

Salesforce Control Systems as Direct Antecedents of Salesperson and Sales Unit Performance: A Literature Review

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Abstract

The impact from sales control systems on individual and organizational effectiveness has been a major issue for scholars since these systems were conceptualized by Anderson and Oliver and Jaworski. Salesperson behavioral performance appears as an antecedent of outcome performance, and both are connected to sales unit effectiveness. This paper focuses on a deep literature review during the period 1983-2014, based on the control systems' typologies found, and summarizes the multiple evidences found, connecting this systems with the salesperson behavioral performance and the outcome performance –and between them-, and both individual results with the sales unit effectiveness, including its managerial implications. After the review of the 142 articles in the field, a cluster of four research directions are identified, namely: (1) the impact of the different variables and activities on the control systems and the performance levels, (2) the methodological variables, (3) the measures of the level control system or performance, and (4) the multisectorial, multicultural and multinational sales environment.

Keywords: Salesforce control; Sales management; Behavior control; Output control

Introduction

Sales departments account for the largest portion of personnel and marketing budget for many firms [1-4], especially in the selling of industrial products, where salespeople (1) are the interface between suppliers and buyers [5,6], (2) represent the service component of the seller's offering [7] and (3) are the only function that generates sales/incomes. The significant role of salespeople on customer satisfaction and financial performance has created a growing interest in the academic world for studying this business area over the last thirty years.

Early studies about salesforce control systems focused on evaluating and understanding the personal characteristics which determinate good sales performance [8-11], while the impact of other variables not controlled by the salesperson had a limited research effort [12]. Subsequently, scholars found that, by adjusting the mode and level of control, managers can affect salesperson efficiency levels [13].

Control systems are the organization's procedures for monitoring, directing, evaluating, and compensating its employees [1], in order to ensure the attainment of desired organizational objectives [14-16]. Managers exercise control through information exchanges with salespeople, where the attitudinal and capacitive standards and the performance goals are established and updated periodically. Information management may be considered the first component, while the evaluation from salesperson's performance results and its impact in rewards or punishments, may be considered the second dimension of supervisory control [17].

Best practices in managing sales organizations may be an important source of competitive advantages [5], however controls under specific conditions (competitive intensity) or contextual factors (low performance documentation, or low procedural knowledge), or mismanagement (sales quotas improperly set), may also cause employees to manipulate data, work against the long-term interest of the organization, and exhibit other dysfunctional behaviors [2,18-20].

Given the range of situations in which the different firms face the commercialization process, many of the studies related to salesforce control systems deal with specific aspects of:

- Certain types of product or industry [9,21-24].
- Distribution types [6,25,26].
- Manager profiles [27-29].
- The selling in an export context [30-36].
- How the cultural environment affects the optimal system [37-39].
- Other contingent matters such as the degree of digitization of the sales activity [40] or the different salesperson profiles.

The applicability of the results of such investigations to other contexts is subject to validation by further work. Our study will focus on those related to the salesperson performance and the sales unit (sales organization) effectiveness, and includes the proposals made by researchers on the work area during the last 32 years (1983-2014).

Although some studies about salesforce management deal with informal controls, most research to date focuses on formal systems. The formalization involves the prescription of rules and processes that salespersons have to follow, and the monitoring, evaluation, and compensation procedures [41]. Quantification by vendors or directors, of valuations on the amount of each of the components of formal controls, has been done successfully in many investigations. However informal controls, despite being equally important in what concerns salesperson behaviors and outcomes [42,43], have not been object of a similar number of empirical investigations.

Recent literature analysis include Verbeke et al.'s (2011) work, who listed the antecedents and moderators of salesperson

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performance found after Churchill et al. [8] study, while Darmon and Martin [44] proposed a framework with organizational, personal and environmental variables affecting sales force control systems and salesperson outcomes. In a similar vein, Singh and Koshy's [45] literature review proposes the predictors on salesperson's performance in a business to business context.

The purpose of our research is to summarize and to update the academic literature concerning the direct effects of the salesforce control systems on sales-performance and from both on sales unit effectiveness, including managerial implications and the research directions. We focus therefore in linear relationships between the control systems, the salesperson performance and finally the sales unit outcomes. A theoretical background about the salesforce control systems will be followed by the research methodology and the synthesis of studies about salesperson performance and sales unit effectiveness. A summary of managerial implications and future research proposals complete this work.

Each of the empirical research concerning the salesforce control systems has used as the background either of the typologies that have been proposed for these systems [1,2,15]. This paper presents a full description of all classifications proposed to date, intending to be a reference for future work, where researchers can identify and assess the similarities and differences between each of these classifications. As a second contribution, we update the state of knowledge on the direct effects that produce control systems on the salesperson performance and sales unit effectiveness, including a classification of the main research directions proposed by the scholars during this period: the impact of different variables on performance levels, the methodologies used in research, the measurement of the degree of control, and the issues about the sale in a global context.

Salesforce Control Systems Typology

Scholars have proposed classifications for control systems usually based on the controlled variable: behavior, activity, capacity, input, outcome, output or compensation. Occasionally the criterion is the degree of formalization [2] or the level of different combinations of the degree of formalization with the level of the controlled variable [46]. Individual criteria identified will be presented hereafter.

In behavior-based control systems the firm assumes risk to gain control, and the management monitors and directs the operations of the salesforce [1]. This system emphasizes the use of field sales managers coupled with fixed salary compensation [3,48], and is typified by high levels of supervisor monitoring, direction and intervention in activities, and subjective and complex methods of evaluating performance, centered on salesperson's job inputs [48]. Under such control system, managers monitor and evaluate inputs from employees who are more likely to take a long term view, take risks in the performance of their duties, and engage in activities as relationship building, which do not result in short-term sales, but are necessary for the long-term success [38,47]. Common tools used in behavior-based systems include group meeting, feedback from managers, training programs, incentive programs, scheduling, and territory management. The variables utilized to evaluate performance are qualitative and subjectively assessed by sales managers and include among other attitude, product knowledge, appearance, planning ability [49], adaptive selling, teamwork, sales presentation, and sales support [16]. Ahearne et al. [50] listed the following service behaviors on relationship quality and share of customer: diligence, information communication, inducements (behavior aimed at personalizing the relationship with a customer),

sportsmanship (salesperson's willingness to tolerate less-than-ideal circumstances without demonstrating negativism), and empathy.

Under an outcome-based system, the marketplace pressures salespeople's performance, reducing managerial overhead, and shifting risk to the salesperson, as a *laissez faire* management [1,48,51,52] that uses incentives to reward salespeople on the basis of their outcomes [53]. Such system may lead (1) to give excessive attention to short-term objectives, (2) to pay less attention to customer's loyalty, (3) to use high pressure techniques in selling, and (4) to reduce the development of long term strategies [47]. For outcome-based systems, less interaction between management and the salesforce is expected, so that sales and profit reports, promotion, salary and bonus [27] are regular tools when meeting or exceeding the performance goals. Sanctions or punishments such as explanation for failure, warnings, probation, or dismissal are taken when performance does not reach the standards in terms of sales volume, market share, new accounts, and customer satisfaction [16,17]. Incentive plans play a prominent role in motivating, directing, and retaining a knowledgeable, skilled, and competent sales force [54,55]. Similarly, Jaworski et al. [46] defined output control as the setting of performance standards that are monitored and evaluated, therefore is considered equivalent to the construct of outcome control [56].

Initially the salesforce control system was represented as a continuum between the two extremes: pure behavior-based and pure outcome-based systems [1,48], and management may elect to position its strategy at various levels between these extremes, resulting in significant consequences in terms of the salesperson's affect, cognition, behavior and performance. Hybrid governance can be created by adopting intermediate levels of ownership, monitoring, direction, subjective evaluation, and results sharing [48,57]. Using this control, firms may position themselves along the continuum and selectively use elements of both systems [58], so that the transition from one form of control to the other would result in fairly smooth changes in the consequences. One main indicator is the proportion of fixed to incentive-based compensation in the overall remuneration plan [39,59].

Measuring the salesforce control has been analysed by different studies from the initial conceptualization from Anderson and Oliver [1]. Based on Babakus et al. [12]'s scale, Panagopoulos and Avlonitis [60] proposed the following 13-item version: monitoring (observe the performance of salesperson in the field, pay attention to the extent to which salesperson travels, regularly review call reports); directing (regularly spend time coaching, discuss performance evaluations, and actively participate in training salesperson on the job); evaluating (evaluate the individual sales results, evaluate the quality of sales presentations made, evaluate the number of sales calls made, and evaluate the profit contribution); rewarding (reward based on their sales results, compensate based on the quality of the sales activities, use nonfinancial incentives to reward the salesperson for their achievements).

The framework from Jaworski [2], and Jaworski and MacInnis identified formal control, as written, management-initiated, and oriented to marketing objectives, and informal control as unwritten, typically worker-initiated, and not necessarily supportive of the marketing objectives controls. The former include input control, as actions prior to salesperson's activity, like selection criteria, recruitment and training programs; process control, focusing on influencing on behavior and/or salespeople's activities, in order to achieve the outcomes; and output control, as setting of performance standards, monitoring, and results' evaluation; while the latter refer to self control, as individual employees taking responsibility for their jobs, based

largely on their intrinsic motivation; social or professional control, or control through peers, where the work unit somehow manages the individuals performance; and cultural control, with norms affecting the individuals as a part of an organization. According to this model, different levels of formal and informal control result in four different combinations [46]: bureaucratic system, similar to behavior-based control as management-initiated, written controls, with professional and cultural mechanisms operating in a secondary role; clan system, relying primarily on professional and cultural mechanisms; high control system, following formal procedures, but also maintaining a collegial work environment and the norms and values of the organization; and low control system, where both formal and informal controls operate as secondary.

Attending to the various results of behavior control on end-performance in different studies: negative [48] and unrelated [3,46], Challagalla and Shervani [15] suggested two different types of behavior control, namely activity and capability control, whose independent operating may explain these diverse results on performance. Activity control refers to the specification of activities, its monitoring and the administering of rewards and punishments according to the performance. Moreover capability control emphasizes the development of individual skills and abilities, setting goals, and monitoring these skills and abilities, providing guidance for improvement, and rewarding and punishing on the basis of the levels acquired. Training and apprenticeships, mentoring-coaching and job enrichment programs are specific activities to enhance skills such as negotiation, presentation, or interpersonal communication [17,61].

Piercy et al. [29,35] defined compensation control as the proportion of incentive pay in the total compensation of salespeople, that operates independently of behavior and outcome control. This type of control might take as basis one item extracted from behavior and outcome control (as it may be also conceptualized monitoring control, direction control, or evaluation control) that locates closer to outcome control construct for being based both on low supervision and having the economic retribution as a focal point of the control. The authors' framework starts in behavior and compensation control, and introduces behavior performance and compensation control as antecedents of outcome performance, which might sustain this sharing of characteristics between outcome and compensation control.

Conceptualization of formal controls follows mainly three theoretical approaches: Agency Theory assumes uncertain environments for salespeople [62] and information costs that makes it difficult to monitor behaviors [5], taking compensation policies as benchmark, and being process or behavioral controls operationalized as fixed compensation (where no risk is shared with the salesperson). Under output or outcome controls salesperson's retribution is at least partially based on the economic performance [1,63]. According to Transaction Cost Theory, management seeks the most efficient solution-either within the company, or outsourcing- to implement governance mechanisms to reduce potential salesperson opportunism [64]. According to this, firm's vertical hierarchy represents process or behavioral control, while output or outcome control is exerted by the market forces that the salesperson has to deal with, bearing the risk and acting as an entrepreneur [1]. This theory recommends behavior-based controls when outcomes are hardly measurable, or to retain valuable salespeople, or with so large salesforces that supervision becomes cost efficient [5,23]. Organizational Theory considers management intervention and influence to characterize each control system, so that process and behavioral controls as based on personal vigilance, and

output control as measurement of outcomes [1,63]. Cultural control is especially relevant in salesperson activity under this theory, due to the special and nature of the activities and tasks they have to perform: the organizational values guide salespeople through ambiguous situations [65].

Based on Agency Theory, Joseph and Thevaranjan [54] feature an analytical model where salesperson either expends effort in an internal dimension, coordinating the delivery schedule in activities that mainly reduce costs, where monitoring is relatively inexpensive; or in an external dimension, adding value by differentiating the product in the customer's mind, with the resulting increase in sales or profit, thus working outwardly with an infinite cost of monitoring. Based on two scenarios: a pure incentives world by one side, and monitoring the internal dimension, and incentives for the external dimension by another, the model suggests the optimal blend of incentives and monitoring considering costs and profits.

Control systems mirror three managerial orientations, indicating supervisor's assessment of each procedure [66]. Based on output or outcome control, with an end-results orientation, supervisors leave it up to salespeople to determine the strategies and efforts to achieve the targeted sales and market shares. Moreover, supervisors who specify, monitor, and give feedback about the activities that salespeople have to perform, follow an activity orientation. Finally, capability-oriented supervisors coach -rather than monitor- salespeople in order to enhance their skills and abilities, to perform sales tasks effectively, monitoring progress, and providing appropriate feedback regarding their capabilities.

The management of the control system includes two organizational levels. On one hand, senior management represented in the chief sales executive is responsible for the strategic part, indicating the type of system to be used, setting global goals and defining the way in which salespeople must be monitored, focusing on the overall results in terms of turnover and profit of the sales unit. Furthermore the field sales managers monitor the daily performance and behavioral outcomes at the individual level, playing an essential role in executing the broad control guidelines at a tactical level [67].

All these classifications and conceptualizations have been used to support researchers in order to develop later related antecedents, results and mediators between control systems and other relevant variables from an academic or managerial point of view. In the next point of this study we describe the process of identification and screening of the articles.

Methodology

This work is based on management and control systems of the sales forces, and we have taken the last thirty two years (1983-2014) as research target. Initial articles on salesforce management are still relevant as theoretical background and some of them include empirical conclusions that may add value to the present study.

The search was performed systematically on the following databases: Business Source Premier (EBSCO), Science Direct, Scopus and Web of Science, using as keyword formula: "Management Control" and Sale*, or "Control System*" and "Sale*", or "Output Control" and "Behavior Control".

Title, abstract and keywords were taken as main search field, and some specific criteria have been applied to better screen the results: in Science Direct the results were limited to the "Business,

Management and Accounting” field, in Business Source Premier the search was limited to refereed academic publications, and in Scopus we screened with the subject area of Social Sciences and Humanities, and excluded those with keywords different to our focus (inventory control, mathematical models, computer simulation, stochastic control systems, etc.). Finally we included a review of the 300 most relevant (first) results of Google Scholar to complete the initial gathering of information. According to Baldauf et al. [68] research in conference proceedings has been mainly published in abstract form and relevant research in working paper is not available, therefore we focused on peer-reviewed journals (Figure 1).

Figure 1 displays the literature selection breakdown: from the resulting 1394 references, 303 were deleted as repetitions and 785 were false positives not related with our topic under one author’s judgement. The reading from abstracts by all authors dropped unanimously another group of 50 studies (if there were differences of criteria, the article remained in the selection) and lastly all authors examined the content of the 256 remaining studies. The final list considered the 114 articles that under any of the authors’ judgement, focused on topics about management and control systems of the sales forces: types, theories related, antecedents, mediators, effects and consequences, under the human resources and the organizational points of view. An additional amount of 28 relevant articles coming from citations in this literature was ultimately included in our study. Almost all the 142 final references were published in the main journals about management, marketing and sales (Table 1), being *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of the Academic Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Research*, and *Journal of Marketing Research*, the most active papers in this area.

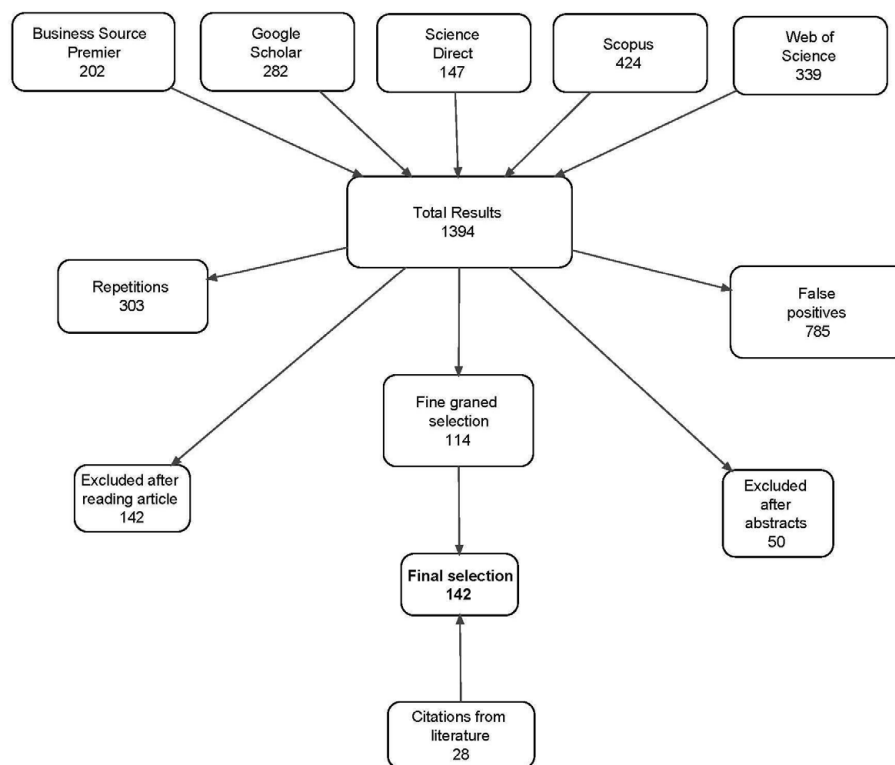
Analysis of Results: Direct Effects of Control Systems on Performance

In this chapter, the relationships found in the literature between the control systems, the salesperson performance and the sales unit effectiveness are introduced. Definitions on each construct and contingent aspects from the empirical investigations are illustrated correspondingly.

Effects on salesperson performance

Performance is an evaluation of activities (behaviors) and accomplishments (outcomes) of employees [1,69] or organizations. Most studies distinguish between the performance of the sales organization or sales organization effectiveness and the salesperson performance, which is further subdivided into behavioral performance and outcome performance [3,12,70,71]. The difference between these two constructs stems from the idea that the individual performance has to be limited to factors under the control of the salesperson, while organizational effectiveness depends on many situational factors including salesperson performance [72].

Salesperson performance includes the evaluation of the behaviors and the outcomes as a result of the individual sales activity. The significance of its evaluation is based on the need of information for effective control in two respects: decisions on rewards and punishments according to salesperson’s outcomes, and the monitoring and coaching in order to improve performance [3,26]. Singh and Koshi [45] summarize the groups of variables related to sales performance in cognitive (declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge), personality (autonomy, self-determination, involvement, emotional stability, and agreeableness), situational (buyer-salesperson similarity



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 1: Results of each database and later screening.

	1985 and before	1986-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2014	Total
Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management	1		2	2	10	3	4	22
Industrial Marketing Management			1	4	1	6	4	16
Journal of Marketing		2	4	5	1	1	1	14
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science				1	4	4	3	12
Journal of Business Research				1	3	4	1	9
Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing					1	5	2	8
Journal of Marketing Research	2	1	1	1		1	2	8
European Journal of Marketing			1	2	1	2		6
International Journal of Research in Marketing				1		3	1	5
The Journal of Marketing Management				1	1			2
Journal of World Business					1		2	3
International Business Review					1	1		2
Journal of International Marketing					2			2
Marketing Letters				1		1		2
Marketing Management					1	1		2
Marketing Science	1			1				2
The Journal of Product Innovation Management				1		1		2
Others	1		3	4	4	8	5	25
Total	5	3	12	25	31	41	25	142

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 1: Journals that provided the selected articles and years of publishing.

and information needs of the buyer), communication-related (skills in adaptive communication and closing the sales), based on attribution-theory (how people interpret events and how this relates to thinking and behaving), behavioral (cooperating, use of technical knowledge, controlling expenses, creating and maintaining good will, information providing, sales presentations, dealing with customers, and time and territory management), and customer orientation (Figure 2).

Behavioral performance: Behavioral performance is an assessment of salesperson's activities and strategies when executing their job responsibilities including adaptive selling, sales presentations, sales planning, sales support, price negotiations, and involvement in team-based selling efforts [1,12,73]. This performance also contains a component of non-selling activity, such as providing information and controlling expenses [3]. So that five dimensions of salesforce performance are identified: using technical knowledge, providing information, controlling expenses, making sales presentations, and achieving sales objectives [74]. Aulakh and Gencturk [30] identify two sets of behavioral control effects in an international environment: the first includes perceptions of agent compliance (the reception the agent gives to the principal's policies and programs) and flexibility, and the second is relationship flexibility, as the willingness to adjust to changing circumstances.

Behavior-based control and behavior performance is one of the most frequently proven entailments in salesforce management literature. We find support to this link in the field sales managers' sample of Babakus et al. [12] and Grant and Cravens [16] studies from Australian marketers; the British-based researches of Piercy et al. [26,72]; the works of Baldauf et al. [38,67,75] in Austria the United Kingdom, and Australia; the multicultural study in Austria, Bahrain, Greece, India, Israel, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom by Cravens et al. [69]; and the analyzes of Spanish industrial sector from Verano-Tacoronte and Melián-González [76], and Küster and Canales [77] considering fixed salary as a main indicator of a behavioral-based control system. Moreover, two British studies from sales managers of diverse British industrial and consumer products from Piercy et al. [29,78] relate sales manager behavior-based control

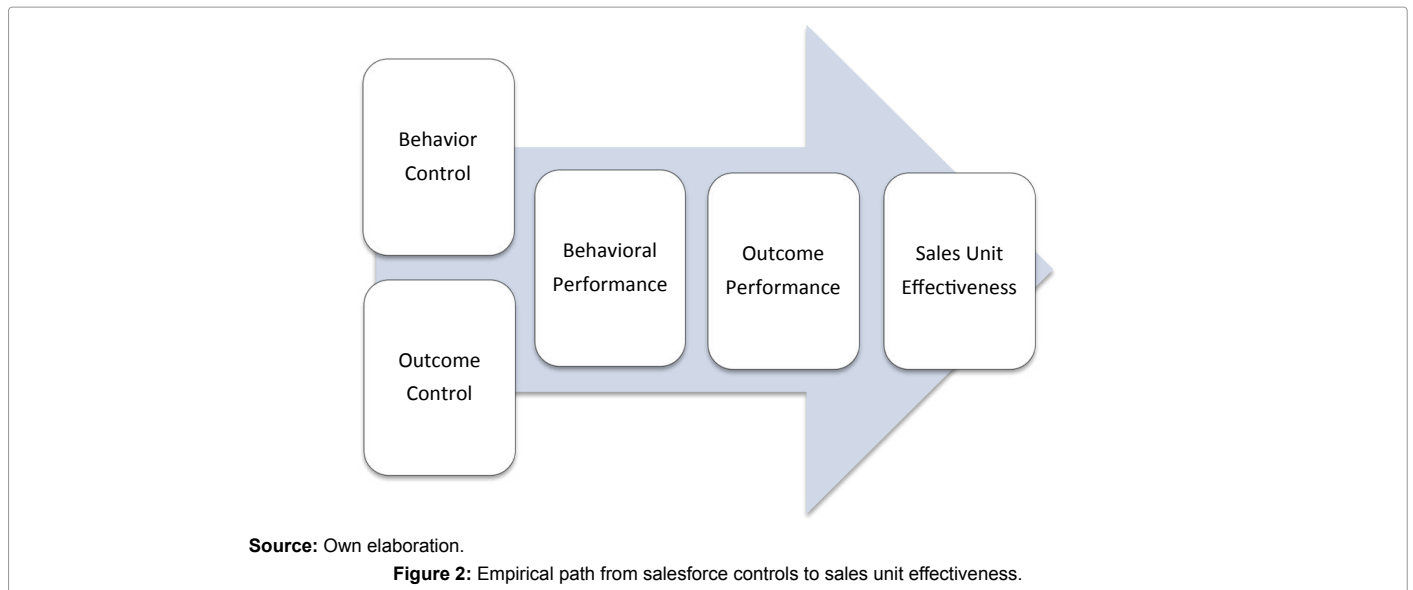
level together with behavior-based competences, with salesperson behavior performance.

Fang et al. found a weaker effect of activity control and capability control on behavior performance when goal difficulty is high (except for activity control in the American sample), and when goal specificity is high (except for capability control in the American sample), as well as a stronger effect when goal participation is high for the Chinese group. According to Cravens et al. Sales management high control system is more effective on behavior and output performance than the other three control combinations (bureaucratic, low, and clan); while Piercy et al. [28,35] found evidence of this relationship in the Greek sample of their study, but not for the Indian and Malaysian.

Theodosiou and Katsikea [36] considered that higher levels of salespeople and sales manager behavioral performance, were related to sales manager capabilities and behavioral strategies, as well as behavior-based control levels in an export environment. However these same scholars together with Morgan [36] did not support the relationship between the extent of behavior-based control and the behavioral performance in a study based on surveys from British sales executives.

Outcome performance

The results attributed to salesperson's activity represent the outcome performance, which include: sales volume, market share, and new accounts, as well as customer satisfaction and profitability [26]. Customer -orientation [20,79] or relationship -selling [80] foster long-term customer satisfaction, -increasing the firm's long-term profitability-, rather than short-term results. When sales managers set goals and punishments/rewards in outcome control systems, they must assess a balance between short and long-term outcomes. Furthermore, these results may be affected by factors different than salesperson behavioral performance, such as market potential, competitive intensity, workload and product-market scope [38], which explains that over time behavioral performance is gaining more importance when evaluating global individual performance, at the expense of outcome performance. An empirical research in Canada with first-level sales managers, concluded that higher-performing salesforces



possess characteristics that are typically associated with behavior-based control rather than those with outcome-based control [70]. Given that outcome performance may be substantially attributable to behavioral performance, the literature on salesforce management eventually integrates the both constructs into “salesperson performance” [81].

Jaworski and Kohli [25] found behavioral performance together with positive output feedback and output role clarity as antecedents of outcome performance. Cravens et al. [3] research based on chief sales executives exposed that the achievement of important sales outcomes may be linked with controlling the behaviors of salespeople. Similar results emerged from empirical investigations in Australia [12,16,82] with industrial and consumer markets. This relationship was also supported in the United Kingdom [72], in both Austria and the United Kingdom [38,75], and again in Austria and Australia [67]. Likewise Theodosiou and Katsikea [36] evidenced that export sales manager behavioral performance as antecedent of export sales manager outcome performance.

As previously stated, behavioral control affects positively behavioral performance and thus in turn to outcome performance. Some literature relates both: behavior and outcome controls directly to outcome performance. The former include Cravens et al. [3], Grant and Cravens [16], Piercy et al. [26], Baldauf et al. [38,75], and Verano-Tacoronte and Melián-González [76]; while Fang et al. Proposed that the impact of outcome control on outcome performance is only significant under moderately difficult performance goals. Evans et al. [61] after a research on American salespeople from diverse sectors, concluded that salesperson perceived influence of output controls positively affects a salesperson’s outcome performance. Aulakh and Gencturk [30] analysing managers of international operations with agents in foreign markets propose a direct effect of output control on agent’s economic performance in this environment.

Reserach in developing countries from Piercy et al. [28] unveiled that outcomes are highest when there is effective interaction between behavior and compensation control, so that behavior control has better consequences when combined with high incentive pay. However, these same authors in a second article [35] find no apparent effect either in behavior or in outcome performance from incentive pay exclusively.

Individual performance: A final group of studies show direct effects of control systems to individual performance as a generic construct, such as Barker [70]’s research on first-level sales managers selected from the largest Canadian companies, that evidenced that higher-performing agents are more likely under behavior-based rather than under outcome-based control systems. Moreover, Piercy et al. [29] identified that higher sales manager levels of behavior control enhance salesperson performance as a direct result, so that appropriate competencies and abilities of field sales managers improve customer relationships, driven by superior salesperson performance. In a similar way, Flaherty et al. [83] connect the deviation from the optimal control profile with a negative influence on individual sales performance, and proposed that managers must be prepared to tailor control to individual characteristics. It will depend on past sales experience, market characteristics and additional strategic considerations. Finally, Holmes and Srivastava [84] designed a straightforward model linking working smart (adaptive selling, developing knowledge in selling situations) and working hard (amount of effort devoted) to the individual performance. The empirical work on the automobile retailing sector evidenced positive effects of both constructs on sales performance.

Interestingly, Slater and Olson [59] followed Miles et al. [85] strategy types: prospectors (continuously seek to locate and exploit new product and market opportunities), defenders (attempt to seal off a portion of the total market to create a stable set of products and customers), and analyzers (occupy an intermediate position between the two extremes by combining the strengths of both the prospector and defender). These authors put forward that prospectors achieve superior performance when utilizing moderate supervisory control, and with outcome-based control systems.

Sales unit/sales organization effectiveness

Sales organization effectiveness is defined as a summary of organizational outcomes for the entire sales organization, or for subsets, such as specific regions, districts, territories, or customer groups [12,72]. Sales volume, market share, profit contribution, customer satisfaction and return on assets are typical bases to measure this term. An empirical study with Austrian field sales managers concluded that sales territory design, particular salesperson characteristics (e.g.,

intrinsic and recognition motivation, sales support orientation, and customer orientation), and a high behavioral performance (e.g., technical knowledge, adaptive selling, teamwork, sales presentation, sales planning, and sales support), or a high outcome performance are antecedents of upper organizational effectiveness [86]. A similar study with Australian sales managers, considered behavioral performance and sales territory design, together with salesperson organizational commitment, as antecedents of sales organization effectiveness [82].

Contribution of behavioral control on sales unit or sales organization as a direct effect is sustained by Cravens et al. [3] who referred to financial dimension and customer satisfaction; Baldauf and Cravens [86]; Grant and Cravens [82]; Baldauf et al. [38]; Piercy et al. [28,35]; Cravens et al. [69]; and Verano-Tacaronite and Melián-González [76]. Moreover outcome performance as an antecedent of sales organization effectiveness was proposed by Babakus et al. [12]; Bello and Gilliland [31] in a study that focuses on American exporting firms; Piercy et al. [72]; Baldauf et al. [75]; Baldauf et al. [67]; and Piercy et al. [78].

The study of Lambe et al. [87] in the pharmaceutical sector found a positive association between team self-managing behaviors (sales performance, sales activities and selling skills) with selling team performance. Baldauf and Cravens [86] evidenced higher levels of sales unit effectiveness in Austrian organizations whose salespeople display high behavioral or high outcome performance. Similarly, research of Spanish field sales managers [88] proposed that behaviour control, salesperson professionalism, behaviour performance and outcome performance, have a positive and significant impact on salesforce effectiveness, treated as salesforce efficacy and supervisor satisfaction.

Menguc and Barker [55]'s work on sales managers and executives of Canadian firms concluded that the level of incentive pay –as an outcome-based control tool- results in lower financial performance outcomes (sales volume, profitability) when sales volatility is high, or the level of complexity of customer's purchase decisions increases, or the level of monitoring is high.

Finally Piercy et al. [89] in research with salespeople from a publisher of directories in the UK and in the USA, focused on team differences, using sales manager gender as a benchmark: although several positive behavioral effects from teams led by female managers were evidenced (higher intrinsic motivation, job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, yet lower role conflict, and propensity to leave) lower team's performance levels were perceived by salespeople. However, in a subsequent study of these authors [28,35] with field sales managers from industrial and consumer products and services, found a higher performance both by salespeople as by sales unit, when teams are led by female managers.

Conclusions And Managerial Implications

We find general agreement with the scholars about that behavior-based controls aligned more the salesperson with the long term interests of the company, and that today's markets, competition intensity the outcome-based controls may be more effective in the short term but may lose customer orientation. In most of and reducing costs is increasing, so customer satisfaction is a key factor for a company to continue maintaining its market shares without having to resort to reductions in product prices as main sales pitch. Oliver and Anderson [58] state that salespeople under behavior-based controls work smarter, while those under outcome-based work faster.

Another widespread evidence is that the path between control

systems and individual outcome performance flows through behavioral performance [38]. This implies that salespeople with highest outcome standards are those with the best technical knowledge, provide the customer with the better and earliest information, and make the best sales presentations, so that managers expect salespeople to perform well on both dimensions of performance [12].

Behavior-based control with behavioral performance is the most frequent evidenced connection between control systems and individual performance. Sales managers may consider to increasing the level of this type of control for achieving a higher performance. Coaching and working with salespeople in order to develop selling skills and relationship strategies, seem to perform better than commanding, criticizing, and dominating [16,38,70]. Specific managerial activities with strongest link to effectiveness are: (1) to encourage salespeople to increase sales and rewarding them for their achievements; (2) actively participate in training salespeople on the job; (3) regularly spend time coaching salespeople and help them to develop their potential; and (4) discuss performance evaluations with salespeople [86]. Managers, in most effective teams, act more as coaches or communicators, rather than looking for results [88]. So time and resources should be invested in training and developing sales manager's competences to drive superior salesperson performance [78].

High levels of behavior and outcome control simultaneously (high control system) are associated with favourable salesperson consequences regarding job satisfaction, role ambiguity, role conflict, turnover intentions, and organizational commitment [90]. Hybrid systems with elements from outcome- and behavior-based, are the most common choice between firms. Onyemah and Anderson [37] highlight the convenience that all the elements co-aling, sharing the same degree of behavior and outcome components, so that these elements become mutually reinforcing. The decision regarding the point along the continuum falls on the chief sales executive. So good levels of communication between senior management and field sales managers are required for adequate daily monitoring, evaluation and direction of the salesforce.

An effective combination of behavior control and compensation control is another relevant managerial decision. Piercy et al. [28,35] propose high incentive pay with high behavior control as the most effective, while Küster and Canales [77] state that the security of fixed salary plus the motivational variable part fully develops salesperson's abilities generating better outcomes for the salesperson and the company. Cultural differences between countries - especially uncertainty avoidance - will determinate different results in terms of individual and team performance, of the combinations of fixed and variable compensation.

Executive decisions regarding sales unit managers' training appears to have an impact on the final result as well. Manager's training and career development should be an executive priority [82], in ways that enhance managers' skills in behavioral control (directing, evaluating and rewarding) beyond their classical selling and outcome control skills [72].

Studies about sales management in export activities or a global environment have concluded that salespeople control should be customized to each specific culture in order to achieve the highest performance. Under an outcome-based system, a part of the risk is shared with the salesperson, which might lead to negative individual consequences in a high risk-avoidance culture, while behavior-based (process) control builds salesperson trust in high power distance

cultures [47]. The complexities of personal selling in overseas activity make behavior control a more difficult and less common tool for export companies [33] especially in psychologically distant markets, where executives should familiarize with market conditions, and exploit the opportunities offered by information technology [36].

Professional control (team self-managing behaviors) has been found as a positive antecedent of sales unit (team) performance [87], and it appears to be an unknown or underused tool for organizations.

Summary Of Research Directions

The main areas of research propositions found in the literature about this topic, contain the following: firstly the impact of the different variables and activities on the control systems and the performance levels [3,12,26,28,29,35]. Baldauf et al. [67] found interesting future research on environmental, organizational and managerial variables that may affect the control strategy; Piercy et al. [26] requested to clarify the congruities and incongruities of the different aspects of control and their relationship with sales organization effectiveness; Baldauf et al. [38] and Piercy et al. [72] focused on the convenience to investigate the behavior-based control extent that lead to higher individual or organizational performance; Cravens et al. [90] referred to the causal links between high control and its consequences; Küster and Canales [88] proposed the study of links between output control on performance and company effectiveness.

Regarding the methodologies, Oliver and Anderson [58] proposed the use of diverse samples and operationalizations, while other authors suggested the studies at different levels. These can include external people, salesperson, sales manager, sales executive, or dyads between them [28,36,70,75,77,78,87,88].

In another hand, most studies on salesforce management are cross-sectional. Therefore longitudinal studies are often requested [5,12,15,17,18,24,29,30-34,37,44,50,55,67,74,76,78,79,89,91-99].

The need to deepen in the measures of the level control system or performance has been highlighted by Piercy et al. [72], who suggested the research on supervisor ratings, self ratings, and sales unit output measures; Barker [70] proposed to refine the measure of outcome performance, and Fang et al. The sales performance in general; Slater and Olson [59] prompted studies about several control variables like average transaction size, number of products handled, number of customers and sales force structure; and Verano-Tacoronte and Melián-González [76] propounded research on measuring the levels of behavior and output control in hybrid systems.

Finally investigations on multisectorial, multicultural and multinational sales environment issues have been frequently suggested by sales control scholars, as may be the case of studies to verify if the results across one country could be transposed to others [33,38,70,77,83], or the analysis of different combinations of behavior and compensation control in different developing countries [28,35].

Other important constructs widely researched in this area, act as mediators between the control systems and salesperson and sales unit performances, and should be a matter of a particular updated literature review. Such constructs, among others are: satisfaction with territory design [12,16,28,35,38,60], organizational commitment [16,26,98,100,101] interpersonal identification [102] (Ahearne et al. 2013); motivation and attitudes [36], organizational citizenship behavior [4], transformational leadership [96]; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation [103] and role ambiguity, clarity, and conflict [17,93,104-107].

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