimately on performance. Finally, this study relied on responses only from one side of the dyad. Salespeople self-reported

the behaviors they enacted, but it would have been useful to capture the perspective of hesitant prospects and how they may perceive these behaviors. Similarly, it could be beneficial to gain ratings from sales managers on how they perceive their salespeople to persist. Indeed, this would provide a more holistic and accurate perspective on persistence in sales.

The existence of these limitations paves the way for many opportunities for future research. As previously mentioned, it would be worthwhile to truly explore the intricacies of persistence by employing ethnographic techniques (Bernard 2011; Fetterman 2010; Lincoln and Guba 1985). Here, the use of participant observation would provide the opportunity to witness the persistence behaviors that salespeople enact. This would also allow the researcher to experience the reactions by prospects first-hand, truly gauging the effects. Future research can also explore the role of national culture on persistence by incorporating participants from other countries and ethnic backgrounds (Doney, Cannon, and Mullen 1998; Hofstede 1980; Hohenberg and Homburg 2016; Petersen, Kushwaha, and Kumar 2015). Participants in the United States might prove to have a different view on persistence than those in other countries. Considering the Hofstede cultural dimensions (https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html) – power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint – it would be fruitful to examine persistence across cultures. For example, the United States ranks high on masculinity (preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success) while Japan is much more of a femininity culture (preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life). Under this presumption, it is likely that Japanese salespeople frown on the notion of persistence and prefer alternative approaches.

There is also great opportunity for future research by examining the "other side" of the dyad. More specifically, it would be intriguing to see if there are any parallels between a salesperson's perception of how they persist and how the prospect actually perceives it. A mismatch may have severe consequences. It would also be valuable to gain a better understanding of how prospects want to be influenced and what they consider to be effective persistence behaviors. While different, recent research has started to consider consumer perceptions of sales pressure (Zboja, Clark, and Haytko 2015). In this study, the authors look exclusively at consumer perceptions in a business-to-consumer context as they relate to salesperson trust and salesperson satisfaction. With regards to persistence, it would be interesting to see if there are any stark differences between business-to-business and business-to-consumer prospects. Likewise, salespeople in business-to-consumer settings may reveal a different view on persistence that is worthy of examining.

Other worthy avenues for future research involve examining boundary conditions on the relationships between persistence behaviors and prospecting productivity. For instance, prospect prioritization may enhance or attenuate the relationships (Homburg, Droll, and Totzek 2008). Considering that prioritization focuses salesperson efforts on high value prospects with high expected pay-offs, salespeople may actually experience negative effects due to a salesperson's likelihood of focusing on prospects that they deem most important. In this way, salespeople may inhibit the positive effects of persistence behaviors on productivity, while further exacerbating the negative consequences of persistence behaviors on productivity. Other potential boundary conditions revolve around the role of the sales manager and the levers they may use. For instance, leader-member exchange (LMX), or the quality of the relationship that exists between a salesperson and his or her supervisor, may moderate the relationships between persistence

behaviors and productivity such that high levels of LMX may actually positively enhance this relationship (Gerstner and Day 1997). This may be a result of a salesperson being really comfortable with his or her supervisor and feel like they can take calculated risks without any significant repercussions. Another possible managerial factor to consider is the amount of feedback and support that a manager provides to his or her subordinates (Kemp, Borders, and Ricks 2013). Managers who do a good job of helping and developing their salespeople may result in an improved relationship between persistence behaviors and productivity. Managers may also influence this relationship with their choice of sales management control strategy (Anderson and Oliver 1987; Piercy, Cravens, and Lane 2001). For instance, the use of an outcome-based control system, which involves minimal direction, little monitoring, and straightforward objective measures of results, may have an adverse impact compared to a behavior-based control system, which is characterized by high levels of direction, considerable monitoring, and subjective methods to measure results.

Conclusion

This dissertation takes a first step towards understanding what persistence entails and the complexities associated with it in a sales context. When dealing with hesitant prospects, findings in this research indicates that persistence involves a social influence process where salespeople are trying to either gain commitment or unmask motives. Accordingly, there are two distinct ways salespeople persist, namely nurture-closured and closure-focused persistence. Within each of these general approaches, salespeople utilize separate tactics in order to meet their objectives. This dissertation also demonstrates the effects of persistence behaviors on prospecting productivity, and, ultimately, sales performance. While the results did not fully work out as

predicted by social influence theory, they do suggest that only nurture-focused persistence has a direct impact on productivity. Additionally, prospecting effectiveness does not have an effect on sales performance, whereas prospecting efficiency has a strong positive impact insinuating that nurture-focused persistence has an effect on sales performance through prospecting efficiency. The dissertation also considered political skill as the "how" of influence that moderates the relationships between persistence behaviors and prospecting productivity. However, counter to theory, the results did not reveal any significant interactions indicating that the effects of persistence are not contingent on salesperson abilities.

Notwithstanding the results of this study, there still remain plenty of unexplored gaps towards fully understanding persistence in sales. Although research has been essentially neglectful of this very important phenomenon up to this point, perhaps due to a misconception about the simplicity of the notion of persistence, it is hopeful that this research has provided a springboard and blazed a trail for further studies on salesperson persistence.

REFERENCES

Ahearne, Michael, Thomas W. Gruen, and Cheryl B. Jarvis (1999), "If Looks Could Sell: Moderation and Mediation of the Attractiveness Effect on Salesperson Performance," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 16 (4), 269-84.

----, Douglas E. Hughes, and Niels Schillewaert (2007), "Why Sales Reps Should Welcome Information Technology: Measuring the Impact of CRM-Based IT on Sales Effectiveness," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 24 (4), 336-49.

----, Ronald Jelinek, and Adam Rapp (2005), "Moving Beyond the Direct Effect of SFA Adoption on Salesperson Performance: Training and Support as Key Moderating Factors," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34 (4), 379-88.

----, Chitrabhan B. Bhattacharya, and Thomas Gruen (2005), "Antecedents and Consequences of Customer-Company Identification: Expanding the Role of Relationship Marketing," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90 (3), 574-85.

----, Scott B. MacKenzie, Philip M. Podsakoff, John E. Mathieu, and Son K. Lam (2010a), "The Role of Consensus in Sales Team Performance," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47 (June), 458-69.

----, Adam Rapp, Douglas E. Hughes, and Rupinder Jindal (2010b), "Managing Sales Force Product Perceptions and Control Systems in the Success of New Product Introductions," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47 (August), 764-76.

----, Narasimhan Srinivasan, and Luke Weinstein (2004), "Effect of Technology on Sales Performance: Progressing From Technology Acceptance to Technology Usage and Consequence," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 24 (4), 297-310.

Ahern, Nancy R., Ermalynn M. Kiehl, Mary L. Sole, and Jacqueline Byers (2006), "A Review of Instruments Measuring Resilience," *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 29 (2), 103-25.

Alderson, Kim L., A. Fitzgerald, and Ken E. Evans (2000), "The Strain Dependent Indentation Resilience of Auxetic Microporous Polyethylene," *Journal of Materials Science*, 35 (16), 4039-47.

Alfranca, Oscar, Ruth Rama, and Nicholas von Tunzelmann (2004), "Innovation Spells in the Multinational Agri-Food Sector," *Technovation*, 24 (8), 599-614.

Alvarez, Sharon A. and Lowell W. Busenitz (2001), "The Entrepreneurship of Resource-Based Theory," *Journal of Management*, 27 (6), 755-75.

Anderson, Erin (1985), "The Salesperson as Outside Agent or Employee: A Transaction Cost Analysis," *Marketing Science*, 4 (3), 234-54.

---- and Richard L. Oliver (1987), "Perspectives on Behavior-Based Versus Outcome-Based Salesforce Control Systems," *Journal of Marketing*, 51 (October), 76-88.

Anderson, James C. and David W. Gerbing (1982), "Some Methods for Respecifying Measurement Models to Obtain Unidimensional Construct Measurement," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19 (Special Issue), 453-60.

---- (1988), "Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-Step Approach," *Psychological Bulletin*, 103 (3), 411-23.

Anderson, Rolph E., Alan J. Dubinsky, and Rajiv Mehta (2007), *Personal Selling: Building Customer Relationships and Partnerships*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Andrews, Martha C., K. Michele Kacmar, and Kenneth J. Harris (2009), "Got Political Skill? The Impact of Justice on the Importance of Political Skill for Job Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94 (6), 1427-37.

Armstrong, J. Scott and Terry S. Overton (1977), "Estimating Nonresponse Bias in Mail Surveys," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14 (Special Issue), 396-402.

Arriaga, Ximena B., Jason T. Reed, Wind Goodfriend, and Christopher R. Agnew (2006), "Relationship Perceptions and Persistence: Do Fluctuations in Perceived Partner Commitment Undermine Dating Relationships?," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91 (6), 1045-65.

Åstebro, Thomas, Scott A. Jeffrey, and Gordon K. Adomdza (2007), "Inventor Perseverance After Being Told to Quit: The Role of Cognitive Biases," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 20 (3), 253-72.

Atuahene–Gima, Kwaku and Haiyang Li (2000), "Marketing's Influence Tactics in New Product Development: A Study of High Technology Firms in China," *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 17 (6), 451-70.

Audia, Pino G., Edwin A. Locke, and Ken G. Smith (2000), "The Paradox of Success: An Archival and Laboratory Study of Strategic Persistence Following Radical Environmental Change," *Academy of Management Journal*, 43 (5), 837-53.

Auh, Seigyoung and Bulent Menguc (2005), "Balancing Exploration and Exploitation: The Moderating Role of Competitive Intensity," *Journal of Business Research*, 58 (12), 1652-61.

Austin, James T. and Jeffrey B. Vancouver (1996), "Goal Constructs in Psychology: Structure, Process, and Content," *Psychological Bulletin*, 120 (3), 338-75.

Autry, Chad W., Michael R. Williams, and William C. Moncrief (2013), "Improving Professional Selling Effectiveness Through the Alignment of Buyer and Seller Exchange Approaches," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 33 (2), 165-84.

Avey, James B., Fred Luthans, and Carolyn M. Youssef (2010), "The Additive Value of Positive Psychological Capital in Predicting Work Attitudes and Behaviors," *Journal of Management*, 36 (2), 430-52.

----, Tara S. Wernsing, and Ketan H. Mhatre (2011), "A Longitudinal Analysis of Positive Psychological Constructs and Emotions on Stress, Anxiety, and Well-Being," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 1-13.

Avila, Ramon A. and Edward F. Fern (1986), "The Selling Situation as a Moderator of the Personality-Sales Performance Relationship: An Empirical Investigation," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 6 (3), 53-64.

Ayala, Juan-Carlos and Guadalupe Manzano (2014), "The Resilience of the Entrepreneur. Influence on the Success of the Business. A Longitudinal Analysis," *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 42, 126-35.

Babakus, Emin, David W. Cravens, Ken Grant, Thomas N. Ingram, and Raymond W. LaForge (1996), "Investigating the Relationships Among Sales, Management Control, Sales Territory Design, Salesperson Performance, and Sales Organization Effectiveness," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 13 (4), 345-63.

----, ----, Mark Johnston, and William C. Moncrief (1999), "The Role of Emotional Exhaustion in Sales Force Attitude and Behavior Relationships," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27 (1), 58-70.

Babin, Barry J., Joseph F. Hair, and James S. Boles (2008), "Publishing Research in Marketing Journals Using Structural Equation Modeling," *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 16 (4), 279-86.

Bagozzi, Richard P. (1980), *Causal Models in Marketing*. New York: Wiley.

---- and Utpal Dholakia (1999), "Goal Setting and Goal Striving in Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Marketing*, 63 (Special Issue), 19-32.

---- and Claes Fornell (1982), "Theoretical Concepts, Measurements, and Meaning," in *A Second Generation of Multivariate Analysis*, Claes Fornell, ed., New York: Praeger, 24-38.

---- and Youjae Yi (2012), "Specification, Evaluation, and Interpretation of Structural Equation Models," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40 (1), 8-34.

Bandura, Albert (1996), *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: Freeman.

---- (1991), "Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Regulation," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50 (2), 248-87.

---- (2001), "Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52 (1), 1-26.

Bank, Barbara J., Bruce J. Biddle, and Ricky L. Slavings (1992), "What Do Students Want? Expectations and Undergraduate Persistence," *Sociological Quarterly*, 33 (3), 321-35.

----, Ricky L. Slavings, and Bruce J. Biddle (1990), "Effects of Peer, Faculty, and Parental Influences on Students' Persistence," *Sociology of Education*, 63 (3), 208-25.

Barañano, Ilaski and M. Paz Moral (2013), "Consumption-Leisure Trade-offs and Persistency in Business Cycles," *Bulletin of Economic Research*, 65 (3), 280-98.

Barnett, Carole K. and Michael G. Pratt (2000), "From Threat-Rigidity to Flexibility: Toward a Learning Model of Autogenic Crisis in Organizations," *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13 (1), 74-88.

Barrick, Murray R., Jonathan A. Shaffer, and Sandra W. DeGrassi (2009), "What You See May Not Be What You Get: Relationships Among Self-Presentation Tactics and Ratings of Interview and Job Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94 (6), 1394-411.

Bartone, Paul T., Jarle Eid, Bjorn H. Johnsen, Jon C. Laberg, and Scott A. Snook (2009), "Big Five Personality Factors, Hardiness, and Social Judgment as Predictors of Leader Performance," *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 30 (6), 498-521.

----, Robert J. Ursano, Kathleen M. Wright, and Larry H. Ingraham (1989), "The Impact of a Military Air Disaster on the Health of Assistance Workers: A Prospective Study," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 177 (6), 317-28.

Bass, Bernard M. (1997), "Personal Selling and Transactional/Transformational Leadership," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 17 (3), 19-28.

Baum, J. Robert and Edwin A. Locke (2004), "The Relationship of Entrepreneurial Traits, Skill, and Motivation to Subsequent Venture Growth," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89 (4), 587.

----, Edwin A. Locke, and Ken G. Smith (2001), "A Multidimensional Model of Venture Growth," *Academy of Management Journal*, 44 (2), 292-303.

Baumgartner, Hans and Christian Homburg (1996), "Applications of Structural Equation Modeling in Marketing and Consumer Research: A Review," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 13 (2), 139-61.

Beasley, Margaret, Ted Thompson, and John Davidson (2003), "Resilience in Response to Life Stress: The Effects of Coping Style and Cognitive Hardiness," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 34 (1), 77-95.

Becker, Jan-Michael, Kristina Klein, and Martin Wetzels (2012), "Hierarchical Latent Variable Models in PLS-SEM: Guidelines for Using Reflective-Formative Type Models," *Long Range Planning*, 45 (5), 359-94.

Bélanger, Jocelyn J., Antonio Pierro, Barbara Barbieri, Nicola A. De Carlo, Alessandra Falco, and Arie W. Kruglanski (2016), "One Size Doesn't Fit All: The Influence of Supervisors' Power Tactics and Subordinates' Need for Cognitive Closure on Burnout and Stress," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 25 (2), 287-300.

Belderbos, René, Victor Gilsing, and Boris Lokshin (2012), "Persistence of, and Interrelation Between, Horizontal and Vertical Technology Alliances," *Journal of Management*, 38 (6), 1812-34.

Belschak, Frank, Willem Verbeke, and Richard P. Bagozzi (2006), "Coping With Sales Call Anxiety: The Role of Sale Perseverance and Task Concentration Strategies," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34 (3), 403-18.

Benhabib, Jess, Roberto Perli, and Plutarchos Sakellaris (2006), "Persistence of Business Cycles in Multisector Real Business Cycle Models," *International Journal of Economic Theory*, 2 (3/4), 181-97.

Bentzen, Jan, Erik S. Madsen, Valdemar Smith, and Mogens Dilling-Hansen (2005), "Persistence in Corporate Performance? Empirical Evidence From Panel Unit Root Tests," *Empirica*, 32 (2), 217-30.

Bernard, Harvey R. (2011), *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (5th ed.). Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Beuk, Frederik, Alan J. Malter, Jelena Spanjol, and John Cocco (2014), "Financial Incentives and Salesperson Time Orientation in New Product Launch: A Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 31 (4), 647-63.

Bhattacharya, Chitrabhan B. and Sankar Sen (2003), "Consumer-Company Identification: A Framework for Understanding Consumers' Relationships with Companies," *Journal of Marketing*, 67 (April), 76-88.

Billieux, Joël, Martial Van der Linden, Yasser Khazaal, Daniele Zullino, and Luke Clark (2012), "Trait Gambling Cognitions Predict Near-Miss Experiences and Persistence in Laboratory Slot Machine Gambling," *British Journal of Psychology*, 103 (3), 412-27.

Bing, Mark N., H. Kristl Davison, Inneka Minor, Milorad M. Novicevic, and Dwight D. Frink (2011), "The Prediction of Task and Contextual Performance by Political Skill: A Meta-Analysis and Moderator Test," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79 (2), 563-77.

Birkinshaw, Julian, Omar Toulan, and David Arnold (2001), "Global Account Management in Multinational Corporations: Theory and Evidence," *Journal of International Business Studies*, 32 (2), 231-49.

Blass, Fred R. and Gerald R. Ferris (2007), "Leader Reputation: The Role of Mentoring, Political Skill, Contextual Learning, and Adaptation," *Human Resource Management*, 46 (1), 5-19.

Blatt, Ruth (2009), "Resilience in Entrepreneurial Teams: Developing the Capacity to Pull Through," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, 29 (11), 1-14.

Blickle, Gerhard (2000), "Influence Tactics Used by Subordinates: An Empirical Analysis of the Kipnis and Schmidt Subscales," *Psychological Reports*, 86 (1), 143-54.

----, Gerald R. Ferris, Timothy P. Munyon, Tassilo Momm, Ingo Zettler, Paula B. Schneider, and M. Ronald Buckley (2011a), "A Multi-Source, Multi-Study Investigation of Job Performance Prediction by Political Skill," *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 60 (3), 449-74.

----, Julia John, Gerald R. Ferris, Tassilo Momm, Yongmei Liu, Rabea Haag, Gesine Meyer, Katharina Weber, and Katharina Oerder (2011b), "Fit of Political Skill to the Work Context: A Two-Study Investigation," *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 61 (2), 295-322.

----, Jochen Kramer, Paula B. Schneider, James A. Meurs, Gerald R. Ferris, Jan Mierke, Alexander H. Witzki, and Tassilo D. Momm (2011c), "Role of Political Skill in Job Performance Prediction Beyond General Mental Ability and Personality in Cross-Sectional and Predictive Studies," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 41 (2), 488-514.

----, Jochen Kramer, Ingo Zettler, Tassilo Momm, James K. Summers, Timothy P. Munyon, and Gerald R. Ferris (2009), "Job Demands as a Moderator of the Political Skill-Job Performance Relationship," *Career Development International*, 14 (4), 333-50.

----, James A. Meurs, Andreas Wihler, Christian Ewen, Andrea Plies, and Susann Günther (2013), "The Interactive Effects of Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, and Political Skill on Job Performance in Complex Jobs: The Importance of Context," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34 (8), 1145-64.

----, ----, Ingo Zettler, Jutta Solga, Daniela Noethen, Jochen Kramer, and Gerald R. Ferris (2008), "Personality, Political Skill, and Job Performance," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 72 (3), 377-87.

----, Katharina Oerder, and James K. Summers (2010a), "The Impact of Political Skill on Career Success of Employees' Representatives," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 77 (3), 383-90.

----, Stephanie Wendel, and Gerald R. Ferris (2010b), "Political Skill as Moderator of Personality–Job Performance Relationships in Socioanalytic Theory: Test of the Getting Ahead Motive in Automobile Sales," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76 (2), 326-35.

Block, Jack and Adam M. Kremen (1996), "IQ and Ego-Resiliency: Conceptual and Empirical Connections and Separateness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70 (2), 349-61.

Blumer, Herbert (1969), *Symbolic Interactionism*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Boh, Wai Fong and Sze-Sze Wong (2015), "Managers Versus Co-Workers as Referents: Comparing Social Influence Effects on Within- And Outside-Subsidiary Knowledge Sharing," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 126, 1-17.

Bolander, Willy, Cinthia B. Satornino, Douglas E. Hughes, and Gerald R. Ferris (2015), "Social Networks Within Sales Organizations: Their Development and Importance for Salesperson Performance," *Journal of Marketing*, 79 (November), 1-16.

Boles, James, Thomas Brashear, Danny Bellenger, and Hiram Barksdale Jr. (2000), "Relationship Selling Behaviors: Antecedents and Relationship with Performance," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 15 (2/3), 141-53.

----, Hiram C. Barksdale, and Julie T. Johnson (1996), "What National Account Decision Makers Would Tell Salespeople About Building Relationships," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 11 (2), 6-19.

Bolino, Mark C., K. Michele Kacmar, William H. Turnley, and J. Bruce Gilstrap (2008), "A Multi-Level Review of Impression Management Motives and Behaviors," *Journal of Management*, 34 (6), 1080-109.

Bollen, Kenneth A. and Walter R. Davis (2009), "Causal Indicator Models: Identification, Estimation, and Testing," *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 16 (3), 498-522.

Bommer, Michael R.W., Brian F. O'Neil, and Beheruz N. Sethna (1994), "A Methodology for Optimizing Selling Time of Salespersons," *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 2 (2), 61-75.

Bonanno, George A. (2004), "Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive After Extremely Aversive Events?," *American Psychologist*, 59 (1), 20-28.

----, Camille B. Wortman, Darrin R. Lehman, Roger G. Tweed, Michelle Haring, John Sonnega, Deborah Carr, and Randolph M. Nesse (2002), "Resilience to Loss and Chronic Grief: A Prospective Study From Preloss to 18-months Postloss," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83 (5), 1150-64.

Boorom, Michael L., Jerry R. Goolsby, and Rosemary P. Ramsey (1998), "Relational Communication Traits and Their Effect on Adaptiveness and Sales Performance," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 26 (1), 16-30.

Borders, Aberdeen L. (2006), "Customer-Initiated Influence Tactics in Sales and Marketing Activities," *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 21 (6), 361-75.

Bowles, Hannah R. and Francis Flynn (2010), "Gender and Persistence in Negotiation: A Dyadic Perspective," *Academy of Management Journal*, 53 (4), 769-87.

Boyle, Brett A. and F. Robert Dwyer (1995), "Power, Bureaucracy, Influence, and Performance: Their Relationships in Industrial Distribution Channels," *Journal of Business Research*, 32 (3), 189-200.

----, F. Robert Dwyer, Robert A. Robicheaux, and James T. Simpson (1992), "Influence Strategies in Marketing Channels: Measures and Use in Different Relationship Structures," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29 (4), 462-73.

Bradford, Kevin D., Goutam N. Challagalla, Gary K. Hunter, and William C. Moncrief III (2012), "Strategic Account Management: Conceptualizing, Integrating, and Extending the Domain from Fluid to Dedicated Accounts," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 32 (1), 41-56.

Brammer, Lawrence M. and Ginger MacDonald (2003), *The Helping Rrelationship: Process and Skills* (8th ed.). Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Brandtstädter, Jochen and Gerolf Renner (1990), "Tenacious Goal Pursuit and Flexible Goal Adjustment: Explication and Age-Related Analysis of Assimilative and Accommodative Strategies of Coping," *Psychology and Aging*, 5 (1), 58.

Brashear, Thomas G., Danny N. Bellenger, Hiram C. Barksdale, and Thomas N. Ingram (1997), "Salesperson Behavior: Antecedents and Links to Performance," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 12 (3/4), 177-84.

Brass, Daniel J. (2001), "Social Capital and Organizational Leadership," in *The Nature of Organizational Leadership: Understanding the Performance Imperatives Confronting Today's Leaders*, Stephen J. Zaccaro and Richard J. Klimoski, eds., San Francisco: Joessey-Bass, 132-52.

Brinkerhoff, Robert O. and Dennis E. Dressler (1990), *Productivity Measurement: A Guide for Managers and Evaluators*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Bromley, Dennis B. (1993), *Reputation, Image and Impression Management*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Brosky, Donald (2011), "Micropolitics in the School: Teacher Leaders' Use of Political Skill and Influence Tactics," *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 6 (1), 1-11.

Brouer, Robyn L., Rebecca Badaway, Vickie Gallagher, and Julita Haber (2015), "Political Skill Dimensionality and Impression Management Choice and Effective Use," *Journal of Business & Psychology*, 30 (2), 217-33.

----., Kenneth J. Harris, and K. Michele Kacmar (2011), "The Moderating Effects of Political Skill on the Perceived Politics–Outcome Relationships," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32 (6), 869-85.

Brower, William (2007), "Persistence and Procrastination," *Strategic Finance*, 88 (10), 6-6.

Brown, Steven P. (1990), "Use of Closed Influence Tactics by Salespeople: Incidence and Buyer Attributions," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 10 (4), 17-29.

---- and Robert A. Peterson (1994), "The Effect of Effort on Sales Performance and Job Satisfaction," *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (April), 70-80.

----, William L. Cron, and John W. Slocum Jr. (1997), "Effects of Goal-Directed Emotions on Salesperson Volitions, Behavior, and Performance: A Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Marketing*, 61 (January), 39-50.

Brown, Tom J. and Peter A. Dacin (1997), "The Company and the Product: Corporate Associations and Consumer Product Responses," *Journal of Marketing*, 61 (January), 68-84.

Bruner, Gordon C. (2003), "Combating Scale Proliferation," *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, 11 (4), 362-72.

Bullough, Amanda and Maija Renko (2013), "Entrepreneurial Resilience During Challenging Times," *Business Horizons*, 56 (3), 343-50.

----, Maija Renko, and Tamara Myatt (2014), "Danger Zone Entrepreneurs: The Importance of Resilience and Self-Efficacy for Entrepreneurial Intentions," *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 38 (3), 473-99.

Burgoon, Judee K. and Jerold L. Hale (1984), "The Fundamental Topoi of Relational Communication," *Communication Monographs*, 51 (3), 193-214.

Bush, Alan J., Victoria D. Bush, Linda M. Orr, and Richard A. Rocco (2007), "Sales Technology: Help or Hindrance to Ethical Behaviors and Productivity?," *Journal of Business Research*, 60 (11), 1198-205.

Bush, Victoria D., Gregory M. Rose, Faye Gilbert, and Thomas N. Ingram (2001), "Managing Culturally Diverse Buyer-Seller Relationships: The Role of Intercultural Disposition and Adaptive Selling in Developing Intercultural Communication Competence," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29 (4), 391-404.

Byron, Kristin, Sophia Terranova, and Stephen Nowicki (2007), "Nonverbal Emotion Recognition and Salespersons: Linking Ability to Perceived and Actual Success," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 37 (11), 2600-19.

Callister, William D. (2003), "Mechanical Properties of Metals," in *Materials Science and Engineering: An Introduction*. 6th ed., New York: John Wiley and Sons, 111-61.

Campbell, Kim S., Lenita Davis, and Lauren Skinner (2006), "Rapport Management During the Exploration Phase of the Salesperson–Customer Relationship," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 26 (4), 359-70.

Cannon, Joseph P. and William D. Perreault (1999), "Buyer-Seller Relationships in Business Markets," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36 (4), 439-60.

Carbonell, Pilar and Ana I. Rodriguez (2006), "The Impact of Market Characteristics and Innovation Speed on Perceptions of Positional Advantage and New Product Performance," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 23 (1), 1-12.

Cartwright, Dorwin (1959), *Studies in Social Power*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Research Center for Group Dynamics, Institute for Social Research.

Carver, Charles S. (1989), "How Should Multifaceted Personality Constructs Be Tested? Issues Illustrated by Self-Monitoring, Attributional Style, and Hardiness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56 (4), 577-85.

---- and Michael F. Scheier (2001), *On the Self-Regulation of Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cascio, Wayne F. (2003), "Changes in Workers, Work, and Organizations," in *Handbook of Psychology*, R.J. Klimoski and Walter C. Borman and Daniel R. Ilgen, eds., Vol. 12, Hoboken: Wiley, 401-22.

Cash, Melanie L. and Dianne Gardner (2011), "Cognitive Hardiness, Appraisal and Coping: Comparing Two Transactional Models," *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 26 (8), 646-64.

Chai, Junwu, Guangzhi Zhao, and Barry J. Babin (2012), "An Empirical Study on the Impact of Two Types of Goal Orientation and Salesperson Perceived Obsolescence on Adaptive Selling," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 32 (2), 261-73.

Chaikin, Alan L. (1971), "The Effects of Four Outcome Schedules on Persistence, Liking For the Task, and Attributions of Causality," *Journal of Personality*, 39 (4), 512-26.

Chakrabarty, Subhra, Gene Brown, and Robert E. Widing (2010), "The Effects of Perceived Customer Dependence on Salesperson Influence Strategies," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 30 (4), 327-41.

----, Diana T. Oubre, and Gene Brown (2008), "The Impact of Supervisory Adaptive Selling and Supervisory Feedback on Salesperson Performance," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 37 (4), 447-54.

Charlton, Bruce G. (2009), "Why Are Modern Scientists So Dull? How Science Selects for Perseverance and Sociability at the Expense of Intelligence and Creativity," *Medical Hypotheses*, 72 (3), 237-43.

Cheema, Amar and Rajesh Bagchi (2011), "The Effect of Goal Visualization on Goal Pursuit: Implications for Consumers and Managers," *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (March), 109-23.

Chin, Wynne W. (2010), "How to Write Up and Report PLS Analyses," in *Handbook of Partial Least Squares*, Vincenzo E. Vinzi and Wynne W. Chin and Jörg Henseler and Hai-jiang Wang, eds., Berlin: Springer, 655-90.

---- (1998), "The Partial Least Squares Approach to Structural Equation Modeling," in *Modern Methods for Business Research*, George A. Marcoulides, ed., Vol. 295-336, Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 295-336.

Chonko, Lawrence B. and Eli Jones (2005), "The Need for Speed: Agility Selling," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 25 (4), 371-82.

Chou, Chien-Hsiang, Yi-Shun Wang, and Tzung- I. Tang (2015), "Exploring the Determinants of Knowledge Adoption in Virtual Communities: A Social Influence Perspective," *International Journal of Information Management*, 35 (3), 364-76.

Christodoulou, Christopher and Jeffrey J. Rosen (1995), "Persistence: An Independent Factor of the Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire," *Psychological Reports*, 76 (3), 1307-14.

Churchill, Gilbert A. (1979), "A Paradigm for Developing Better Measures of Marketing Constructs," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16 (1), 64-73.

----, Neil M. Ford, Steven W. Hartley, and Orville C. Walker Jr. (1985), "The Determinants of Salesperson Performance: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 22 (May), 103-18.

----, Neil M. Ford, and Orville C. Walker Jr. (1990), *Sales Force Management*. Boston: Irwin Publishing.

Cialdini, Robert B. (1987), "Compliance Principles of Compliance Professionals: Psychologists of Necessity," in *Social Influence: The Ontario Symposium*, James M. Olson and Mark P. Zanne and C. Peter Herman, eds., Vol. 5, Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 165-84.

---- (2001), *Influence: Science and Practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

---- and Noah J. Goldstein (2004), "Social Influence: Compliance and Conformity," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 591-621.

---- and Melanie R. Trost (1998), "Social Influence: Social Norms, Conformity and Compliance," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Daniel T. Gilbert and Susan T. Fiske and Lindzey Gardner, eds. 4th ed., Boston: McGraw-Hill, 151-92.

Claessens, Brigitte J.C., Wendelien Van Eerde, Christel G. Rutte, and Robert A. Roe (2007), "A Review of the Time Management Literature," *Personnel Review*, 36 (2), 255-76.

Clark, Terry (1989), "Managing Outliers: Qualitative Issues in the Handling of Extreme Observations in Marketing Research," *Marketing Research*, 1 (2), 31-48.

Clarke, David E. (1972), "The Effects of Simulated Feedback and Motivation on Persistence at a Task," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 8 (3), 340-46.

Comer, Lucette B., J.A.F. Nicholls, and Leslie J. Vermillion (1998), "Diversity in the Sales Force: Problems and Challenges," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 18 (4). 1-20.

Corcoran, Kevin J. (1995), *High Performance Sales Organizations: Achieving Competitive Advantage in the Global Marketplace*. Chicago: Irwin.

Cloninger, C. Robert (2004), *Feeling Good: The Science of Well-Being*. New York: Oxford University Press.

----, Thomas R. Przybeck, Dragan M. Svrakic, and Richard D. Wetzel (1994), *The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI): A Guide to Its Development and Use*. St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Psychobiology of Personality.

----, Dragan M. Svrakic, and Thomas R. Przybeck (1993), "A Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 50 (12), 975-90.

----, Ada H. Zohar, Schmuel Hirschmann, and Dana Dahan (2011), "The Psychological Costs and Benefits of Being Highly Persistent: Personality Profiles Distinguish Mood Disorders From Anxiety Disorders," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 136 (3), 758-66.

Conlon, Edward J. (1980), "Feedback About Personal and Organizational Outcomes and Its Effect on Persistence of Planned Behavioral Changes," *Academy of Management Journal*, 23 (2), 267-86.

Connor, Kathryn M. and Jonathan R.T. Davidson (2003), "Development of a New Resilience Scale: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)," *Depression and Anxiety*, 18 (2), 76-82.

Constantin, Ticu, Andrei Holman, and Maria Ana Hojbotă (2012), "Development and Validation of a Motivational Persistence Scale," *Psihologija*, 45 (2), 99-120.

Cooper, Nelson, Cheryl A. Estes, and Lawrence Allen (2004), "Bouncing Back," *Parks & Recreation* 39 (4), 28-35.

Cope, Jason (2011), "Entrepreneurial Learning From Failure: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis," *Journal of Business Venturing*, 26 (6), 604-23.

Costa, Paul T. and Robert R. McCrae (1992), *NEO PI-R Professional Manual*. Odessa: Pyschological Assessment Resources.

Coughlan, Anne T. and Subrata K. Sen (1989), "Salesforce Compensation: Theory and Managerial Implications," *Marketing Science*, 8 (4), 324-42.

Coutu, Diane L. (2002), "How Resilience Works," *Harvard Business Review*, 80 (5), 46-56.

Cravens, David W., Thomas N. Ingram, Raymond W. LaForge, and Clifford E. Young (1993), "Behavior-Based and Outcome-Based Salesforce Control Systems," *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (October), 47-59.

Crosby, Lawrence A., Kenneth A. Evans, and Deborah Cowles (1990), "Relationship Quality in Services Selling: An Interpersonal Influence Perspective," *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (July), 68-81.

Creswell, John W. (1998), "Five Qualitative Traditions of Inquiry," in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 47-72.

---- (2013), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.

Crosby, Lawrence A., Kenneth A. Evans, and Deborah Cowles (1990), "Relationship Quality in Services Selling: An Interpersonal Influence Perspective," *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (July), 68-81.

Cullen, Kristin L., Jinyan Fan, and Cong Liu (2014), "Employee Popularity Mediates the Relationship Between Political Skill and Workplace Interpersonal Mistreatment," *Journal of Management*, 40 (6), 1760-78.

Cummings, B. (2004), "Increasing Face Time," *Sales and Marketing Management*, 6 (1), 12-13.

Cupach, William R., Brian H. Spitzberg, Colleen M. Bolingbroke, and Bobbi S. Tellitocci (2011), "Persistence of Attempts to Reconcile a Terminated Romantic Relationship: A Partial Test of Relational Goal Pursuit Theory," *Communication Reports*, 24 (2), 99-115.

Daftary-Kapur, Tarika, Steven D. Penrod, Maureen O'Connor, and Brian Wallace (2014), "Examining Pretrial Publicity in a Shadow Jury Paradigm: Issues of Slant, Quantity, Persistence and Generalizability," *Law and Human Behavior* 38 (5), 462-77.

Davis, Donna F., Susan L. Golicic, and Courtney N. Boerstler (2011), "Benefits and Challenges of Conducting Multiple Methods Research in Marketing," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39 (3), 467-79.

Davis, Keith E., April Ace, and Michelle Andra (2000), "Stalking Perpetrators and Psychological Maltreatment of Partners: Anger-Jealousy, Attachment Insecurity, Need for Control, and Break-Up Context," *Violence and Victims*, 15 (4), 407-25.

De Fruyt, Filip, Lieve Van de Wiele, and Cornelis Van Heeringen (2000), "Cloninger's Psychobiological Model of Temperament and Character and the Five-Factor Model of Personality," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 29 (3), 441-52.

Delahaij, Roos, Anthony W.K. Gaillard, and Karen van Dam (2010), "Hardiness and the Response to Stressful Situations: Investigating Mediating Processes," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 49 (5), 386-90.

DeTienne, Dawn R., Dean A. Shepherd, and Julio O. De Castro (2008), "The Fallacy of "Only the Strong Survive": The Effects of Extrinsic Motivation on the Persistence Decisions for Under-Performing Firms," *Journal of Business Venturing*, 23 (5), 528-46.

Deutsch, Morton and Harold B. Gerard (1955), "A Study of Normative and Informational Social Influences Upon Individual Judgment," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 51 (3), 629.

DeVellis, Robert F. (2012), *Scale Development: Theory and Applications* (Third ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.

Di Paula, Adam and Jennifer D. Campbell (2002), "Self-Esteem and Persistence in the Face of Failure," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83 (3), 711-24.

Diamantopoulos, Adamantios (2011), "Incorporating Formative Measures into Covariance-Based Structural Equation Models," *MIS Quarterly*, 35 (2), 335-58.

----, Petra Riefler, and Katharina P. Roth (2008), "Advancing Formative Measurement Models," *Journal of Business Research*, 61 (12), 1203-18.

---- and Judy A. Siguaw (2006), "Formative Versus Reflective Indicators in Organizational Measure Development: A Comparison and Empirical Illustration," *British Journal of Management*, 17 (4), 263-82.

---- and Heidi M. Winklhofer (2001), "Index Construction with Formative Indicators: An Alternative to Scale Development," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38 (2), 269-77.

Dietvorst, Roeland C., Willem J.M.I. Verbeke, Richard P. Bagozzi, Carolyn Yoon, Marion Smits, and A.A.D. Van Der Lugt (2009), "A Sales Force-Specific Theory-of-Mind Scale: Tests of Its Validity by Classical Methods and Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 46 (5), 653-68.

Dijkstra, Theo K (2010), "Latent Variables and Indices: Herman Wold's Basic Design and Partial Least Squares," in *Handbook of Partial Least Squares: Concepts, Methods, and Applications in Marketing and Related Fields*, Vincenzo E. Vinzi and Wynne W. Chin and Jörg Henseler and Huiwen Wang, eds., Berlin: Springer, 23-46.

DiMenichi, Brynne C. and Lauren L. Richmond (2015), "Reflecting on Past Failures Leads to Increased Perseverance and Sustained Attention," *Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 27 (2), 180-93.

Doney, Patricia M., Joseph P. Cannon, and Michael R. Mullen (1998), "Understanding the Influence of National Culture on the Development of Trust," *Academy of Management Review*, 23 (3), 601-20.

Dooley, Martin D., A. Abigail Payne, and A. Leslie Robb (2012), "Persistence and Academic Success in University," *Canadian Public Policy*, 38 (3), 315-39.

Dorsey, David W., Jose M. Cortina, and Joseph N. Luchman (2010), "Adaptive and Citizenship-Related Behaviors at Work," in *Handbook of Employee Selection*, James L. Farr and Nancy T. Tippins, eds., New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 463-87.

Dubinsky, Alan J. (1981), "A Factor Analytic Study of The Personal Selling Process," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 1 (1), 26-33.

Duckworth, Angela L., Teri A. Kirby, Eli Tsukayama, Heather Berstein, and K. Anders Ericsson (2011), "Deliberate Practice Spells Success Why Grittier Competitors Triumph at the National Spelling Bee," *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2 (2), 174-81.

----, Christopher Peterson, Michael D. Matthews, and Dennis R. Kelly (2007), "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92 (6), 1087-101.

---- and Patrick D. Quinn (2009), "Development and Validation of the Short Grit Scale (GRIT–S)," *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 91 (2), 166-74.

Dweck, Carol S. and Ellen L. Leggett (1988), "A Social-Cognitive Approach to Motivation and Personality," *Psychological Review*, 95 (2), 256-73.

Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. and Melissa E. Graebner (2007), "Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges," *Academy of Management Journal*, 50 (1), 25-32.

Elbedweihy, Alaa M., Chanaka Jayawardhena, Mohamed H. Elsharnouby, and Tamer H. Elsharnouby (2016), "Customer Relationship Building: The Role of Brand Attractiveness and Consumer–Brand Identification," *Journal of Business Research* (Forthcoming).

Ellemers, Naomi, Bertjan Doosje, and Russell Spears (2004), "Sources of Respect: The Effects of Being Liked by Ingroups and Outgroups," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 34 (2), 155-72.

Ellen, B. Parker, Gerald R. Ferris, and M. Ronald Buckley (2013), "Leader Political Support: Reconsidering Leader Political Behavior," *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24 (6), 842-57.

Elliot, Andrew J. (1999), "Approach and Avoidance Motivation and Achievement Goals," *Educational Psychologist*, 34 (3), 169-89.

---- and Marcy A. Church (2003), "A Motivational Analysis of Defensive Pessimism and Self-Handicapping," *Journal of Personality*, 71 (3), 369-96.

Elliott, Elaine S. and Carol S. Dweck (1988), "Goals: An Approach to Motivation and Achievement," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54 (1), 5-12.

Eschleman, Kevin J., Nathan A. Bowling, and Gene M. Alarcon (2010), "A Meta-Analytic Examination of Hardiness," *International Journal of Stress Management*, 17 (4), 277-307.

Eskreis-Winkler, Lauren, Elizabeth P. Shulman, Scott A. Beal, and Angela L. Duckworth (2014), "The Grit Effect: Predicting Retention in the Military, the Workplace, School and Marriage," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5 (36), 1-12.

Etcheverry, Paul E. and Benjamin Le (2005), "Thinking About Commitment: Accessibility of Commitment and Prediction of Relationship Persistence, Accommodation, and Willingness to Sacrifice," *Personal Relationships*, 12 (1), 103-23.

Evans, Kenneth R., Richard G. McFarland, Bart Dietz, and Fernando Jaramillo (2012), "Advancing Sales Performance Research: A Focus on Five Underresearched Topic Areas," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 32 (1), 89-105.

Eveleth, Daniel M. and Linda Morris (2002), "Adaptive Selling in a Call Center Environment: A Qualitative Investigation," *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 16 (1), 25-39.

Ewen, Christian, Andreas Wihler, Gerhard Blickle, Katharina Oerder, B. Parker Ellen, Ceasar Douglas, and Gerald R. Ferris (2013), "Further Specification of the Leader Political Skill–Leadership Effectiveness Relationships: Transformational and Transactional Leader Behavior as Mediators," *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24 (4), 516-33.

Falbe, Cecilia M. and Gary Yukl (1992), "Consequences for Managers of Using Single Influence Tactics and Combinations of Tactics," *Academy of Management Journal*, 35 (3), 638-52.

Fang, Eric, Robert W. Palmatier, and Kenneth R. Evans (2004), "Goal-Setting Paradoxes? Trade-offs Between Working Hard and Working Smart: The United States Versus China," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 32 (2), 188-202.

Farrell, Mark and Bill Schroder (1999), "Power and Influence in the Buying Centre," *European Journal of Marketing*, 33 (11/12), 1161-70.

Fayolle, Alain and Benoit Gailly (2015), "The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Intention: Hysteresis and Persistence," *Journal of Small Business Management*, 53 (1), 75-93.

Feather, Norman T. (1961), "The Relationship of Persistence at a Task to Expectation of Success and Achievement Related Motives," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63 (3), 552-61.

---- (1962), "The Study of Persistence," *Psychological Bulletin*, 59 (2), 94-115.

Feldman, Daniel C. and Barton A. Weitz (1991), "From the Invisible Hand to the Gladhand: Understanding a Careerist Orientation to Work," *Human Resource Management*, 30 (2), 237-57.

Fennis, Bob M. and Marielle Stel (2011), "The Pantomime of Persuasion: Fit Between Nonverbal Communication and Influence Strategies," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47 (4), 806-10.

Ferris, Gerald R., William P. Anthony, Robert W. Kolodinsky, David C. Gilmore, and Michael G. Harvey (2002a), "Development of Political Skill," in *Research in Management Education and Development. Volume 1: Rethinking Management Education for the 21st Century*, Charles Wankel and Robert J. DeFillippi, eds., Greenwich: Information Age, 3-25.

----, Howard M. Berkson, David M. Kaplan, David C. Gilmore, M. Ronald Buckley, Wayne A. Hochwarter, and L. Alan Witt (1999), "Development and Initial Validation of the Political Skill Inventory," in Academy of Management, 59th Annual National Meeting. Chicago.

----, Fred R. Blass, Ceasar Douglas, Robert W. Kolodinsky, and Darren C. Treadway (2003), "Personal Reputation in Organizations," in *Organizational Behavior: The State of the Science*, Jerald Greenberg, ed. 2nd ed., Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 211-46.

----, Gerhard Blickle, Paula B. Schneider, Jochen Kramer, Ingo Zettler, Jutta Solga, Daniela Noethen, and James A. Meurs (2008), "Political Skill Construct and Criterion-Related Validation: A Two-Study Investigation," *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 23 (7), 744-71.

----, Sherry L. Davidson, and Pamela L Perrewé (2005a), *Political Skill At Work: Impact on Work Effectiveness*. Mountain View: Davies-Black Publishing.

---- and Timothy A. Judge (1991), "Personnel/Human Resources Management: A Political Influence Perspective," *Journal of Management*, 17 (2), 447-88.

---- and Terence R. Mitchell (1987), "The Components of Social Influence and Their Importance for Human Resources Research," *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 5, 103-28.

----, Pamela L. Perrewé, and Ceasar Douglas (2002b), "Social Effectiveness in Organizations: Construct Validity and Research Directions," *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9 (1), 49-63.

----, Darren C. Treadway, Robyn L. Brouer, and Timothy P. Munyon (2012), "Political Skill in the Organizational Sciences," in *Politics in Organizations: Theory and Research Considerations*, Gerald R. Ferris and Darren C. Treadway, eds., New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis 487-529.

----, ----, Robert W. Kolodinsky, Wayne A. Hochwarter, Charles J. Kacmar, Ceasar Douglas, and Dwight D. Frink (2005b), "Development and Validation of the Political Skill Inventory," *Journal of Management*, 31 (1), 126-52.

----, ----, Pamela L. Perrewé, Robyn L. Brouer, Ceasar Douglas, and Sean Lux (2007), "Political Skill in Organizations," *Journal of Management*, 33 (3), 290-320.

----, L. Alan Witt, and Wayne A. Hochwarter (2001), "Interaction of Social Skill and General Mental Ability on Job Performance and Salary," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86 (6), 1075-82.

Fetterman, David M. (2010), *Ethnography: Step-by-Step*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Fine, Leslie M. (2007), "Selling and Sales Management," *Business Horizons*, 50 (3), 185-91.

Finkelstein, Sydney and Donald C. Hambrick (1990), "Top Management Team Tenure and Organizational Outcomes: The Moderating Role of Managerial Discretion," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 484-503.

Fischer, Eileen, Cele C. Otnes, and Linda Tuncay (2007), "Pursuing Parenthood: Integrating Cultural and Cognitive Perspectives on Persistent Goal Striving," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (4), 425-40.

Flaig, Gebhard and Manfred Stadler (1994), "Success Breeds Success. The Dynamics of the Innovation Process," *Empirical Economics*, 19 (1), 55-68.

Flett, Gordon L. and Paul L. Hewitt (2002), *Perfectionism: Theory, Research, and Treatment*. Washington, DC.: American Psychological Association.

Flint, Daniel J., Robert B. Woodruff, and Sarah F. Gardial (2002), "Exploring the Phenomenon of Customers' Desired Value Change in a Business-to-Business Context," *Journal of Marketing*, 66 (October), 102-17.

Fombrun, Charles and Mark Shanley (1990), "What's in a Name? Reputation Building and Corporate Strategy," *Academy of Management Journal*, 33 (2), 233-58.

Forgas, Joseph P. and Kipling D. Williams (2001), "Social Influence: Introduction and Overview," in *Social Influence: Direct and Indirect Processes*, Joseph P. Forgas and Kipling D. Williams, eds., New York: Pyschology Press, 3-24.

---- (2003), *Social Judgments: Implicit and Explicit Processes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fornell, Claes and David F. Larcker (1981), "Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18 (1), 39-50.

Fox, Shaul and Michael Hoffman (2002), "Escalation Behavior as a Specific Case of Goal-Directed Activity: A Persistence Paradigm," *Basic & Applied Social Psychology*, 24 (4), 273-85.

Franke, George R. and Jeong-Eun Park (2006), "Salesperson Adaptive Selling Behavior and Customer Orientation: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43 (4), 693-702.

Frankel, Robert, Dag Naslund, and Yemisi Bolumole (2005), "The “White Space” of Logistics Research: A Look At the Role of Methods Usage," *Journal of Business Logistics*, 26 (2), 185-209.

Frazier, Gary L. and Raymond C. Rody (1991), "The Use of Influence Strategies in Interfirm Relationships in Industrial Product Channels," *Journal of Marketing*, 55 (January), 52-69.

---- and John O. Summers (1984), "Interfirm Influence Strategies and Their Application within Distribution Channels," *Journal of Marketing*, 48 (Summer), 43-55.

---- (1986), "Perceptions of Interfirm Power and Its Use within a Franchise Channel of Distribution," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23 (2), 169-76.

French Jr., John R. and Bertram Raven (1959), "The Bases of Social Power," in *Studies in Social Power*, Dustin Cartwright, ed., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, 150-67.

Gal, David and Blakeley B. McShane (2012), "Can Small Victories Help Win the War? Evidence from Consumer Debt Management," *Journal of Marketing Research* 49 (4), 487-501.

Ganesan, Shankar (1994), "Determinants of Long-Term Orientation in Buyer-Seller Relationships," *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (April), 1-19.

Garcia, Danilo (2012), "The Affective Temperaments: Differences Between Adolescents in the Big Five Model and Cloninger's Psychobiological Model of Personality," *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 13 (6), 999-1017.

----, Nóra Kerekes, and Trevor Archer (2012), "A Will and a Proper Way Leading to Happiness: Self-Directedness Mediates the Effect of Persistence on Positive Affectivity," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 53 (8), 1034-38.

Gardner, Timothy M., Timothy P. Munyon, Peter W. Hom, and Rodger W. Griffeth (2016), "When Territoriality Meets Agency: An Examination of Employee Guarding as a Territorial Strategy," *Journal of Management* (Forthcoming)

Gartner, William B., Elizabeth Gatewood, and Kelly G. Shaver (1991), "Reasons for Starting a Business: Not-So-Simple Answers to Simple Questions," in *Research at the Marketing/Entrepreneurship Interface*, Gerald E. Hills and Raymond W. LaForge, eds., Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, 90-101.

Garver, Michael S. and John T. Mentzer (1999), "Logistics Research Methods: Employing Structural Equation Modeling to Test for Construct Validity," *Journal of Business Logistics*, 20 (1), 33-57.

Gatewood, Elizabeth J., Kelly G. Shaver, Joshua B. Powers, and William B. Gartner (2002), "Entrepreneurial Expectancy, Task Effort, and Performance," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 27 (2), 187-206.

Geen, Russell G. (1991), "Social Motivation," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 42, 377-99.

Geertz, Clifford (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gefen, David, Detmar W. Straub, and Edward E. Rigdon (2011), "Editor's Comments: An Update and Extension to SEM Guidelines for Admnistrative and Social Science Research," *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, 35 (2), iii-xiv.

Gentry, William A., David C. Gilmore, Marissa L. Shuffler, and Jean B. Leslie (2012), "Political Skill as an Indicator of Promotability Among Multiple Rater Sources," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33 (1), 89-104.

George, Elizabeth, Prithviraj Chattopadhyay, Sim B. Sitkin, and Jeff Barden (2006), "Cognitive Uncerpinnings of Institutional Persistence and Change: A Framing Perspective," *Academy of Management Review*, 31 (2), 347-65.

Gerbing, David W. and James C. Anderson (1988), "An Updated Paradigm for Scale Development Incorporating Unidimensionality and Its Assessment," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25 (2), 186-92.

Gernigon, Christophe, Philippe Fleurance, and Bruno Reine (2000), "Effects of Uncontrollability and Failure on the Development of Learned Helplessness in Perceptual-Motor Tasks," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 71 (1), 44-54.

Gerstner, Charlotte R. and David V. Day (1997), "Meta-Analytic Review of Leader–Member Exchange Theory: Correlates and Construct Issues," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82 (6), 827-44.

Ghoshal, Sumantra and Heike Bruch (2003), "Going Beyond Motivation to The Power of Volition," *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 44 (3), 51-57.

Giacobbe, Ralph W. (1991), "Adaptive Selling Behavior and Sales Performance Effectiveness: A Contingency Approach," Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University.

----, Donald W. Jackson Jr, Lawrence A. Crosby, and Claudia M. Bridges (2006), "A Contingency Approach to Adaptive Selling Behavior and Sales Performance: Selling Situations and Salesperson Characteristics," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 26 (2), 115-42.

Gillespie, Nathan A., C. Robert Cloninger, Andrew C. Heath, and Nicholas G. Martin (2003), "The Genetic and Environmental Relationship Between Cloninger's Dimensions of Temperament and Character," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35 (8), 1931-46.

Gimeno, Javier, Timothy B. Folta, Arnold C. Cooper, and Carolyn Y. Woo (1997), "Survival of the Fittest? Entrepreneurial Human Capital and the Persistence of Underperforming Firms," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42 (4), 750-83.

Gioia, Dennis A., Kevin G. Corley, and Aimee L. Hamilton (2013), "Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research Notes on the Gioia Methodology," *Organizational Research Methods*, 16 (1), 15-31.

Giunipero, Larry C. and Robert B. Handfield (2004), *Purchasing Education and Training II*: CAPS Research, Tempe, AZ.

Glaser, Barney G. (1978), *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

---- and Anselm L. Strauss (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Gloria, Alberta M. and Tamara A. Ho (2003), "Environmental, Social, and Psychological Experiences of Asian American Undergraduates: Examining Issues of Academic Persistence," *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 81 (1), 93.

Goddard, John A. and John O.S. Wilson (1996), "Persistence of Profits for UK Manufacturing and Service Sector Firms," *Service Industries Journal*, 16 (2), 105-17.

Goffman, Erving (1959), *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City: Doubleday & Co.

Goldenberg, Barton (1996), "Re-Engineering Sales & Marketing with Advanced Information Delivery Systems," *Sales and Marketing Management*, Special Supplement, S1-S31.

Goldsmith, Elizabeth B. and Ronald E. Goldsmith (2011), "Social Influence and Sustainability in Households," *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 35 (2), 117-21.

Gollwitzer, Peter M., Elizabeth J. Parks-Stamm, Alexander Jaudas, and Paschal Sheeran (2008), "Flexible Tenacity in Goal Pursuit," in *Handbook of Motivation Science*, James Y. Shah and Wendi L. Gardner, eds., New York: Guilford, 325-41.

Goltz, Sonia M. (1999), "Can't Stop On a Dime: The Roles of Matching and Momentum in Persistence of Commitment," *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 19 (1), 37-63.

Gordon, Randall A. (1996), "Impact of Ingratiation on Judgments and Evaluations: A Meta-Analytic Investigation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71 (1), 54-70.

Grant, Adam M. (2008), "Does Intrinsic Motivation Fuel the Prosocial Fire? Motivational Synergy in Predicting Persistence, Performance, and Productivity," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93 (1), 48-58.

----, Elizabeth M. Campbell, Grace Chen, Keenan Cottone, David Lapedis, and Karen Lee (2007), "Impact and the Art of Motivation Maintenance: The Effects of Contact With Beneficiaries on Persistence Behavior," *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, 103 (1), 53-67.

Grant, Ken and David W. Cravens (1996), "Examining Sales Force Performance in Organizations That Use Behavior-Based Sales Management Processes," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 25 (5), 361-71.

Greenleaf, Eric A. (1992), "Improving Rating Scale Measures by Detecting and Correcting Bias Components in Some Response Styles," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29 (2), 176-88.

Grol, Maud and Rudi De Raedt (2015), "The Influence of Psychological Resilience on the Relation Between Automatic Stimulus Evaluation and Attentional Breadth for Surprised Faces," *Cognition and Emotion*, 29 (1), 146-57.

Guenzi, Paolo, Catherine Pardo, and Laurent Georges (2007), "Relational Selling Strategy and Key Account Managers' Relational Behaviors: An Exploratory Study," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36 (1), 121-33.

---- and Kaj Storbacka (2015), "The Organizational Implications of Implementing Key Account Management: A Case-Based Examination," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 45, 84-97.

Gunderson, Lance H. and Crawford S. Holling (2001), *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Gundlach, Gregory T. and Ernest R. Cadotte (1994), "Exchange Interdependence and Interfirm Interaction: Research in a Simulated Channel Setting," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31 (4), 516-32.

Gusnard, Debra A., John M. Ollinger, Gordon L. Shulman, C Robert Cloninger, Joseph L. Price, David C. Van Essen, and Marcus E. Raichle (2003), "Persistence and Brain Circuitry," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 100 (6), 3479-84.

Hair, Joe F., Christian M. Ringle, and Marko Sarstedt (2011), "PLS-SEM: Indeed a Silver Bullet," *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19 (2), 139-52.

----, Marko Sarstedt, Christian M. Ringle, and Jeannette A. Mena (2012), "An Assessment of the Use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling in Marketing Research," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40 (3), 414-33.

----, Rolph E. Anderson, Ronald L. Tatham, and William C. Black (1998), *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

----, William C. Black, Barry J. Babin, and Rolph E. Anderson (2010), *Multivariate Data Analysis* (Seventh ed.). Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River.

----, G. Tomas Hult, Christian M. Ringle, and Marko Sarstedt (2013), *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hall, Angela T., Fred R. Blass, Gerald R. Ferris, and Randy Massengale (2004), "Leader Reputation and Accountability in Organizations: Implications for Dysfunctional Leader Behavior," *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15 (4), 515-36.

Hall, Zachary R., Michael Ahearne, and Harish Sujan (2015), "The Importance of Starting Right: The Influence of Accurate Intuition on Performance in Salesperson–Customer Interactions," *Journal of Marketing*, 79 (May), 91-109.

Hamel, Gary and Liisa Valikangas (2003), "The Quest for Resilience," *Harvard Business Review*, 81 (9), 52-65.

Hamza, Chloe A., Teena Willoughby, and Taylor Heffer (2015), "Impulsivity and Nonsuicidal Self-Injury: A Review and Meta-Analysis," *Clinical Psychology Review*, 38, 13-24.

Harris, Clyde E. and Rosann L. Spiro (1981), "Training Implications of Salesperson Influence Strategy," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 1 (2), 10-17.

Harris, Kenneth J., K. Michele Kacmar, Suzanne Zivnuska, and Jason D. Shaw (2007), "The Impact of Political Skill on Impression Management Effectiveness," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92 (1), 278-85.

Harvey, Paul, Ranida B. Harris, Kenneth J. Harris, and Anthony R. Wheeler (2007), "Attenuating the Effects of Social Stress: The Impact of Political Skill," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12 (2), 105-15.

Haumann, Till, Benjamin Quaiser, Jan Wieseke, and Mario Rese (2014), "Footprints in the Sands of Time: A Comparative Analysis of the Effectiveness of Customer Satisfaction and Customer-Company Identification over Time," *Journal of Marketing*, 78 (November), 78-102.

Hausknecht, John P. (2010), "Candidate Persistence and Personality Test Practice Effects: Implications for Staffing System Management " *Personnel Psychology*, 63 (2), 299-324.

Hawes, Jon M., James T. Strong, and Bernard S. Winick (1996), "Do Closing Techniques Diminish Prospect Trust?," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 25 (5), 349-60.

Hayward, Mathew L.A., William R. Forster, Saras D. Sarasvathy, and Barbara L. Fredrickson (2010), "Beyond Hubris: How Highly Confident Entrepreneurs Rebound to Venture Again," *Journal of Business Venturing*, 25 (6), 569-78.

Heath, Andrew C., C. Robert Cloninger, and Nicholas G. Martin (1994), "Testing a Model for the Genetic Structure of Personality: A Comparison of the Personality Systems of Cloninger and Eysenck," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66 (4), 762-75.

Heckhausen, Jutta and Richard Schulz (1995), "A Life-Span Theory of Control," *Psychological Review*, 102 (2), 284-304.

Henningsen, David D. and Mary Lynn M. Henningsen (2003), "Examining Social Influence in Information-Sharing Contexts," *Small Group Research*, 34 (4), 391-412.

---- and Mary Lynn Miller Henningsen (2015), "A Preliminary Examination of Perceptions of Social Influence in Group Decision Making in the Workplace," *Journal of Business Communication*, 52 (2), 188-204.

Henningsen, Mary Lynn M., David D. Henningsen, Michael G. Cruz, and Joshua Morrill (2003), "Social Influence in Groups: A Comparative Application of Relational Framing Theory and the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion," *Communication Monographs*, 70 (3), 175-97.

Henseler, Jörg, Christian M. Ringle, and Marko Sarstedt (2015), "A New Criterion for Assessing Discriminant Validity in Variance-Based Structural Equation Modeling," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43 (1), 115-35.

----, Christian M. Ringle, and Rudolf R. Sinkovics (2009), "The Use of Partial Least Squares Path Modeling in International Marketing," *Advances in International Marketing*, 20, 277-319.

Heyl, Vera, Hans-Werner Wahl, and Heidrun Mollenkopf (2007), "Affective Well-Being in Old Age: The Role of Tenacious Goal Pursuit and Flexible Goal Adjustment," *European Psychologist*, 12 (2), 119-29.

Hibbard, Jonathan D., Frederic F. Brunel, Rajiv P. Dant, and Dawn Iacobucci (2001), "Does Relationship Marketing Age Well?," *Business Strategy Review*, 12 (4), 29-35.

Higgins, Chad A., Timothy A. Judge, and Gerald R. Ferris (2003), "Influence Tactics and Work Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24 (1), 89-106.

Hiller, Nathan J. and Donald C. Hambrick (2005), "Conceptualizing Executive Hubris: The Role of (Hyper-) Core Self-Evaluations in Strategic Decision-Making " *Strategic Management Journal*, 26 (4), 297-319.

Hinkin, Timothy R. (1995), "A Review of Scale Development Practices in the Study of Organizations," *Journal of Management*, 21 (5), 967-88.

Hoang, Ha and Javier Gimeno (2010), "Becoming A Founder: How Founder Role Identity Affects Entrepreneurial Transitions and Persistence in Founding," *Journal of Business Venturing*, 25 (1), 41-53.

Hochwarter, Wayne A., Gerald R. Ferris, Mark B. Gavin, Pamela L. Perrewé, Angela T. Hall, and Dwight D. Frink (2007a), "Political skill as Neutralizer of Felt Accountability—Job Tension Effects on Job Performance Ratings: A Longitudinal Investigation," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 102 (2), 226-39.

----, Gerald R. Ferris, Robert Zinko, Breda Arnell, and Matrecia James (2007b), "Reputation s a Moderator of Political Behavior-Work Outcomes Relationships: A Two-Study Investigation With Convergent Results," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92 (2), 567-76.

----, James K. Summers, Katina W. Thompson, Pamela L. Perrewé, and Gerald R. Ferris (2010), "Strain Reactions to Perceived Entitlement Behavior by Others As a Contextual Stressor: Moderating Role of Political Skill in Three Samples," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 15 (4), 388-98.

----, Lawrence A. Witt, Darren C. Treadway, and Gerald R. Ferris (2006), "The Interaction of Social Skill and Organizational Support on Job Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91 (2), 482-89.

Hockey, G. Robert J. (1997), "Compensatory Control in the Regulation of Human Performance Under Stress and High Workload: A Cognitive-Energetical Framework," *Biological Psychology*, 45 (1), 73-93.

Hocking, John E., Don W. Stacks, and Steven T. McDermott (2003), *Communications Research* (3rd ed.). Boston: Person Education, Inc.

Holland, Daniel V. and Dean A. Shepherd (2013), "Deciding to Persist: Adversity, Values, and Entrepreneurs' Decision Policies," *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 37 (2), 331-58.

Hofstede, Geert (1980), "Motivation, Leadership, and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad?," *Organizational Dynamics*, 9 (1), 42-63.

Hohenberg, Sebastian and Christian Homburg (2016), "Motivating Sales Reps for Innovation Selling in Different Cultures," *Journal of Marketing*, 80 (March), 101-20.

Holland, John L. (1973), *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

---- (1976), "Vocational Preferences," in *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Marvin D. Dunnette, ed., Chicago: Rand McNally, 521-70.
Hollander, Edwin P. (1976), *Doing Research in Social Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Holling, Crawford S. (1973), "Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems," *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 1-23.

Homburg, Christian, Mathias Droll, and Dirk Totzek (2008), "Customer Prioritization: Does It Pay Off, and How Should It Be Implemented?," *Journal of Marketing*, 72 (September), 110-30.

----, Michael Müller, and Martin Klarmann (2011), "When Should the Customer Really Be King? On the Optimum Level of Salesperson Customer Orientation in Sales Encounters," *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (March), 55-74.

----, Jan Wieseke, and Wayne D. Hoyer (2009), "Social Identity and the Service-Profit Chain," *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (March), 38-54.

----, John P. Workman Jr., and Ove Jensen (2002), "A Configurational Perspective on Key Account Management," *Journal of Marketing*, 66 (April), 38-60.

Hu, Li-tze and Peter M. Bentler (1999), "Cutoff Criteria for Fit Indexes in Covariance Structure Analysis: Conventional Criteria Versus New Alternatives," *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6 (1), 1-55.

Hughes, Douglas E., Joël Le Bon, and Adam Rapp (2013), "Gaining and Leveraging Customer-Based Competitive Intelligence: The Pivotal Role of Social Capital and Salesperson Adaptive Selling Skills," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41 (1), 91-110.

Hung, Hao-Kai, Ryh-Song Yeh, and Hsin-Yu Shih (2012), "Voice Behavior and Performance Ratings: The Role of Political Skill," *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31 (2), 442-50.

Hunt, Shelby D. (2002), *Foundations of Marketing Theory: Toward a General Theory of Marketing*. London: M.E. Sharpe.

Hunter, Gary K. and William D. Perreault (2006), "Sales Technology Orientation, Information Effectiveness, and Sales Performance," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 26 (2), 95-113.

Hyman, Michael R. and Jeffrey K. Sager (1999), "Marginally Performing Salespeople: A Definition," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 19 (4), 67-74.

Hystad, Sigurd W., Jane Eid, and John I. Brevik (2011), "Effects of Psychological Hardiness, Job Demands, and Job Control on Sickness Absence: A Prospective Study," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 16 (3), 265-78.

Ifeagwazi, Chuka M., JohnBosco C. Chukwuorji, and Endurance A. Zacchaeus (2015), "Alienation and Psychological Wellbeing: Moderation by Resilience," *Social Indicators Research*, 120 (2), 525-44.

Iglesias-Pradas, Santiago, Ángel Hernández-García, and Pedro Fernández-Cardador (2015), "Social Factors' Influences on Corporate Wiki Acceptance and Use," *Journal of Business Research*, 68 (7), 1481-87.

Ilies, Remus, Timothy Judge, and David Wagner (2006), "Making Sense of Motivational Leadership: The Trail From Transformational Leaders to Motivated Followers," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 13 (1), 1-22.

Ingram, Thomas N., Charles H. Schwepker Jr., and Don Hutson (1992), "Why Salespeople Fail," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 21 (3), 225-30.

Inkpen, Andrew C. and Jerry Ross (2001), "Why Do Some Strategic Alliances Persist Beyond Their Useful Life?," *California Management Review*, 44 (1), 132-48.

Instone, Debra, Brenda Major, and Barbara B. Bunker (1983), "Gender, Self Confidence, and Social Influence Strategies: An Organizational Simulation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44 (2), 322-33.

Jackson, Donald W., John L. Schlacter, Claudia M. Bridges, and Andrew S. Gallan (2010), "A Comparison and Expansion of the Bases Used for Evaluating Salespeople's Performance," *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 18 (4), 395-406.

Jackson, Douglas N. (1974), *Manual for the Personality Research Form*. Goshen: Research Psychology Press.

Jacob, Jojo, René Belderbos, and Victor Gilsing (2013), "Technology Alliances in Emerging Economies: Persistence and Interrelation in European Firms' Alliance Formation," *R&D Management*, 43 (5), 447-60.

Jacobs, Beth, Steven Prentice-Dunn, and Ronald W. Rogers (1984), "Understanding Persistence: An Interface of Control Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 5 (4), 333-47.

Jaramillo, Fernando, Jay Prakash Mulki, and William B. Locander (2006), "The Role of Time Wasted in Sales Force Attitudes and Intention to Quit," *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 24 (1), 24-36.

----, William B. Locander, Paul E. Spector, and Eric G. Harris (2007), "Getting the Job Done: The Moderating Role of Initiative on the Relationship Between Intrinsic Motivation and Adaptive Selling," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 27 (1), 59-74.

Jarvis, Cheryl B., Scott B. MacKenzie, and Philip M. Podsakoff (2003), "A Critical Review of Construct Indicators and Measurement Model Misspecification in Marketing and Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30 (2), 199-218.

Jawahar, I.M., James A. Meurs, Gerald R. Ferris, and Wayne A. Hochwarter (2008), "Self-Efficacy and Political Skill as Comparative Predictors of Task and Contextual Performance: A Two-Study Constructive Replication," *Human Performance*, 21 (2), 138-57.

Jaworski, Bernard J. and Ajay K. Kohli (1993), "Market Orientation: Antecedents and Consequences," *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (July), 53-70.

Jick, Todd D. (1979), "Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24 (4), 602-11.

Johlke, Mark C. (2006), "Sales Presentation Skills and Salesperson Job Performance," *The Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 21 (5), 311-19.

John, George and Barton Weitz (1989), "Salesforce Compensation: An Empirical Investigation of Factors Related to Use of Salary Versus Incentive Compensation," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 26 (1), 1-14.

Johnsen, Bjørn Helge, Jarle Eid, Staale Pallesen, Paul T. Bartone, and Odd A. Nissestad (2009), "Predicting Transformational Leadership in Naval Cadets: Effects of Personality Hardiness and Training," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 39 (9), 2213-35.

Johnson, Jean L., Tomoaki Sakano, Joseph A. Cote, and Naoto Onzo (1993), "The Exercise of Interfirm Power and its Repercussions in U.S.-Japanese Channel Relationships," *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (April), 1-10.

Johnson, Russell E., Chu-Hsiang Chang, and Robert G. Lord (2006), "Moving From Cognition to Behavior: What the Research Says," *Psychological Bulletin*, 132 (3), 381-415.

Johnston, Mark W. and Greg W. Marshall (2013), *Sales Force Management: Leadership, Innovation, Technology* (11th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Jolson, Marvin A. and Thomas R. Wotruba (1992), "Prospecting: A New Look at This Old Challenge," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 12 (4), 59-66.

Jones, Edward E. (1990), *Interpersonal Perception*. New York: Macmillan.

---- and Thane S. Pittman (1982), "Toward a General Theory of Strategic Self-Presentation," in *Psychological Perspectives on the Self*, Jerry Suls, ed., Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 231-62.

Jones, Eli, Steven P. Brown, Andris A. Zoltners, and Barton A. Weitz (2005), "The Changing Environment of Selling and Sales Management," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 25 (2), 105-11.

Jones, Joseph M. (2008), "An Exploratory Study on Attitude Persistence Using Sales Promotion," *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 20 (3), 401-16.

Jöreskog, Karl G. and Herman Wold (1982), "The ML and PLS Techniques for Modeling with Latent Variables: Historical and Comparative Aspects," in *Systems Under Indirect Observation, Part I*, Herman Wold and Karl G. Jöreskog, eds., Vol. 1, Amsterdam: North-Holland, 263-70.

Judge, Timothy A. and Robert D. Bretz Jr. (1994), "Political Influence Behavior and Career Success," *Journal of Management*, 20 (1), 43.

Kacmar, K. Michele, Martha C. Andrews, Kenneth J. Harris, and Bennett J. Tepper (2013), "Ethical Leadership and Subordinate Outcomes: The Mediating Role of Organizational Politics and the Moderating Role of Political Skill," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 115 (1), 33-44.

Kaplan, David M. (2008), "Political Choices: The Role of Political Skill in Occupational Choice," *Career Development International*, 13 (1), 46-55.

Kaplan, Martin F. (1989), "Task, Situational, and Personal Determinants of Influence Processes in Group Decision Making," in *Advances in Group Processes*, Edward J. Lawler and Barry Markovsky, eds., Vol. 6, Greenwich: JAI Press, 87-105.

---- and Charles E. Miller (1987), "Group Decision Making and Normative Versus Informational Influence: Effects of Type of Issue and Assigned Decision Rule," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53 (2), 306-13.

Kapoutsis, Ilias, Alexandros Papalexandris, Andreas Nikolopoulos, Wayne A. Hochwarter, and Gerald R. Ferris (2011), "Politics Perceptions as Moderator of the Political Skill–Job Performance Relationship: A Two-Study, Cross-National, Constructive Replication," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 78 (1), 123-35.

Kara, Ali, Syed S. Andaleeb, Mehmet Turan, and Serap Cabuk (2013), "An Examination of the Effects of Adaptive Selling Behavior and Customer Orientation on Performance of Pharmaceutical Salespeople in an Emerging Market," *Journal of Medical Marketing*, 13 (2), 102-14.

Keck, Kay L., Thomas W. Leigh, and James G. Lollar (1995), "Critical Success Factors in Captive, Multi-line Insurance Agency Sales," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 15 (1), 17-33.

Keith, Janet E., Donald W. Jackson Jr., and Lawrence A. Crosby (1990), "Effects of Alternative Types of Influence Strategies under Different Channel Dependence Structures," *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (July), 30-41.

Kelly, Janice R., Jay W. Jackson, and Sarah L. Hutson-Comeaux (1997), "The Effects of Time Pressure and Task Differences on Influence Modes and Accuracy in Decision-Making Groups," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23 (1), 10-22.

Kelman, Herbert C. (1961), "Processes of Opinion Change," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 25 (1), 57-78.

Kemp, Elyria, Aberdeen Leila Borders, and Joe M. Ricks (2013), "Sales Manager Support: Fostering Emotional Health in Salespeople," *European Journal of Marketing*, 47 (3/4), 635-54.

Kerlinger, Fred N. and Howard B. Lee (2000), "Survey Research," in *Foundations of Behavioral Research*, Fred N. Kerlinger and Howard B.. Lee, eds., Orlando: Harcourt, Inc. , 599-619.

Khoshaba, Deborah M. and Salvatore R. Maddi (1999), "Early Experiences in Hardiness Development," *Consulting Psychology Journal* 51 (2), 106-16.

Kim, Jae-On and James Curry (1977), "The Treatment of Missing Data in Multivariate Analysis," *Sociological Methods & Research*, 6 (2), 215-40.

Kim, Jieun, Jae-Eun Kim, and Kim K. Johnson (2010), "The Customer-Salesperson Relationship and Sales Effectiveness in Luxury Fashion Stores: The Role of Self Monitoring," *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 1 (4), 230-39.

Kim, Keysuk (2000), "On Interfirm Power, Channel Climate, and Solidarity in Industrial Distributor-Supplier Dyads," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28 (3), 388-405.

Kipnis, David and Stuart M. Schmidt (1988), "Upward-Influence Styles: Relationship with Performance Evaluations, Salary, and Stress," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 33 (4), 528-42.

----, Stuart M. Schmidt, and Ian Wilkinson (1980), "Intraorganizational Influence Tactics: Explorations in Getting One's Way," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 65 (4), 440-52.

Kisfalvi, Veronika (2000), "The Threat of Failure, the Perils of Success and CEO Character: Sources of Strategic Persistence," *Organization Studies*, 21 (3), 611-39.

Kitchell, Susan (1997), "CEO Characteristics and Technological Innovativeness: A Canadian Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 14 (2), 111-21.

Klehe, Ute-Christine and Neil Anderson (2007), "Working Hard and Working Smart: Motivation and Ability During Typical and Maximum Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92 (4), 978-92.

Klinger, Eric (1975), "Consequences of Commitment To and Disengagement From Incentives," *Psychological Review*, 82 (1), 1-25.

Knowles, Elizabeth M. (1999), *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Knowles, Eric S., Shannon Butler, and Jay A. Linn (2001), "Increasing Compliance by Reducing Resistance," in *Social Influence: Direct and Indirect Processes* Joseph P. Forgas and Kipling D. Williams, eds., New York: Psychology Press, 41-60.

---- and Jay A. Linn (2004), "Approach-Avoidance Model of Persuasion: Alpha and Omega Strategies for Change," in *Resistance and Persuasion*, Eric S. Knowles and Jay A. Linn, eds., Mahwah: Erlbaum, 259-82.

Kobasa, Suzanne C. (1979), "Stressful Life Events, Personality, and Health: An Inquiry into Hardiness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37 (1), 1-11.

Kolodinsky, Robert W., Darren C. Treadway, and Gerald R. Ferris (2007), "Political Skill and Influence Effectiveness: Testing Portions of an Expanded Ferris and Judge (1991) Model," *Human Relations*, 60 (12), 1747-77.

Koo, Minjung and Ayelet Fishbach (2012), "The Small-Area Hypothesis: Effects of Progress Monitoring on Goal Adherence," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (3), 493-509.

Kovjanic, Snjezana, Sebastian C. Schuh, and Klaus Jonas (2013), "Transformational Leadership and Performance: An Experimental Investigation of the Mediating Effects of Basic Needs Satisfaction and Work Engagement," *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 86 (4), 543-55.

Kraus, Florian, Michael Ahearne, Son K. Lam, and Jan Wieseke (2012), "Toward a Contingency Framework of Interpersonal Influence in Organizational Identification Diffusion," *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, 118 (2), 162-78.

Kruglanski, Arie W. (1989), *Lay Epistemics and Human Knowledge: Cognitive and Motivational Biases*. New York, NY: Plenum.

---- (2004), *The Psychology of Closed Mindedness*. New York: Psychology Press.

---- and Donna M. Webster (1996), "Motivated Closing of the Mind: "Seizing" and "Freezing"," *Psychological Review*, 103 (2), 263-83.

Kruse, Barbara G. (2006), "The Meaning of Perseverance: Caregiver Stories of Courage During Recent Hurricanes," *Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing*, 8 (6), 338-45.

Kuhl, Julius (1994), "Action Versus State Orientation: Psychometric Properties of the Action Control Scale (ACS-90)," in *Volition and Personality: Action Versus State Orientation*, Julius Kuhl and Jurgen Beckmann, eds., Seattle: Hogrefe & Huber, 47-59.

Kumar, Nirmalya, Lisa K. Scheer, and Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp (1998), "Interdependence, Punitive Capability, and the Reciprocation of Punitive Actions in Channel Relationships," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 35 (2), 225-35.

Ladouceur, Robert and Serge Sévigny (2005), "Structural Characteristics of Video Lotteries: Effects of a Stopping Device on Illusion of Control and Gambling Persistence," *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 21 (2), 117-31.

Lalwani, Ashok K. (2009), "The Distinct Influence of Cognitive Busyness and Need for Closure on Cultural Differences in Socially Desirable Responding," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (2), 305-16.

Lam, Son K., Michael Ahearne, Ye Hu, and Niels Schillewaert (2010), "Resistance to Brand Switching When a Radically New Brand is Introduced: A Social Identity Theory Perspective," *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (November), 128-46.

Langan-Fox, Janice (1991), "Motivation and the Self Concept: Persisting Goals of Young Women and Men," *International Journal of Psychology*, 26 (4), 409-27.

Langley, Ann (1999), "Strategies For Theorizing From Process Data," *Academy of Management Review*, 691-710.

Lant, Theresa K., Frances J. Milliken, and Bipin Batra (1992), "The Role of Managerial Learning and Interpretation in Strategic Persistence and Reorientation: An Empirical Exploration," *Strategic Management Journal*, 13 (8), 585.

Latham, Gary P. (2003), "Goal Setting:: A Five-Step Approach to Behavior Change," *Organizational Dynamics*, 32 (3), 309-18.

---- and Edwin A. Locke (1979), "Goal Setting—A Motivational Technique That Works," *Organizational Dynamics*, 8 (2), 68-80.

---- (1991), "Self-Regulation Through Goal Setting," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50 (2), 212-47.

Law, Daniel W. (2005), "Interactive Organizational Commitment and Hardiness in Public Accountants' Turnover," *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 20 (4), 383-93.

----, John T. Sweeney, and Scott L. Summers (2008), "An Examination of the Influence of Contextual and Individual Variables on Public Accountants' Exhaustion," *Advances in Accounting Behavioral Research*, 11, 129-53.

Le Bas, Christian and Nicolas Poussing (2014), "Are Complex Innovators More Persistent Than Single Innovators? An Empirical Analysis of Innovation Persistence Drivers," *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 18 (1), 1-21.

Le Foll, David, Olivier Rascle, and N. C. Higgins (2006), "Persistence in a Putting Task During Perceived Failure: Influence of State-attributions and Attributional Style," *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 55 (4), 586-605.

Leary, Mark R. (1995), *Self-Presentation: Impression Management and Interpersonal Behavior*. Madison: Brown & Benchmark.

Leatherwood, Marya L. and Edward J. Conlon (1987), "Diffusibility of Blame: Effects on Persistence in a Project," *Academy of Management Journal*, 30 (4), 836-47.

Lee, Ji Hee, Suk Kyung Nam, A-Reum Kim, Boram Kim, Min Young Lee, and Sang Min Lee (2013), "Resilience: A Meta-Analytic Approach," *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 91 (3), 269-79.

Lee, Matthew K. O., Na Shi, Christy M. K. Cheung, Kai H. Lim, and Choon Ling Sia (2011), "Consumer's Decision to Shop Online: The Moderating Role of Positive Informational Social Influence," *Information & Management*, 48 (6), 185-91.

Lengnick-Hall, Cynthia A. and Tammy E. Beck (2005), "Adaptive Fit Versus Robust Transformation: How Organizations Respond to Environmental Change," *Journal of Management*, 31 (5), 738-57.

Levy, David A., Barry E. Collins, and Paul R. Nail (1998), "A New Model of Interpersonal Influence Characteristics," *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 13 (4), 715-33.

Levy, Michael and Arun Sharma (1994), "Adaptive Selling: The Role of Gender, Age, Sales Experience, and Education," *Journal of Business Research*, 31 (1), 39-47.

---- (1993), "Relationships Among Measures of Retail Salesperson Performance," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 21 (3), 231-38.

Limnios, Elena A.M., Tim Mazzarol, Anas Ghadouani, and Steven G.M. Schilizzi (2014), "The Resilience Architecture Framework: Four Organizational Archetypes," *European Management Journal*, 32 (1), 104-16.

Lincoln, Yvonna S. and Egon G. Guba (1985), *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Lindell, Michael K. and David J. Whitney (2001), "Accounting for Common Method Variance in Cross-Sectional Research Designs," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86 (1), 114-21.

Liu, Annie H. and Mark P. Leach (2001), "Developing Loyal Customers with a Value-Adding Sales Force: Examining Customer Satisfaction and the Perceived Credibility of Consultative Salespeople," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 21 (2), 147-56.

Liu, Yongmei, Gerald R. Ferris, Robert Zinko, Pamela L. Perrewé, Bart Weitz, and Jun Xu (2007), "Dispositional Antecedents and Outcomes of Political Skill in Organizations: A Four-Study Investigation with Convergence," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71 (1), 146-65.

Locke, Edwin A. (2011), *Handbook of Principles of Organizational Behavior: Indispensable Knowledge for Evidence-Based Management*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

---- (1991), "Goal Theory vs. Control Theory: Contrasting Approaches to Understanding Work Motivation," *Motivation and Emotion*, 15 (1), 9-28.

---- and Gary P. Latham (2006), "New Directions in Goal-Setting Theory," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15 (5), 265-68.

---- (1990), *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

London, Manuel (1993), "Relationships Between Career Motivation, Empowerment and Support for Career Development," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 66 (1), 55-69.

Lucas Jr., Henry C., Charles B. Weinberg, and Kenneth W. Clowes (1975), "Sales Response as a Function of Territorial Potential and Sales Representative Workload," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 12 (3), 298-305.

Lufi, Dubi and Arie Cohen (1987), "A Scale for Measuring Persistence in Children," *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 51 (2), 178-85.

Lumpkin, G. Tom and Keith H. Brigham (2011), "Long-Term Orientation and Intertemporal Choice in Family Firms," *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 35 (6), 1149-69.

Luszczynska, Aleksandra and Roman Cieslak (2005), "Protective, Promotive, and Buffering Effects of Perceived Social Support in Managerial Stress: The Moderating Role of Personality," *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 18 (3), 227-44.

Luthans, Fred (2002), "The Need For and Meaning of Positive Organizational Behavior," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23 (6), 695-706.

----, Carolyn M. Youssef, and Bruce J. Avolio (2006), *Psychological Capital: Developing the Human Competitive Edge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Luthar, Harsh, Jasmine Tata, and Eileen Kwesiga (2009), "A Model for Predicting Outcomes of Sexual Harassment Complaints by Race and Gender," *Employee Responsibilities & Rights Journal*, 21 (1), 21-35.

Luthar, Suniya S., Dante Cicchetti, and Bronwyn Becker (2000), "The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work," *Child Development*, 71 (3), 543-62.

Luthy, Michael R. (2000), "Preparing the Next Generation of Industrial Sales Representatives: Advice From Senior Sales Executives," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 29 (3), 235-42.

Lvina, Elena, Gary Johns, Darren C. Treadway, Gerhard Blickle, Yongmei L. Liu, Jun Liu, Salim Atay, Ingo Zettler, Jutta Solga, and Daniela Noethen (2012), "Measure Invariance of the Political Skill Inventory (PSI) Across Five Cultures," *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 12 (2), 171-91.

Lynam, Donald R., Joshua D. Miller, Drew J. Miller, Marina A. Bornovalova, and C.W. Lejuez (2011), "Testing the Relations Between Impulsivity-Related Traits, Suicidality, and Nonsuicidal Self-Injury: A Test of the Incremental Validity of the UPPS Model," *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, 2 (2), 151-60.

Macan, Therese H. (1994), "Time Management: Test of a Process Model," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79 (3), 381-91.

Maddi, Salvatore R. (2006), "Hardiness: The Courage to Grow From Stresses," *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1 (3), 160-68.

---- (2002), "The Story of Hardiness: Twenty Years of Theorizing, Research, and Practice," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research*, 54 (3), 173-85.

---- and Suzanne C. Kobasa (1984), *The Hardy Executive: Health Under Stress*. Homewood: Dow Jones-Irwin.

Madhani, Pankaj M. (2014), "Managing Sales Compensation Across the Economic Cycle: Direct Sales Force Versus Independent Reps," *Compensation and Benefits Review*, 46 (1), 16-24.

Mael, Fred and Blake E. Ashforth (1992), "Alumni and Their Alma Mater: A Partial Test of the Reformulated Model of Organizational Identification," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13 (2), 103-23.

Malhotra, Naresh K. (2004), *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Mantrala, Lurali K. and Kalyan Raman (1990), "Analysis of a Sales Force Incentive Plan for Accurate Sales Forecasting and Performance," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 7 (2), 189-202.

Markman, Gideon D., Robert A. Baron, and David B. Balkin (2005), "Are Perseverance and Self-Efficacy Costless? Assessing Entrepreneurs' Regretful Thinking," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26 (1), 1-19.

Marshall, Greg W., Daniel J. Goebel, and William C. Moncrief (2003), "Hiring for Success at the Buyer–Seller Interface," *Journal of Business Research*, 56 (4), 247-55.

Martin-Krumm, Charles P., Philippe G. Sarrazin, Christopher Peterson, and Jean-Pierre Famose (2003), "Explanatory Style and Resilience After Sports Failure," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35 (7), 1685-95.

Maslyn, John M., Steven M. Farmer, and Donald B. Fedor (1996), "Failed Upward Influence Attempts: Predicting the Nature of Subordinate Persistence in Pursuit of Organizational Goals," *Group & Organization Management*, 21 (4), 461-80.

Masten, Ann S. (2001), "Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development," *American Psychologist*, 56 (3), 227-38.

---- and Jelena Obradović (2006), "Competence and Resilience in Development," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1094 (1), 13-27.

Mau, Wei-Cheng (2003), "Factors That Influence Persistence in Science and Engineering Career Aspirations," *The Career Development Quarterly*, 51 (3), 234-43.

Maury, Tristan-Pierre and Fabien Tripier (2003), "Output Persistence in Human Capital-Based Growth Models," *Economics Bulletin*, 5 (11), 1-8.

Maxwell, Joseph A. (2013), *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

McCalister, Katherine T., Christyn L. Dolbier, Judith A. Webster, Mark W. Mallon, and Mary A. Steinhardt (2006), "Hardiness and Support at Work as Predictors of Work Stress and Job Satisfaction," *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 20 (3), 183-91.

McEvily, Susan K. and Bala Chakravarthy (2002), "The Persistence of Knowledge-Based Advantage: An Empirical Test for Product Performance and Technological Knowledge," *Strategic Management Journal*, 23 (4), 285-305.

McEwan, Troy, Paul Mullen, and Rachel MacKenzie (2009), "A Study of the Predictors of Persistence in Stalking Situations," *Law & Human Behavior* 33 (2), 149-58.

McFarland, Richard G., Goutam N. Challagalla, and Tasadduq A. Shervani (2006), "Influence Tactics for Effective Adaptive Selling," *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (October), 103-17.

---- and Blair Kidwell (2006), "An Examination of Instrumental and Expressive Traits on Performance: The Mediating Role of Learning, Prove, and Avoid Goal Orientations," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 26 (2), 143-59.

McFarlin, Dean B. (1985), "Persistence in the Face of Failure The Impact of Self-Esteem and Contingency Information," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 11 (2), 153-63.

----, Roy F. Baumeister, and Jim Blascovich (1984), "On Knowing When to Quit: Task Failure, Self-Esteem, Advice, and Nonproductive Persistence," *Journal of Personality*, 52 (2), 138-55.

McGiboney, Garry W. and Clifford Carter (1993), "Measuring Persistence and Personality Characteristics of Adolescents," *Psychological Reports*, 72 (1), 128.

McGrath, Joseph E. (1982), "Dilemmatics: The Study of Research Choices and Dilemmas," in *Judgment Calls in Research* Joseph E. McGrath and Joanne Martin and Richard A. Kulka, eds., Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 69-102.

McGrath, Rita G. (1999), "Falling Forward: Real Options Reasoning and Entrepreneurial Failure," *Academy of Management Review*, 24 (1), 13-30.

McMurrain, Robert C. and Rajesh Srivastava (2009), "The Impact of Self-Efficacy on Expectancy, Effort and Adaptive Selling in a Personal Selling Context," *Journal of Selling and Major Account Management* 9(1), 42-53.

McNellis, Casey J. (2013), "The Impact of Hardiness on Accounting Task Performance," *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 28 (4), 364-80.

Meier, George and Maryann H. Albrecht (2003), "The Persistence Process: Development of a Stage Model for Goal-Directed Behavior," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 10 (2), 43-54.

Meir, Elchanan I. and Azy Barak (1974), "Pervasiveness of the Relationship Between Intrinsic-Extrinsic Needs and Persistence at Work " *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 59 (1), 103-04.

Melnyk, Steven A., William J. Ritchie, and Roger J. Calantone (2013), "The Case of the C-TPAT Border Security Initiative: Assessing the Adoption/Persistence Decisions When Dealing With a Novel, Institutionally Driven Administrative Innovation," *Journal of Business Logistics*, 34 (4), 289-300.

Menguc, Bulent and A. Tansu Barker (2003), "The Performance Effects of Outcome-Based Incentive Pay Plans on Sales Organizations: A Contextual Analysis," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 23 (4), 341-58.

Mentzer, John T. and Daniel J. Flint (1997), "Validity in Logistics Research," *Journal of Business Logistics*, 18 (1), 199-216.

Meurs, James A., Vickie C. Gallagher, and Pamela L. Perrewé (2010), "The Role of Political Skill in the Stressor–Outcome Relationship: Differential Predictions for Self- and Other-Reports of Political Skill," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76 (3), 520-33.

Millán, José María, Emilio Congregado, and Concepción Román (2014), "Persistence in Entrepreneurship and Its Implications for the European Entrepreneurial Promotion Policy," *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 36 (1), 83-106.

Miller, Arden and Harry L. Hom (1990), "Influence of Extrinsic and Ego Incentive Value on Persistence After Failure and Continuing Motivation," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82 (3), 539-45.

Miller, Gregory E. and Carsten Wrosch (2007), "You've Gotta Know When to Fold 'Em: Goal Disengagement and Systemic Inflammation in Adolescence," *Psychological Science* 18 (9), 773-77.

Mintzberg, Henry (1983), *Power In and Around Organizations*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall

Mischel, Walter, Robert Zeiss, and Antonette Zeiss (1974), "Internal-External Control and Persistence: Validation and Implications of the Stanford Preschool Internal-External Scale," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 29 (2), 265-78.

Mitchell, Terrence R. (1997), "Matching Motivational Strategies with Organizational Contexts," in *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Larry L. Cummings and Barry M. Staw, eds., Vol. 19, Greenwich: JAI Press, 57-149.

---- and Denise H. Daniels (2003), "Observations and Commentary on Recent Research in Work Motivation," in *Motivation and Work Behavior*, Lyman Porter and Gregory Bigley and Richard M. Steers, eds. 7th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 26-44.

Moeller, Miriam and Michael Harvey (2011), "The Influence of Political Skill on the Acceptance of Foreign Nationals at the Home Country Organization: An Examination of Cultural Stigmatization," *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22 (12), 2593-608.

Moncrief, William C. and Greg W. Marshall (2005), "The Evolution of The Seven Steps of Selling," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34 (1), 13-22.

Montgomery, Marvin (2012), "In Selling, It's the Pleasantly Persistent Salesperson Who Succeeds," (accessed September 19, 2014, [available at http://www.sbnonline.com/article/in-selling-its-the-pleasantly-persistent-salesperson-who-succeeds/%5D.

Morrison, Margaret A., Eric Haley, Kim B. Sheehan, and Ronald E. Taylor (2012), *Using Qualitative Research in Advertising: Strategies, Techniques, and Applications* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Mudrack, Peter E. (2004), "Job Involvement, Obsessive - Compulsive Personality Traits, and Workaholic Behavioral Tendencies," *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17 (5), 490-508.

Mueller, Daniel J. and Kyung Kim (2004), "The Tenacious Goal Pursuit and Flexible Goal Adjustment Scales: Examination of Their Validity," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 64 (1), 120-42.

Multon, Karen D., Steven D. Brown, and Robert W. Lent (1991), "Relation of Self-Efficacy Beliefs to Academic Outcomes: A Meta-Analytic Investigation," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 38 (1), 30-38.

Munyon, Timothy P., James K. Summers, Katina M. Thompson, and Gerald R. Ferris (2015), "Political Skill and Work Outcomes: A Theoretical Extension, Meta-Analytic Investigation, and Agenda for the Future," *Personnel Psychology*, 68 (1), 143-84.

Nederhof, Anton J. (1985), "Methods of Coping with Social Desirability Bias: A Review," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 15 (3), 263-80.

Ndubisi, Nelson O. (2008), "Gender Differences in Entrepreneurial Traits, Perceptions and Usage of Information and Communication Technologies," *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 14 (1/2), 107-21.

Nesse, Randolph M. (2000), "Is Depression an Adaptation?," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 57 (1), 14-20.

Newman, Russ (2005), "APA's Resilience Initiative," *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 36 (3), 227-29.

Nonis, Sarath A., Jeffrey K. Sager, and Kamalesh Kumar (1996), "Salespeople's Use of Upward Influence Tactics (UITs) in Coping with Role Stress," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 24 (1), 44-56.

Noy, Chaim (2008), "Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11 (4), 327-44.

Nunnally, Jum C. and Ira H. Bernstein (1994), *Psychometric Theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

O'Connell, Michael and Hammad Sheikh (2007), "Growth in Career Earnings and the Role of Achievement-Related Traits," *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 28 (5), 590-605.

Oppenheimer, Daniel M., Tom Meyvis, and Nicolas Davidenko (2009), "Instructional Manipulation Checks: Detecting Satisficing to Increase Statistical Power," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45 (4), 867-72.

Orbach, Iris, Robert N. Singer, and Milledge Murphey (1997), "Changing Attributions With an Attribution Training Technique Related to Basketball Dribbling," *The Sport Psychologist*, 11, 294-304.

Palmatier, Robert W., Rajiv P. Dant, Dhruv Grewal, and Kenneth R. Evans (2006), "Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Relationship Marketing: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (October), 136-53.

Paparoidamis, Nicholas G. and Paolo Guenzi (2009), "An Empirical Investigation into the Impact of Relationship Selling and LMX on Salespeople's Behaviours and Sales Effectiveness," *European Journal of Marketing*, 43 (7/8), 1053-75.

Pardo, Catherine (1997), "Key Account Management in the Business to Business Field: The Key Account's Point of View," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 17 (4), 17-26.

Park, Jeong Eun and Michele D. Bunn (2003), "Organizational Memory: A New Perspective on the Organizational Buying Process," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 18 (3), 237-57.

---- and George D. Deitz (2006), "The Effect of Working Relationship Quality on Salesperson Performance and Job Satisfaction: Adaptive Selling Behavior in Korean Automobile Sales Representatives," *Journal of Business Research*, 59 (2), 204-13.

----, Juyoung Kim, Alan J. Dubinsky, and Hyunju Lee (2010), "How Does Sales Force Automation Influence Relationship Quality and Performance? The Mediating Roles of Learning and Selling Behaviors," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39 (7), 1128-38.

---- and Betsy B. Holloway (2003), "Adaptive Selling Behavior Revisited: An Empirical Examination of Learning Orientation, Sales Performance, and Job Satisfaction," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 23 (3), 239-51.

Patel, Pankaj C. and Sherry M. B. Thatcher (2014), "Sticking It Out: Individual Attributes and Persistence in Self-Employment," *Journal of Management*, 40 (7), 1932-79.

Patzelt, Holger, Christian Lechner, and Anja Klaukien (2011), "Networks and the Decision to Persist with Underperforming R&D Projects," *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 28 (5), 801-15.

Payan, Janice M. and Richard G. McFarland (2005), "Decomposing Influence Strategies: Argument Structure and Dependence as Determinants of the Effectiveness of Influence Strategies in Gaining Channel Member Compliance," *Journal of Marketing*, 69 (July), 66-79.

Pelham, Alfred M. (2009), "An Exploratory Study of the Influence of Firm Market Orientation on Salesperson Adaptive Selling, Customer Orientation, Interpersonal Listening in Personal Selling and Salesperson Consulting Behaviors," *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 17 (1), 21-39.

---- and Pamela Kravitz (2008), "An Exploratory Study of the Influence of Sales Training Content and Salesperson Evaluation on Salesperson Adaptive Selling, Customer Orientation, Listening, and Consulting Behaviors," *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 16 (5), 413-35.

Perrewé, Pamela L., Gerald R. Ferris, Dwight D. Frink, and William P. Anthony (2000), "Political Skill: An Antidote for Workplace Stressors," *Academy of Management Executive*, 14 (3), 115-23.

----, Kelly L. Zellars, Gerald R. Ferris, Ana M. Rossi, Charles J. Kacmar, and David A. Ralston (2004), "Neutralizing Job Stressors: Political Skill as an Antidote to the Dysfunctional Consequences of Role Conflict," *Academy of Management Journal*, 47 (1), 141-52.

Petersen, J. Andrew, Tarun Kushwaha, and V. Kumar (2015), "Marketing Communication Strategies and Consumer Financial Decision Making: The Role of National Culture," *Journal of Marketing*, 79 (January), 44-63.

Peterson, Christopher and Martin E.P. Seligman (2004), *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, Robert A., Gerald Albaum, and Nancy M. Ridgway (1989), "Consumers Who Buy From Direct Sales Companies," *Journal of Retailing*, 65 (2), 273-86.

Pettigrew, Andrew M. (1992), "The Character and Significance of Strategy Process Research," *Strategic Management Journal*, 13 (S2), 5-16.

Pettijohn, Charles E., Linda S. Pettijohn, and Albert J. Taylor (2007), "Does Salesperson Perception of the Importance of Sales Skills Improve Sales Performance, Customer Orientation, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment, and Reduce Turnover?," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 27 (1), 75-88.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey (1981), *Power in Organizations*. Boston: Pitman.

---- (2010a), "Power Play," *Harvard Business Review*, 88 (7/8), 84-92.

---- (2010b), *Power: Why Some People Have It and Others Don't*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

---- and Gerald R. Salancik (1978), *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Approach*. New York: Harper and Row.

Piercy, Nigel F., David W. Cravens, and Neil A. Morgan (1998), "Salesforce Performance and Behaviour-Based Management Processes in Business-to-Business Sales Organizations," *European Journal of Marketing*, 32 (1/2), 79-100.

----, ----, and Nikala Lane (2001), "Sales Manager Behavior Control Strategy and Its Consequences: The Impact of Gender Differences," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 21 (1), 39-49.

Pilling, Bruce K., Naveen Donthu, and Steve Henson (1999), "Accounting for the Impact of Territory Characteristics on Sales Performance: Relative Efficiency as a Measure of Salesperson Performance," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 19 (2), 35-45.

Plank, Richard E. and David A. Reid (1994), "The Mediating Role of Sales Behaviors: An Alternative Perspective of Sales Performance and Effectiveness," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 14 (3), 43-56.

Plouffe, Christopher R., Willy Bolander, and Joseph A. Cote (2014), "Which Influence Tactics Lead to Sales Performance? It is a Matter of Style," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 34 (2), 141-59.

----, Srinivas Sridharan, and Donald W. Barclay (2010), "Exploratory Navigation and Salesperson Performance: Investigating Selected Antecedents and Boundary Conditions in High-Technology and Financial Services Contexts," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39 (4), 538-50.

Ployhart, Robert E. and Paul D. Bliese (2006), "Individual Adaptability (I-ADAPT) Theory: Conceptualizing the Antecedents, Consequences, and Measurement of Individual Differences in Adaptability," *Advances in Human Performance and Cognitive Engineering Research*, 6, 3-39.

Podsakoff, Philip M., Scott B. MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon Lee, and Nathan P. Podsakoff (2003), "Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88 (5), 879-903.

----, Scott B. MacKenzie, and Nathan P. Podsakoff (2012), "Sources of Method Bias in Social Science Research and Recommendations On How to Control It," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63, 539-69.

Polansky, Norman, Ronald Lippitt, and Fritz Redl (1950), "An Investigation of Behavioral Contagion in Groups," *Human Relations*, 3, 319-48.

Ponomarov, Serhiy Y. and Mary C. Holcomb (2009), "Understanding the Concept of Supply Chain Resilience," *International Journal of Logistics Management*, 20 (1), 124-43.

Porter, Stephen S. and Lawrence W. Inks (2000), "Cognitive Complexity and Salesperson Adaptability: An Exploratory Investigation," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 20 (1), 15-21.

----, Joshua L. Wiener, and Gary L. Frankwick (2003), "The Moderating Effect of Selling Situation on the Adaptive Selling Strategy–Selling Effectiveness Relationship," *Journal of Business Research*, 56 (4), 275-81.

Powley, Edward H. (2009), "Reclaiming Resilience and Safety: Resilience Activation in the Critical Period of Crisis," *Human Relations*, 62 (9), 1289-326.

Pratt, Michael G. (2009), "From the Editors: For the Lack of a Boilerplate: Tips on Writing Up (and Reviewing) Qualitative Research," *Academy of Management Journal*, 52 (5), 856-62.

Prieto, Leon C. (2010), "Proactive Personality and Entrepreneurial Leadership: Exploring the Moderating Role of Organizational Identification and Political Skill," *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 16 (2), 107-21.

Pulakos, Elaine D., Sharon Arad, Michelle A. Donovan, and Kevin E. Plamondon (2000), "Adaptability in the Workplace: Development of a Taxonomy of Adaptive Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85 (4), 612-24.

Raju, Jagmohan S. and V. Srinivasan (1996), "Quota-Based Compensation Plans for Multiterritory Heterogeneous Salesforces," *Management Science*, 42 (10), 1454-62.

Rapp, Adam, Raj Agnihotri, and Lukas P. Forbes (2008), "The Sales Force Technology–Performance Chain: The Role of Adaptive Selling and Effort," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 28 (4), 335-50.

----, Michael Ahearne, John Mathieu, and Tammy Rapp (2010a), "Managing Sales Teams in a Virtual Environment," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 27 (3), 213-24.

----, ----, John Mathieu, and Niels Schillewaert (2006), "The Impact of Knowledge and Empowerment on Working Smart and Working Hard: The Moderating Role of Experience," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 23 (3), 279-93.

----, Kevin J. Trainor, and Raj Agnihotri (2010b), "Performance Implications of Customer-Linking Capabilities: Examining the Complementary Role of Customer Orientation and CRM Technology," *Journal of Business Research*, 63 (11), 1229-36.

----, Daniel G. Bachrach, and Tammy L. Rapp (2013), "The Influence of Time Management Skill on the Curvilinear Relationship Between Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Task Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98 (4), 668-77.

Rashotte, Lisa S. (2009), "Social Influence," in *The Concise Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, George Ritzer and J. Michael Ryan, eds., Vol. 9, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 562-63.

Raymond, Mary A. and John F. Tanner Jr. (1994), "Selling and Sales Management in Action: Maintaining Customer Relationships in Direct Sales: Stimulating Repeat Purchase Behavior," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 14 (4), 67-76.

Raymond, Wladimir, Pierre Mohnen, Franz Palm, and Sybrand S. Van Der Loeff (2010), "Persistence of Innovation in Dutch Manufacturing: Is it Spurious?," *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 92 (3), 495-504.

Read, Stuart, Nicholas Dew, Saras D. Sarasvathy, Michael Song, and Robert Wiltbank (2009), "Marketing Under Uncertainty: The Logic of an Effectual Approach," *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (May), 1-18.

Reinartz, Werner, Michael Haenlein, and Jörg Henseler (2009), "An Empirical Comparison of the Efficacy of Covariance-Based and Variance-Based SEM," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 26 (4), 332-44.

Reinmoeller, Patrick and Nicole Van Baardwijk (2005), "The Link Between Diversity and Resilience," *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 46 (4), 61.

Rich, Gregory A. (1998), "Selling and Sales Management in Action: The Constructs of Sales Coaching: Supervisory Feedback, Role Modeling and Trust," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 18 (1), 53-63.

Richardson, Glenn E. (2002), "The Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58 (3), 307-21.

---- and Phillip J. Waite (2002), "Mental Health Promotion Through Resilience and Resiliency Education," *International Journal of Emergent Mental Health*, 4 (1), 65-75.

Richtnér, Anders and Hans Löfsten (2014), "Managing in Turbulence: How the Capacity for Resilience Influences Creativity," *R&D Management*, 44 (2), 137-51.

Riley, Elizabeth N., Jessica L. Combs, Carol E. Jordan, and Gregory T. Smith (2015), "Negative Urgency and Lack of Perseverance: Identification of Differential Pathways of Onset and Maintenance Risk in the Longitudinal Prediction of Nonsuicidal Self-Injury," *Behavior Therapy*, 46 (4), 439-48.

Ringle, Christian M., Sven Wende, and Alexander Will (2005), "SmartPLS 2.0 (Beta)." Hamburg.

Robbins, Steven B., Le Huy, Daniel Davis, Aaron Carlstrom, Kristy Lauver, and Ronelle Langley (2004), "Do Psychosocial and Study Skill Factors Predict College Outcomes? A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin*, 130 (2), 261-88.

Roberts, Karl A. (2005), "Associated Characteristics of Stalking Following the Termination of Romantic Relationships," *Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice*, 1 (1), 15-35.

Robertson, Kelley (2012), "9 Essential Selling Skills Every Sales Person Must Know," (accessed September 18, 2014, [available at http://fearless-selling.ca/9-essential-skills/%5D.

Robertson-Kraft, Claire and Angela L. Duckworth (2014), "True Grit: Trait-Level Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals Predicts Effectiveness and Retention Among Novice Teachers," *Teachers College Record* 116 (3), 1-27.

Robinson, Laura L. and Sharon Price-Bonham (1978), "Fathers' Reinforcement and Task Persistence of Young Children," *Journal of Psychology*, 99 (1), 83-91.

Robinson, Leroy, Greg W. Marshall, William C. Moncrief, and Felicia G. Lassk (2002), "Toward a Shortened Measure of Adaptive Selling," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 22 (2), 111-18.

----, Greg W. Marshall, and Miriam B. Stamps (2005), "An Empirical Investigation of Technology Acceptance in a Field Sales Force Setting," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34 (4), 407-15.

Román, Sergio and Dawn Iacobucci (2010), "Antecedents and Consequences of Adaptive Selling Confidence and Behavior: A Dyadic Analysis of Salespeople and their Customers," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38 (3), 363-82.

Rossiter, John R. (2002), "The C-OAR-SE Procedure for Scale Development in Marketing," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 19 (4), 305-35.

Rubel, Olivier and Ashutosh Prasad (2015), "Dynamic Incentives in Sales Force Compensation," *Marketing Science*, 34 (1), 1-14.

Ryals, Lynette J. and Andrew S. Humphries (2007), "Managing Key Business-to-Business Relationships What Marketing Can Learn From Supply Chain Management," *Journal of Service Research*, 9 (4), 312-26.

Ryans, David G. (1939), "The Measurement of Persistence: An Historical Review," *Psychological Bulletin*, 36 (9), 715-39.

Sagarin, Brad J., Robert B. Cialdini, William E. Rice, and Sherman B. Serna (2002), "Dispelling the Illusion of Invulnerability: The Motivations and Mechanisms of Resistance to Persuasion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83 (3), 526-41.

Salancik, Gerald R. and Jeffrey Pfeffer (1978), "A Social Information Processing Approach to Job Attitudes and Task Design," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23 (2), 224-53.

Salojärvi, Hanna, Liisa-Maija Sainio, and Anssi Tarkiainen (2010), "Organizational Factors Enhancing Customer Knowledge Utilization in the Management of Key Account Relationships," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39 (8), 1395-402.

Sandelands, Lloyd E., Joel Brockner, and Mary A. Glynn (1988), "If at First You Don't Succeed, Try, Try Again: Effects of Persistence- Performance Contingencies, Ego Involvement, and Self-Esteem on Task Persistence," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 73 (2), 208-16.

Saxe, Robert and Barton A. Weitz (1982), "The SOCO Scale: A Measure of the Customer Orientation of Salespeople," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19 (3), 343-51.

Schmidt, Aaron M. and Chad M. Dolis (2009), "Something's Got to Give: The Effects of Dual-Goal Difficulty, Goal Progress, and Expectancies on Resource Allocation," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94 (3), 678-91.

Schriesheim, Chester A. and Timothy R. Hinkin (1990), "Influence Tactics Used by Subordinates: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis and Refinement of the Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson Subscales," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75 (3), 246-57.

Schwepker Jr., Charles H. (1999), "Understanding Salespeople's Intention to Behave Unethically: The Effects of Perceived Competitive Intensity, Cognitive Moral Development and Moral Judgment," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 21 (4), 303-16.

Seligman, Martin E., Tracy A. Steen, Nansook Park, and Christopher Peterson (2005), "Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions," *American Psychologist*, 60 (5), 410-21.

Semadar, Assaf, Garry Robins, and Gerald R. Ferris (2006), "Comparing the Validity of Multiple Social Effectiveness Constructs in the Prediction of Managerial Job Performance," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27 (4), 443-61.

Seo, Myeong-Gu, Lisa F. Barrett, and Jean M. Bartunek (2004), "The Role of Affective Experience in Work Motivation " *Academy of Management Review*, 29 (3), 423-39.

Shane, Scott, Edwin A. Locke, and Christopher J. Collins (2003), "Entrepreneurial Motivation," *Human Resource Management Review*, 13 (2), 257-79.

Shannahan, Kirby L., Alan J. Bush, and Rachelle J. Shannahan (2012), "Are Your Salespeople Coachable? How Salesperson Coachability, Trait Competitiveness, and Transformational Leadership Enhance Sales Performance," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41 (1), 40-54.

Sharma, Arun (1997), "Customer Satisfaction-Based Incentive Systems: Some Managerial and Salesperson Considerations," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 17 (2), 61-70.

---- and Dan Sarel (1995), "The Impact of Customer Satisfaction Based Incentive Systems on Salespeople's Customer Service Response: An Empirical Study," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 15 (3), 17-29.

Sheffi, Yossi (2005), "Building a Resilient Supply Chain," *Harvard Business Review*, 1 (8), 1-4.

Sheldon, Kennon M., Neetu Abad, Yuna Ferguson, Alexander Gunz, Linda Houser-Marko, Charles P. Nichols, and Sonja Lyubomirsky (2010), "Persistent Pursuit of Need-Satisfying Goals Leads to Increased Happiness: A 6-month Experimental Longitudinal Study," *Motivation and Emotion*, 34 (1), 39-48.

Shen, Aaron X.L., Christy M.K. Cheung, Matthew K.O. Lee, and Huaping Chen (2011), "How Social Influence Affects We-Intention to Use Instant Messaging: The Moderating Effect of Usage Experience," *Information Systems Frontiers*, 13 (2), 157-69.

Shi, Junqi, Zhuo Chen, and Le Zhou (2011), "Testing Differential Mediation Effects of Sub-dimensions of Political Skills in Linking Proactive Personality to Employee Performance," *Journal of Business & Psychology*, 26 (3), 359-69.

Shoemaker, Mary E. and Mark C. Johlke (2002), "An Examination Of The Antecedents Of A Crucial Selling Skill: Asking Questions," *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 14 (1), 118-31.

Shoss, Mindy K., L.Alan Witt, and Dusya Vera (2012), "When Does Adaptive Performance Lead to Higher Task Performance?," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33 (7), 910-24.

Siguaw, Judy A. and Earl D. Honeycutt (1995), "An Examination of Gender Differences in Selling Behaviors and Job Attitudes," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 24 (1), 45-52.

Silver, Lawrence S., Sean Dwyer, and Bruce Alford (2006), "Learning and Performance Goal Orientation of Salespeople Revisited: The Role of Performance-Approach and Performance-Avoidance Orientations," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 26 (1), 27-38.

Singh, Ramendra and Gopal Das (2013), "The Impact of Job Satisfaction, Adaptive Selling Behaviors and Customer Orientation on Salesperson's Performance: Exploring the Moderating Role of Selling Experience," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 28 (7), 554-64.

---- and Abraham Koshy (2010), "Determinants of B2B Salespersons' Performance and Effectiveness: A Review and Synthesis of Literature," *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 25 (7), 535-46.

Smith, Anne D., Donde A. Plowman, Dennis Duchon, and Amber M. Quinn (2009), "A Qualitative Study of High-Reputation Plant Managers: Political Skill and Successful Outcomes," *Journal of Operations Management*, 27 (6), 428-43.

Snell, Samuel J., Scott Tonidandel, Phillip W. Braddy, and John W. Fleenor (2014), "The Relative Importance of Political Skill Dimensions for Predicting Managerial Effectiveness," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 23 (6), 915-29.

Snyder, Mark (1987), *Public Appearances, Private Realities: The Psychology of Self-Monitoring*. New York: W.H. Freeman.

Sommer, Kristin L. and Roy F. Baumeister (2002), "Self-Evaluation, Persistence, and Performance Following Implicit Rejection: The Role of Trait Self-Esteem," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28 (7), 926-38.

Spiro, Rosann L. and William D. Perreault (1979), "Influence Use By Industrial Salesmen: Influence-Strategy Mixes and Situational Determinants," *Journal of Business*, 52 (3), 435-55.

----, William J. Stanton, and Gregory A. Rich (2003), *Management of a Sales Force* (11th ed.). Burr Ridge: McGraw-Hill-Irwin

---- and Barton A. Weitz (1990), "Adaptive Selling: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Nomological Validity," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 27 (1), 61-69.

Spitzberg, Brian H. and William R. Cupach (2014), *The Dark Side of Relationship Pursuit: From Attraction to Obsession and Stalking*. New York: Routledge.

Spradley, James P. (1979), *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Steele-Johnson, Debra, Russell S. Beauregard, Paul B. Hoover, and Aaron M. Schmidt (2000), "Goal Orientation and Task Demand Effects on Motivation, Affect, and Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85 (5), 724-38.

Steffens, Paul, Siri Terjesen, and Per Davidsson (2012), "Birds of a Feather Get Lost Together: New Venture Team Composition and Performance," *Small Business Economics*, 39 (3), 727-43.

Stengel, Richard (2000), *You're Too Kind: A Brief History of Flattery*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Strauss, Anselm L. (1987), *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---- and Juliet Corbin (1998), "Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Applications." Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Strutton, David, Lou E. Pelton, and John F. Tanner (1996), "Shall We Gather in the Garden: The Effect of Ingratiatory Behaviors on Buyer Trust in Salespeople," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 25 (2), 151-62.

Suddaby, Roy (2006), "From the Editors: What Grounded Theory is Not," *Academy of Management Journal*, 49 (4), 633-42.

Sujan, Harish (1986), "Smarter Versus Harder: An Exploratory Attributional Analysis of Salespeople's Motivation," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23 (1), 41-49.

----, Barton A. Weitz, and Nirmalya Kumar (1994), "Learning Orientation, Working Smart, and Effective Selling," *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (July), 39-52.

----, ----, and Mita Sujan (1988), "Increasing Sales Productivity by Getting Salespeople to Work Smarter " *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 8 (2), 9-19.

Sutcliffe, Kathleen M. and Timothy J. Vogus (2003), "Organizing for Resilience," in *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline*, Kim S. Cameron and Jane E. Dutton and Robert E. Quinn, eds., Vol. 94, San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 94-110.

Swoboda, Bernhard, Andrea Schlüter, Edith Olejnik, and Dirk Morschett (2012), "Does Centralising Global Account Management Activities in Response to International Retailers Pay Off?," *Management International Review*, 52 (5), 727-56.

Szekely, Anna, Zsolt Ronai, Zsofia Nemoda, G. Kolmann, Judit Gervai, and Maria Sasvari-Szekely (2004), "Human Personality Dimensions of Persistence and Harm Avoidance Associated with DRD4 and 5-HTTLPR Polymorphisms," *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part B: Neuropsychiatric Genetics*, 126 (1), 106-10.

Szymanski, David M. (1988), "Determinants of Selling Effectiveness: The Importance of Declarative Knowledge to the Personal Selling Concept," *Journal of Marketing*, 52 (January), 64-77.

Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner (1979), "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, William Austin and Stephen Worchel, eds., Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole, 33-48.

Tammemagi, Triona, Denis O'Hora, and Kristen A. Maglieri (2013), "The Effects of a Goal Setting Intervention on Productivity and Persistence in an Analogue Work Task," *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 33 (1), 31-54.

Tanner Jr., John F. (1994), "Adaptive Selling at Trade Shows," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 14 (2), 15-23.

Tashakkori, Abbas and Charles Teddlie (2010), "Putting the Human Back in ‘‘Human Research Methodology’’: The Researcher in Mixed Methods Research," *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4 (4), 271-77.

Taylor, Shelley E. and Jonathon D. Brown (1988), "Illusion and Well-Being: A Social Psychological Perspective on Mental Health," *Psychological Bulletin*, 103 (2), 193.

Tedeschi, James T. (1981), *Impression Management Theory and Social Psychological Research*. New York: Academic Press.

---- and Thomas V. Bonoma (1972), "Power and Influence: An Introduction," in *The Social Influence Process*, James T. Tedeschi, ed., Chicago: Aldine Publishing

----, Barry R. Schlenker, and Thomas V. Bonoma (1971), "Cognitive Dissonance: Private Ratiocination or Public Spectacle?," *American Psychologist*, 26 (8), 685-95.

---- (1973), *Conflict, Power, and Games: The Experimental Study of Interpersonal Relations*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.

Tellefsen, Thomas and Nermin Eyuboglu (2002), "The Impact of a Salesperson's In-House Conflicts and Influence Attempts on Buyer Commitment," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 22 (3), 157-72.

Tenenbaum, Gershon, Ronnie Lidor, Noah Lavyan, Kieran Morrow, Shirley Tonnel, and Aaron Gershgoren (2005), "Dispositional and Task-Specific Social-Cognitive Determinants of Physical Effort Perseverance," *Journal of Psychology*, 139 (2), 139-57.

Terho, Harri, Alexander Haas, Andreas Eggert, and Wolfgang Ulaga (2012), "'It's Almost Like Taking the Sales Out of Selling'—Towards a Conceptualization of Value-Based Selling in Business Markets," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41 (1), 174-85.

Thibaut, John W. and Harold H. Kelley (1959), *The Social Psychology of Groups*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Todd, Samuel Y., Kenneth J. Harris, Ranida B. Harris, and Anthony R. Wheeler (2009), "Career Success Implications of Political Skill," *Journal of Social Psychology*, 149 (3), 279-304.

Treadway, Darren C., Garry Adams, T. Johnston Hanes, Pamela L. Perrewé, Marshall J. Magnusen, and Gerald R. Ferris (2014), "The Roles of Recruiter Political Skill and Performance Resource Leveraging in NCAA Football Recruitment Effectiveness," *Journal of Management*, 40 (6), 1607-26.

----., Jacob W. Breland, Garry L. Adams, Allison B. Duke, and Laura A. Williams (2010), "The Interactive Effects of Political Skill and Future Time Perspective on Career and Community Networking Behavior," *Social Networks*, 32 (2), 138-47.

----, ----, Lisa M. Williams, Jeewon Cho, Jun Yang, and Gerald R. Ferris (2013), "Social Influence and Interpersonal Power in Organizations Roles of Performance and Political Skill in Two Studies," *Journal of Management*, 39 (6), 1529-53.

----, Gerald R. Ferris, Allison B. Duke, Garry L. Adams, and Jason B. Thatcher (2007), "The Moderating Role of Subordinate Political Skill on Supervisors' Impressions of Subordinate Ingratiation and Ratings of Subordinate Interpersonal Facilitation," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92 (3), 848-55.

Triguero, Ángela, David Córcoles, and María C. Cuerva (2013), "Differences in Innovation Between Food and Manufacturing Firms: An Analysis of Persistence," *Agribusiness*, 29 (3), 273-92.

Tsui, Anne S. (1984), "A Role Set Analysis of Managerial Reputation," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 34, 64-96.

Turner, John C. (1991), *Social Influence*. Belmont: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Turnipseed, David L. (1999), "An Exploratory Study of the Hardy Personality at Work in the Health Care Industry," *Psychological Reports*, 85 (3), 1199-217.

---- (2003), "Hardy Personality: A Potential Link with Organizational Citizenship Behavior," *Psychological Reports*, 93 (2), 529-43.

Tzempelikos, Nektarios and Spiros Gounaris (2015), "Linking Key Account Management Practices to Performance Outcomes," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 45, 22-34.

Van de Ven, Andrew H. (1992), "Suggestions for Studying Strategy Process: A Research Note," *Strategic Management Journal*, 13 (5), 169-88.

Van Gelderen, Marco (2012), "Perseverance Strategies of Enterprising Individuals," *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, 18 (6), 630-48.

Vansteenkiste, Maarten, Joke Simons, Willy Lens, Kennon M. Sheldon, and Edward L. Deci (2004), "Motivating Learning Performance, and Persistence: The Synergistic Effects of Intrinsic Goal Contents and Autonomy-Supportive Contexts," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87 (2), 246-60.

Venkatesh, Rajiv, Ajay K. Kohli, and Gerald Zaltman (1995), "Influence Strategies in Buying Centers," *Journal of Marketing*, 59 (October), 71-82.

Venkatesh, Viswanath and Susan A. Brown (2001), "A Longitudinal Investigation of Personal Computers in Homes: Adoption Determinants and Emerging Challenges," *MIS Quarterly*, 25 (1), 71-102.

Verbeke, Willem and Richard P. Bagozzi (2000), "Sales Call Anxiety: Exploring What it Means When Fear Rules a Sales Encounter," *Journal of Marketing*, 64 (July), 88-101.

----, Bart Dietz, and Ernst Verwaal (2011), "Drivers of Sales Performance: A Contemporary Meta-Analysis. Have Salespeople Become Knowledge Brokers?," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39 (3), 407-28.

Vinchur, Andrew J., Jeffery S. Schippmann, Fred S. Switzer III, and Philip L. Roth (1998), "A Meta-Analytic Review of Predictors of Job Performance For Salespeople," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83 (4), 586-97.

Virtanen, Tatu, Petri Parvinen, and Minna Rollins (2015), "Complexity of Sales Situation and Sales Lead Performance: An Empirical Study in Business-to-Business Company," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 45, 49-58.

Vogt, W. Paul, Dianne C. Gardner, and Lynne M. Haeffele (2012), *When To Use What Research Design*. New York: Guilford Press.

Von Culin, Katherine R., Eli Tsukayama, and Angela L. Duckworth (2014), "Unpacking Grit: Motivational Correlates of Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9 (4), 306-12.

Wagnild, Gail M. (2011), *The Resilience Scale User's Guide: For the US English Version of the Resilience Scale and the 14-item Resilience Scale (RS-14)*. Worden: The Resilience Center.

---- and Heather M. Young (1993), "Development and Psychometric Evaluation of the Resilience Scale," *Journal of Nursing Measurement*, 1 (2), 165-78.

Walker, Brian, Stephen Carpenter, John Anderies, Nick Abel, Graeme Cumming, Marco Janssen, Louis Lebel, Jon Norberg, Garry D. Peterson, and Rusty Pritchard (2002), "Resilience Management in Social-Ecological Systems: A Working Hypothesis for a Participatory Approach," *Conservation Ecology*, 6 (1), 14.

Walker, Orville C., Gilbert A. Churchill, and Neil M. Ford (1979), "Where Do We Go From Here? Some Selected Issues Concerning the Motivation and Performance of the Industrial Sales Force," in *Critical Issues in Sales Management: State-of-the-art and Future Research Needs*, Gerald Albaum and Gilbert A. Churchill, eds., Eugene: University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 10-75.

Wallendorf, Melanie and Russell W. Belk (1989), "Assessing Trustworthiness in Naturalistic Consumer Research," in *Interpretive Consumer Research*, Elizabeth C. Hirschman, ed., Provo: Association for Consumer Research, 69-84.

Walton, Gregory M., Geoffrey L. Cohen, David Cwir, and Steven J. Spencer (2012), "Mere Belonging: The Power of Social Connections," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102 (3), 513-32.

Wanberg, Connie R., Theresa M. Glomb, Zhaoli Song, and Sarah Sorenson (2005), "Job-Search Persistence During Unemployment: A 10-Wave Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90 (3), 411-30.

Wang, Yinglei, Darren B. Meister, and Peter H. Gray (2013), "Social Influence and Knowledge Management Systems Use: Evidence From Panel Data," *MIS Quarterly*, 37 (1), 299-313.

Weeks, William A. and Lynn R. Kahle (1990), "Salespeople's Time Use and Performance," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 10 (1), 29-37.

Weitz, Barton A. (1981), "Effectiveness in Sales Interactions: A Contingency Framework," *Journal of Marketing*, 45 (Winter), 85-103.

---- (1978), "Relationship Between Salesperson Performance and Understanding of Customer Decision Making," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 15 (4), 501-16.

---- and Kevin D. Bradford (1999), "Personal Selling and Sales Management: A Relationship Marketing Perspective," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27 (2), 241-54.

----, Harish Sujan, and Mita Sujan (1986), "Knowledge, Motivation, and Adaptive Behavior: A Framework for Improving Selling Effectiveness," *Journal of Marketing*, 50 (October), 174-91.

Westman, Mina (1990), "The Relationship Between Stress and Performance: The Moderating Effect of Hardiness," *Human Performance*, 3 (3), 141.

Westphal, James D. and Michael K. Bednar (2005), "Pluralistic Ignorance in Corporate Boards and Firms' Strategic Persistence in Response to Low Firm Performance," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50 (2), 262-98.

Whitaker, Brian G. and Jason J. Dahling (2013), "The Influence of Autonomy and Supervisor Political Skill on the Use and Consequences of Peer Intimidation in Organizations," *Human Performance*, 26 (5), 353-73.

Williams, Lisa A. and David Desteno (2008), "Pride and Perseverance: The Motivational Role of Pride," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94 (6), 1007-17.

Wilson, Jeffrey M. and C. Shane Hunt (2011), "The Impact of Sales Engineers on Salesperson Effectiveness," *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 5 (2), 130-38.

Windle, Gill, Kate M. Bennett, and Jane Noyes (2011), "A Methodological Review of Resilience Measurement Scales," *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 9 (8), 1-18.

Witkow, Melissa R., Virginia Huynh, and Andrew J. Fuligni (2015), "Understanding Differences in College Persistence: A Longitudinal Examination of Financial Circumstances, Family Obligations, and Discrimination in an Ethnically Diverse Sample," *Applied Developmental Science*, 19 (1), 4-18.

Witt, L. Alan and Gerald R. Ferris (2003), "Social Skill as Moderator of the Conscientiousness-Performance Relationship: Convergent Results Across Four Studies," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88 (5), 809-20.

Wood, Wendy (2000), "Attitude Change: Persuasion and Social Influence," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 51 (1), 539-70.

Wright, Peter (1986), "Schemer Schema: Consumers' Intuitive Theories about Marketers' Influence Tactics," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 13, 1-3.

Wrosch, Carsten, Michael F. Scheier, Gregory E. Miller, Richard Schulz, and Charles S. Carver (2003), "Adaptive Self-Regulation of Unattainable Goals: Goal Disengagement, Goal Reengagement, and Subjective Well-Being," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29 (12), 1494-508.

Yin, Robert K. (2013), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Young, Matthew M., Michael J. A. Wohl, Kimberly Matheson, Steve Baumann, and Hymie Anisman (2008), "The Desire to Gamble: The Influence of Outcomes on the Priming Effects of a Gambling Episode," *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 24 (3), 275-93.

Yukl, Gary, Carolyn Chavez, and Charles F. Seifert (2005), "Assessing the Construct Validity and Utility of Two New Influence Tactics," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26 (6), 705-25.

---- and Cecilia M. Falbe (1990), "Influence Tactics and Objectives in Upward, Downward, and Lateral Influence Attempts," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75 (2), 132-40.

---- and J. Bruce Tracey (1992), "Consequences of Influence Tactics Used with Subordinates, Peers, and the Boss," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77 (4), 525-35.

Zaleski, Zbigniew (1987), "Behavioral Effects of Self-Set Goals for Different Time Ranges " *International Journal of Psychology*, 22 (1), 17-38.

Zautra, Alex J., John S. Hall, and Kate E. Murray (2010), "Resilence: A New Definition of Health for People and Communities," in *Handbook of Adult Resilience*, John W. Reich and Alex J. Zautra and John S. Hall, eds., New York: Guilford Press, 3-30.

Zboja, James J., Ronald A. Clark, and Diana L. Haytko (2015), "An Offer You Can't Refuse: Consumer Perceptions of Sales Pressure," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1-16.

Zhang, Hong, Darius K. S. Chan, and Yanjun Guan (2013), "Plans Are More Helpful When One Perseveres: The Moderating Role of Persistence in the Relationship Between Implementation Intentions and Goal Progress," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 35 (2), 231-40.

Zinko, Robert, Gerald R. Ferris, Fred R. Blass, and Mary D. Laird (2007), "Toward a Theory of Reputation in Organizations," in *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, Joseph J. Martocchio, ed., Vol. 26, Oxford: JAI Press/Elsevier Science, 169-209.

Zohar, Ada H. and C. Robert Cloninger (2011), "The Psychometric Properties of the TCI-140 in Hebrew," *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 27 (2), 73-80.

Zoltners, Andris A., Prabhakant Sinha, and Sally E. Lorimer (2008), "Sales Force Effectiveness: A Framework for Researchers and Practitioners," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 28 (2), 115-31.

Zuckerman, Marvin (1994), *Behavioral Expressions and Biosocial Bases of Sensation Seeking*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Salesperson Persistence Interview Guide

Research Questions: What is the nature of salesperson persistence? What are the factors and social interactions that lead salespeople to persist? How does persistence manifest behaviorally?

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. As you know, I am currently a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee working on my dissertation. As previously mentioned in our conversations, I am currently working on a dissertation that focuses on salesperson behavior in a business-to-business context. I am particularly interested your individual behavior, your experiences, and your thoughts as a salesperson. The purpose of the interview is to capture these experiences in your own words. There are no right or wrong answers, and please remember that you are the expert. I am merely interested in having an open discussion about your specific experiences and thoughts as a salesperson.

Discussion of process

- Obtain informed consent to conduct and record interview
- Briefly describe data collection and analyses
- Describe data storage and destruction
- Assurance of confidentiality
- Emphasize the respondent's right to end interview at any time
- Summary report as an incentive to them
- Turn on recorder and obtain verbal consent to conduct and record interview

General Questions

1) Can you give me a bit about your personal background and how you got involved in sales?
   - Obtain demographic/contextual data on organization – years of experience, industries, products
   - Obtain demographic/contextual data on participant – position, education
   - Uncover how they view their role and the value they provide in the organization
2) What types of sales training have you participated in?
   - Uncover any specific training that they received in being persistent

Specific Experiences and Social Processes

1) What do you think are the characteristics of a good salesperson?
2) What are your personal strengths as a salesperson?
3) Tell me about a time when you met with a new prospect to explore the possibility of doing business with them and the prospect gave you mixed signals about their interest. What did you do?
4) Tell me about a time when you were dealing with a prospect and, after a few interactions, it became clear to you that you would be unable to close the deal. What did you do then?
   -What do you do when you face resistance from prospective buyers? (If needed)

-What particular actions do you take in persisting with a customer? (If needed)

5) What does being persistent mean to you?
6) What motivates you to persist in your role as a salesperson?
7) What are some reasons why you may persist more or less with a particular prospect?

-How do you know when to persist and when to stop persisting in your pursuit of a particular prospect? (If needed)

8) Can you see any negatives with being persistent in a sales setting?
9) To what extent do you believe that being persistent contributes to your performance as a salesperson?

Uncover

- How does persistence manifest behaviorally (both short and long-term)
- How do they view persistence
- What does persistence mean to them
- What type of sales training did they receive (specifically geared towards persistence)
- What are the stopping rules/decision criteria that they use in determining when to stop pursuing a customer
- What drives their choice of their stopping rules
- How do they view their success/failures in terms of over-or-under pursuing customers
- How do they determine how persistent they should be towards specific customers
- What types of influences (external and internal) or factors lead them to more or less persistent

Probes

Need to remember to constantly probe for details using non-verbal active listening cues and using statements such as:

- Can you elaborate on that in more detail
- Tell me more about that
- What did that mean to you
- Please go on
- Can you please give me an example

Wrap-up

- Do you have anything else you wish to share with us at this time?
- May I contact you in the future if we have other follow-up questions?

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with me today. I certainly appreciate you sharing your perspective and insights today. I have learned a lot from our conversation. As I mentioned, I am going to be compiling this research and will provide you with a summary of the findings if you wish. In the meanwhile, if there are any thoughts that come to mind, please contact me by email or phone on the business card.

Appendix B – Measurement Items

Maintain Contact

Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year.

I maintained contact with viable inactive customers to ensure that…

	Never = 0	1	2	3	4	Sometimes = 5	6	7	8	9	Always = 10
...our firm was always on their mind.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...they would think of me when a future need arose.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...they would think of our firm when a future need arose.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...they remember me in the future.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Value-Adding Follow-Up

Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year.

When I followed-up with viable inactive customers that…

	Never = 0	1	2	3	4	Sometimes = 5	6	7	8	9	Always = 10
...I ensured I had something relevant to share.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I leveraged common interests to engage in relevant follow-up conversations with them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I identified meaningful ways to continue my interactions with them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I leveraged information relevant to them in order to promote continued interaction.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Give Them Space

Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year.

When dealing with viable inactive customers that…

	Never = 0	1	2	3	4	Sometimes = 5	6	7	8	9	Always = 10
...I gave them more space so they felt less pressure.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
..I pursued them in a less aggressive fashion.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I reduced the intensity of my follow-up efforts with them so they didn't feel like I was pushing them to make a decision.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I reduced the frequency of my follow-up contacts with them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Probe Resistance
Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year.

When dealing with viable inactive customers that…

	Never = 0	1	2	3	4	Sometimes = 5	6	7	8	9	Always = 10
...I engaged with them to understand why they were unwilling to close on the deal.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I encouraged them to express their concerns.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I pushed them to open-up about why they were unwilling to commit.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I asked them to explain what aspects of working with our firm did not appeal to them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Reframe Offer
Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year.

When dealing with viable inactive customers that…

	Never = 0	1	2	3	4	Sometimes = 5	6	7	8	9	Always = 10
...I went back and provided them with a more compelling offer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I made the offer more appealing to them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I changed the terms of an offer so that it was more convincing to them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I repositioned our offer so that it was more attractive to them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Attempt Close
Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year.

When dealing with viable inactive customers that…

	Never = 0	1	2	3	4	Sometimes = 5	6	7	8	9	Always = 10
...I asked them for their business.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I asked them if they were ready to begin working with our firm.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I asked them if they would consider doing business with our firm.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I attempted to close the deal with them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Threaten Break-Up
Please indicate how often you performed each of the following behaviors during the last year.

When dealing with viable inactive customers that…

	Never = 0	1	2	3	4	Sometimes = 5	6	7	8	9	Always = 10
...I let them know that the time may not be right for our firms to do business.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I informed them that I would no longer be contacting them if I didn't hear back from them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I let them know that if they wanted to continue the conversation, it was up to them to follow-up with me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I let them know that I would not be contacting them again unless they let me know they had some interest in working with our firm.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Political Skill
Using the scale provided, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement about yourself.

Social Astuteness

	Strongly Disagree = 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree = 7
I understand people very well.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have good intuition and savvy about how to present myself to others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I pay close attention to people's facial expressions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Interpersonal Influence

	Strongly Disagree = 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree = 7
I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am good at getting people to like me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Networking Ability

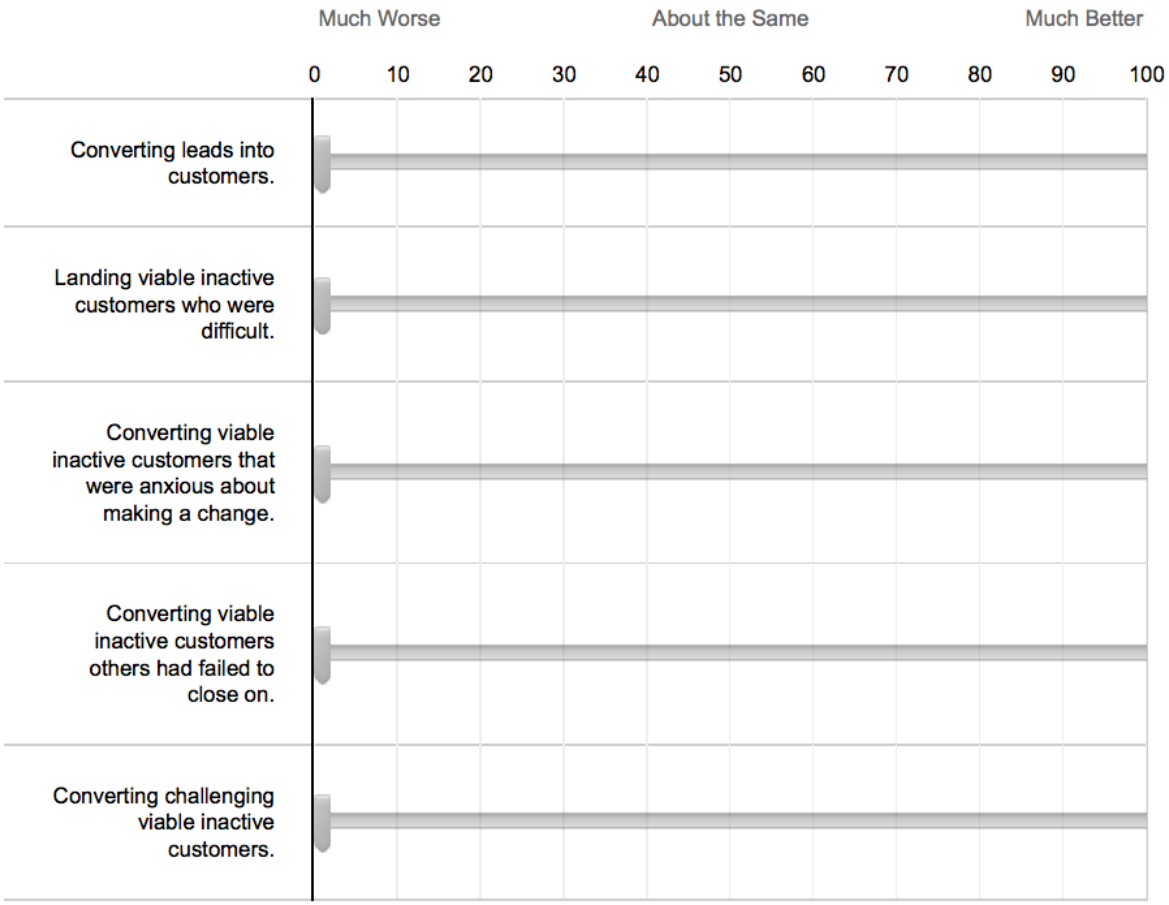
	Strongly Disagree = 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree = 7
I spend a lot of time and effort networking with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am good at building relationships with influential people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know a lot of important people and am well connected.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Apparent Sincerity

	Strongly Disagree = 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree = 7
When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I try to show a genuine interest in other people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I try to be sincere when I deal with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

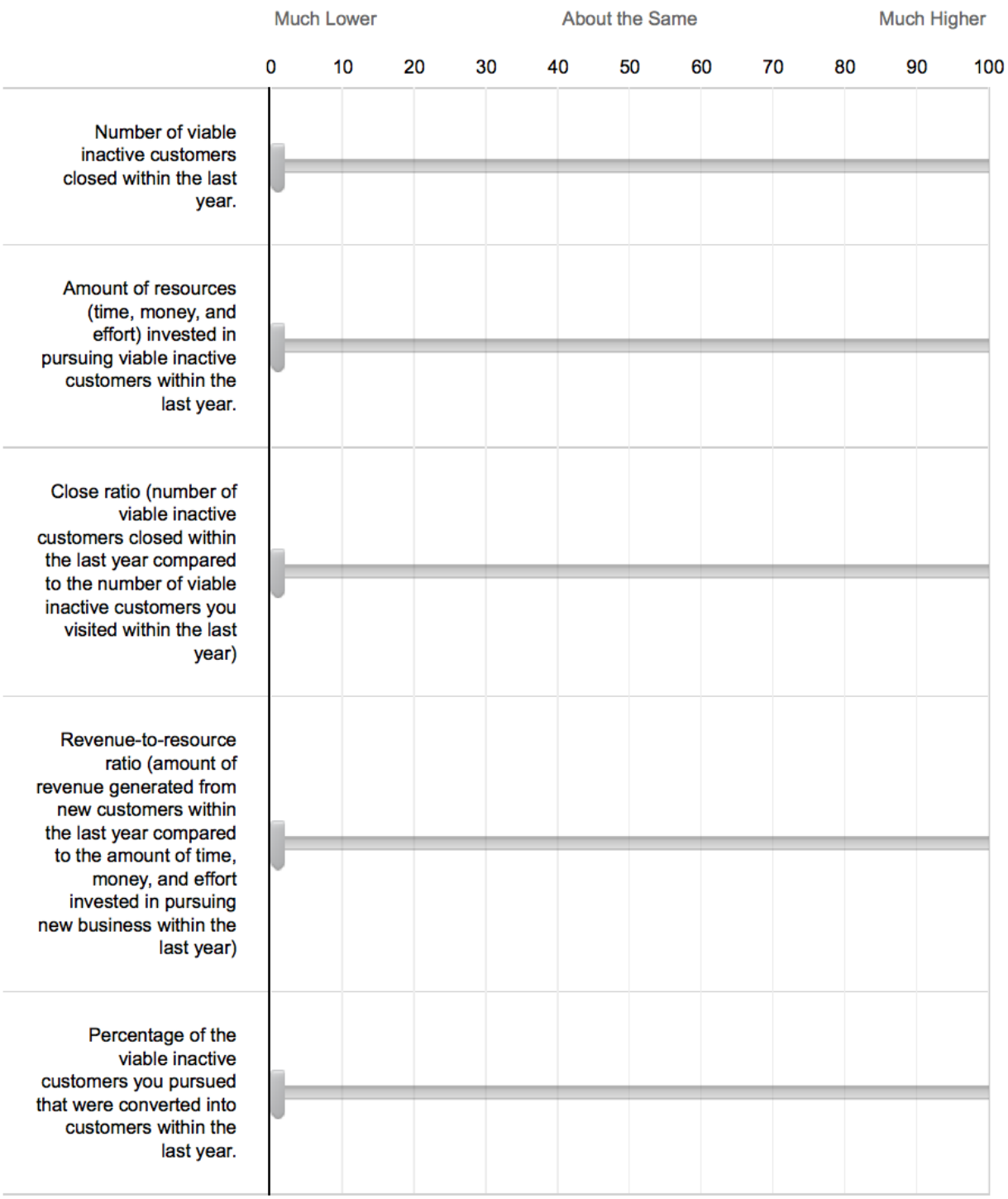
Prospecting Effectiveness

When compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, how well did you perform within the last year as it relates to each of the following:



Prospecting Efficiency

When compared to other salespeople employed in your firm, describe your performance within the last year as it relates to each of the following:



VITA

Nawar Naim Chaker holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He earned a Master of Business Administration, with an emphasis in Change Management, from the University of Colorado at Denver. Prior to joining UT to complete his Ph.D. degree, Nawar worked in marketing, sales, distribution, and engineering. Nawar's industry experience has primarily been in sales, where he worked for two Fortune 100 companies in Colorado.

Nawar uses his work experience as the impetus for his research interests. In particular, his research focuses on topics in marketing strategy, personal selling, sales management, and cross-functional sales relationships. More specifically, he is interested in understanding the drivers of salesperson performance and the factors that contribute to salesperson attraction, retention, and attrition.

In May 2016, Nawar completed his Ph.D. in Business Administration with a major in Marketing and a minor in Econometrics at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Elon University, where he will be teaching sales courses and be involved in the sales center.