



Some determinants of salesforce effectiveness

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to find out what characterises salespeople in the most effective salesforce in Spain.

Design/methodology/approach – An empirical analysis has been done with 108 field sales managers from different sectors of activity to determine the conditions of the salesperson's control, professionalism and behaviour that affect his/her performance and the effectiveness of companies. A structural equations model or second generation multivariate model was used – PLS.

Findings – The results show that more effective salesforces are controlled through behaviour control systems, salespersons in this team identify with the company's strategic objectives and an important part of their remuneration is based on a fixed salary.

Research limitations/implications – First, the information has been gathered on a unique hierarchical level – team managers. Second, the company's activity sector and the type of salesperson can modify the results. Finally, the size of the sample has limited the potential application of specific statistical techniques and even the generalisation of the results.

Practical implications – Field sales managers must help to define the salespeople's tasks to reach the company's objectives in the most effective way. This situation implies, logically, that control is exerted over behaviour and to a lesser extent over the results achieved by the salesperson.

Originality/value – The paper determines those variables which allow companies, and especially those persons holding responsibility in the salesforce, to increase their effectiveness. The objective enriches the knowledge on sales effectiveness and also applies, in the Spanish case, a study methodology that has been applied in other countries.

Keywords Sales force, Employee behaviour, Managers, Spain

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The organisational culture can play an important role in determining overall organisational effectiveness, because organisational culture will affect employee fit, which in turn impacts upon effectiveness (Behery and Paton, 2008). Despite the importance of measuring business performance, there is a little research on the marketing effectiveness (Eusebio *et al.*, 2006) and sales management practices (Avlonitis and Panagopoulos, 2007). Moreover, Spain has received relatively little attention from organisational research (Aragón-Correa *et al.*, 2006).

The achievement of acceptable sales results is an essential requirement of companies' performance and for reaching salespeople's individual objectives. That is why a large part of the work done by field sales managers centres on motivating their salespeople, and that is considered to be a tool to achieve success (Futrell, 2003). A field sales manager is responsible for a group of salespeople (typically less than ten), and



plays a pivotal role in applying the sales management control strategy (Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a). In spite of that, evaluation of the results obtained by salespeople should not be limited to a statistical analysis or a comparison with the objectives planned; sales management must also value the acquisition of information on the salespeople's environment and present and future effects on their work (Chonko *et al.*, 1992; Ingram *et al.*, 2001; Küster and Román, 2006). This paper tries to integrate different aspects such as the type of salesforce behaviour control system, salespeople's professionalism or the way of measuring their individual performance; and also aims to identify the different scope of salesforce effectiveness. All these results are analysed from the field sales managers' point-of-view.

The analysis of salespeople's performance and effectiveness, in terms of measurement and the determining variables, is of great interest for business. First, salespeople's performance and effectiveness have an impact on company performance and effectiveness; a company's future therefore depends on them (Muczyk and Gable, 1987; Rich *et al.*, 1999; Ingram *et al.*, 2001; Olson *et al.*, 2001). Second, the basic objective of the evaluation of salespeople's performance and effectiveness comprises analysing the activities they develop when doing their work. Nevertheless, in attempting to define salesperson performance and sales organisation effectiveness, the accumulated knowledge is analogous to the tip of the iceberg (Ingram, 2004).

In spite of that, there is no clear, globally accepted differentiation in the literature between the terms performance and effectiveness. Some authors do not see any differences between them (Szymanski, 1988); and others even oppose such differences; what for some is performance is effectiveness for others (Walker *et al.*, 1979; Weitz, 1981); and yet others consider performance consists of effectiveness plus efficiency (Homburg *et al.*, 2004). For example, Barker (1997) associates the concept of performance to each salesperson's individual work and the concept of effectiveness to the organisation globally, or the sales unit; but even this author uses the term performance in both situations in a more recent piece of work.

In the literature, we can find different models of performance and effectiveness, and the variables that determine them (Churchill *et al.*, 1993; Brown and Peterson, 1994; Plank and Reid, 1994; Challagalla and Shervani, 1996; Atuahene-Gima and Kamel, 1998; Churchill *et al.*, 2000; Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a; Atuahene-Gima and Li, 2002; Holmes and Srivastava, 2002)

In our opinion, and following previous authors' works (Varela, 1992; Grant and Cravens, 1999; Churchill *et al.*, 2000; Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a, b; Piercy *et al.*, 2001; Román *et al.*, 2002; Román and Munuera, 2003; among others), effectiveness and performance are different concepts. Thus, taking this reference framework into account, the main objective of this work is to find out which activities affect the effectiveness of the salesforce and allow differentiation between more and less effective teams. Thus, and following other authors' works, such as Cravens *et al.* (1992), we intend to determine those variables which allow companies, and especially those persons holding responsibility in the salesforce, to increase their effectiveness. Specifically, this research tries to integrate different aspects such as the type of control over the salesforce, salespeople's professionalism or the way of measuring their individual performance; and it also aims to identify the different scope of effectiveness. The objective is to enrich the knowledge on sales effectiveness and also to apply in a specific country (Spain), a similar methodology applied in other countries by other

authors. To do this, and based on Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, 2002) and Piercy *et al.*'s (2004) previous research, this paper puts forward a framework with two main contributions. The first one proposes a direct analysis of the relationships between diverse effectiveness antecedents and effectiveness. The second one considers two dimensions of the effectiveness construct: financial efficacy and field sales manager satisfaction. We are aware of that the cultural differences between countries can affect the results of the investigation (Quer *et al.*, 2007), and because of this, in the conclusion sections these possible differences are commented.

In this article, we first examine the literature about effectiveness, salespeople control, professionalism and performance of salespeople. Then, the relations of these four elements are investigated. In order to achieve this objective, a questionnaire was completed through personal interviews with field sales managers.

2. Theoretical foundations and hypotheses development

The effectiveness of a sales organisation may be defined as an overall evaluation of the results obtained either by the organisation as a whole or by a group of salespeople providing their own individual achievements (Churchill *et al.*, 1993, 2000). Such evaluation is done through the use of certain financial indicators; such as market share or the contribution to benefit (Jackson *et al.*, 1995; Ingram *et al.*, 2001). Together with these financial indicators, there are other effectiveness indicators related to field sales manager satisfaction; for example, gaining new clients (Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a, b).

This effectiveness is subject to many influences, both internal (for example, managers themselves or salespeople) and external (for example, the salespeople's working environment). Thus, effectiveness makes reference to some indicator of the result for which the salesperson is partially responsible and which is influenced by a series of factors not subject to his/her control, called non-personal factors or organisational and environmental variables (Churchill *et al.*, 1985; Varela, 1992; Grant and Cravens, 1999; Churchill *et al.*, 2000; Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a, b; Piercy *et al.*, 2001; Román *et al.*, 2002).

More specifically, in accordance with Cravens *et al.* (1992); Babakus *et al.* (1996); Grant and Cravens (1999); Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, b); Piercy *et al.* (2001); Román *et al.* (2002) or Futrell (2003), existing literature on the subject has traditionally identified aspects related to the control of the salesforce, professionalism, the performance of the salesperson's behaviour and individual performance as key aspects for determining effectiveness. These concepts are analysed below.

As indicated by Anderson and Oliver (1987), the control of the salesforce may be defined as the degree of monitoring, evaluation and reward that those in charge of the control exert on salespeople so that the latter develop their tasks and responsibilities and consequently, the company's objectives are achieved (Jaworski, 1988; Jaworski *et al.*, 1993). The sales management may choose between two opposed, but complementary systems, in order to implement the control tasks; behaviour control and outcome-results control (Anderson and Oliver, 1987; Marshall and Mowen, 1993; Canales and Torán, 1998; Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a, b; Baldauf *et al.*, 2002). Behaviour control is typically centred on salesperson job inputs. Under outcome control, sales revenue is thought to be a sufficient criterion for sales proficiency. Both control systems are part of two edges in a continuum. However, a company's control system is

unlikely to be located precisely at one of the two edges; and it is more likely to contain elements of both (Küster and Román, 2006).

Oliver and Anderson (1994, 1995) identify three elements that allow the approach used by companies to control their salespeople: commitment level, subjective control mechanisms and remuneration system. Thus, in companies where behaviour control is mainly used, management has an important commitment to that task, which implies greater involvement in the supervision, management and contact between salespeople and supervisors than when result control is used. Second, a company placing more emphasis on behaviour than on results uses more subjective mechanisms to control their salesforce than when the control is on results. Third, the implementation of the control systems is related to the remuneration system, based on a fixed salary if the control is on behaviour and on a commission-based remuneration when control of results is applied. Additionally, this type of system makes it easier for salespeople to develop sales activities focused on client satisfaction (Schwepker and Good, 2004), and ethical sales behaviour (Román and Munuera, 2005). In addition, as may be concluded from Choi *et al.*'s (2004) work, this system makes the development of salespeople's skills and knowledge easier.

The above discussion suggests that greater control of salespeople, especially their behaviour, improves salesforce results. According to studies of salesforce control, the proper design of control systems should positively motivate the salesforce (Challagalla and Shervani, 1996). Successful and more productive salespeople should in turn be appropriately rewarded. In addition, the influence of the sales control systems on the motivation of the salesforce should positively impact the organisation's long-term profitability (Coughlan and Sen, 1989). Thus, Piercy *et al.* (1997) found that the field sales manager of the most effective salesforce devoted greater effort to behaviour control-related tasks. For example, the field sales managers of the most effective teams highlighted salespeople training as a tool for developing all their potential. Additionally, Baldauf *et al.* (2001a) were able to prove a positive relation between salespeople controlled by means of systems based on behaviour and higher effectiveness levels. Therefore the following research hypothesis is proposed:

- H1.* The greater the control of salespeople's behaviour, the greater the level of salesforce effectiveness in terms of (a) salesforce efficacy and (b) supervisor satisfaction.

Regarding professionalism of the salesforce, following Anderson and Oliver (1987), the main professional behaviour-related characteristics of the salesforce include attitude, motivation and the salesperson's strategic behaviour or approach. Thus, among the attitudes of the salesforce, professional competencies, or specific knowledge and skills related to a salesperson's work must be evaluated (Anderson and Oliver, 1987). These include aspects such as knowledge of the products-services offered to the customers, the knowledge of the company they work for or the control of the skills needed for sales (Cámara and Sanz, 2001; Manning and Reece, 2004). In his study, Barker (1997) concluded that, in the opinion of both field sales managers of the salesforce and sales managers, the environment in which salespeople perform provides more effective salespeople with greater knowledge and a higher level of training in aspects such as product knowledge or sales techniques. Regarding motivation, and following Churchill *et al.* (1993, 2000), we can distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the

salesforce. The former is of a personal type and work-related; for example, job satisfaction; whereas the latter is alien to work itself, for example, remuneration. Piercy *et al.* (1997) concluded that the most effective salesforces were characterised by a high level of motivation of their members, who feel their work is imaginative and creative and who are stimulated by changes in their environment. Finally, and within the context of sales management, the strategic behaviour or approach may be understood as the development of some actions favouring both the achievement of the salesperson's individual objectives and the overall objectives of the sales organisation (Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a, b). Baldauf *et al.*'s (2001a, b) study reveals a significant and positive relationship between the control on salespeople's behaviour and their strategic behaviour, which leads to increased efficacy; so those salespeople whose behaviour is more strategic (not only concerned about their sales but also about building customer loyalty) contribute in a positive and significant way to improve the effectiveness of their salesforce.

Sujan *et al.* (1994) suggest that salespeople can observe their customers' reaction to their sales strategy and make rapid behavioural adjustments that will ultimately lead to higher customer satisfaction and sales effectiveness. In view of the above, salesforces made up of more professional salespeople are expected to be more effective (Piercy *et al.*, 1997; Grant and Cravens, 1999; Baldauf *et al.*, 2002). We therefore propose a second hypothesis:

H2. The more professional the salespeople, the greater the level of salesforce effectiveness in terms of (a) salesforce efficacy and (b) supervisor satisfaction.

As suggested in the introduction to this paper, effectiveness and performance are different terms. In this sense, and following Piercy *et al.* (1997), Grant and Cravens (1999), and Baldauf *et al.* (2002), the salesperson's performance has a positive effect on salesforce effectiveness. According to Churchill *et al.* (1985, 1993, 2000), Varela (1992), Grant and Cravens (1999), Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, b), Piercy *et al.* (2001) and Román *et al.* (2002), among others, by performance we must understand a result of the behaviour, which is evaluated in terms of contribution to company objectives, and is determined by factors that the salesperson can control. In contrast, sales organisation effectiveness is defined as a summary of overall organisational outcomes (Churchill *et al.*, 2000), and a considerable body of empirical research has found that variation in sales effectiveness can be explained by environmental and organisational factors (Cravens *et al.*, 1993). The existence of "good" and "bad" salespeople in terms of performance might thus be determined. More specifically, the literature distinguishes two dimensions of performance: behaviour performance and outcome performance (Anderson and Oliver, 1987; Behrman and Perreault, 1982; Cravens *et al.*, 1993).

The salesperson's behaviour performance includes a series of actions which are directly or indirectly related to sales and which contribute both to the achievement of personal objectives and the objectives of the organisation they work for (Churchill *et al.*, 2000). Such actions include technical knowledge of their products or services, adaptation to sales techniques, team-work capacity, task-planning, conducting sales interviews and follow-up of the interviews (John and Weitz, 1989; Spiro and Weitz, 1990; Cravens *et al.*, 1993; Oliver and Anderson, 1994). A characteristic common to these tasks is that the salesperson exerts an important control over them, regardless of the sales results that potentially may be achieved (Baldauf *et al.*, 2002). Salespeople's

actions related to their behaviour and attitude appear, in the literature consulted, to be positively related to salesforce effectiveness. Achieving high performance requires salespeople with strong selling skills and the capacity to plan activities (Baldauf and Cravens, 2002). Thus, Piercy *et al.* (1997) concluded in their work that most effective salesforces achieved significantly better results regarding indicators such as market share, high mark-ups or the creation of long-term relationships with customers. Additionally, Cravens *et al.* (1992) detected that most effective teams achieved better results regarding company objectives such as turnover or client satisfaction. Therefore, in view of the above, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H3.* The better the salespeople's behaviour performance, the higher the level of salesforce effectiveness in terms of (a) salesforce efficacy and (b) supervisor satisfaction.

Basic sales management supports a positive impact of salespeople outcome performance on sales effectiveness (Walker *et al.*, 1979). Salespeople are responsible for implementing the strategy for achieving sales organisation effectiveness (Babakus *et al.*, 1996). The review of the literature (Cravens *et al.*, 1992; Barker, 1997; Piercy *et al.*, 1997; Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a, b; Baldauf *et al.*, 2002, among others), suggests that salespeople in the most effective teams achieve better results in aspects such as individual sales figures or the percentage of sales to new customers. For example, Baldauf *et al.* (2002) stated that an important predictor of salesforce effectiveness was the level of achievement of salespeople's objectives. On the basis of previous studies (Walker *et al.*, 1979; Anderson and Oliver, 1987), these authors also determined that as control on behaviour makes it possible to align the objectives of the salespeople and the sales organisation, and considering the positive relationship between this type of control and the salesperson's performance, a positive relationship between performance and effectiveness may be expected. To sum up, the literature review leads to the fourth hypothesis:

- H4.* The better the salespeople's outcome performance, the higher the level of salesforce effectiveness in terms of (a) salesforce efficacy and (b) supervisor satisfaction.

Finally, field sales managers were asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with their salesforce. This satisfaction indicates the sales manager's evaluation of salespeople's performance (Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a). Therefore, in view of the above the final hypothesis is posited:

- H5.* The higher the level of salesforce effectiveness in terms of salesforce efficacy, the greater the supervisor satisfaction.

To sum up, and as the biggest investments in business communication correspond to the cost of the salesforce, the knowledge of these sources of effectiveness will favour the achievement of better business results (Piercy *et al.*, 1997). Furthermore, in an environment like the current one, characterised by a high level of competitiveness and greater bargaining power in the hands of the big accounts, sales organisations must look for alternatives to improve their effectiveness (Babakus *et al.*, 1996). The selection of factors which discriminate between more and less effective salesforce responds to the fact that, as mentioned above, effectiveness depends on factors which are internal

and external to the sales organisation, and not all may be controlled by the salespeople. We have therefore chosen those factors on which some kind of control may be exerted, in such a way that the influence on these factors by the salespeople themselves and by their superiors enables better and therefore more effective individual and collective results to be achieved (Figure 1).

3. Objectives and methodology

As mentioned above, the main objective of this study centres on the analysis of differences in terms of effectiveness between sales organisations in Spain. In this process, we try and determine the key variables to improve their performance. To that end, the procedure in previous studies such as those by Cravens *et al.* (1992), Barker (1997), Piercy *et al.* (1997), Baldauf and Cravens (1999), Baldauf *et al.* (2001a), Baldauf *et al.* (2002), and Piercy *et al.* (2004), among others, has been followed. Then, and as a second objective, the differences between the most and least effective sales teams are analysed through a cluster analysis. All these results are evaluated from the field sales managers' point-of-view.

3.1 Sample

The present study consists in the field sales managers in SMEs in a specific geographic area, Spain. The Spanish market is relatively well developed, part of the European Union, and has a good rate of growth over recent years. According to the Spanish Central Business Directory (DIRCE), in 2006, the number of SMEs reached 99.87 percent of the 3,165,619 Spanish companies, excluding agriculture and fisheries.

The Hofstede Analysis illustrates that uncertainty avoidance is ranked the highest for Spain, while the other three dimensions are ranked moderately. This is a result of Spain's feelings and concerns regarding rules, regulations, and career security. One interesting thing to note is their low masculinity score. While women are still behind men in business equality, they are extremely important in society. Hofstede has developed four dimensions of differences in values that comprise the elements of national culture that are especially relevant to management research (Deshpandé and Farley, 1999). Table I shows the Spain scores and those in which prior studies have conducted. According to Pelham (1993) and Greenley (1995), those who manage and

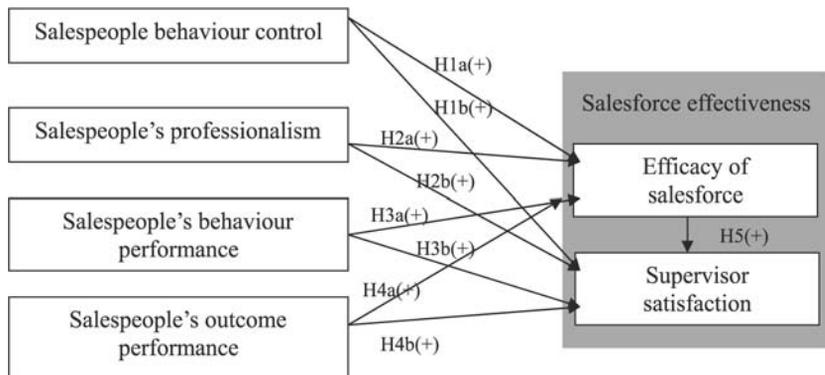


Figure 1.
Sales force effectiveness model

	Power distance (a)	Uncertainty avoidance (b)	Individualism (c)	Masculinity (d)
Spain	57	86	51	42
Austria	11	70	55	79
Australia	36	51	90	61
Greece	60	112	35	57
India	77	40	48	56
Malaysia	104	36	26	50
UK	35	35	89	66

Notes: (a) The degree of inequality between people that is considered “normal”; (b) The degree to which people prefer structured situations in which the rules about how they should behave are clear; (c) The degree to which people prefer to act as individuals, often expecting personal rather than a group rewards; (d) The degree to which values separate the roles of men and women in society

Table I.
Hofstede cultural
dimension scores

control, such as team leaders, have enough reliable company-related information. These employees have information related to decision making, efficiency and the environment. The leadership of teams, with a formal position, plays a critical role in the success and performance of teams (Lyons, 2006). And this fact is especially true in small and medium-sized companies (Pelham, 1993).

The questionnaire was translated into Spanish, and a second translation of the instrument back into English by another translator, and then a comparison of the two versions was done to ensure translation equivalence. Following Cravens *et al.* (1993) and Ruiz's (1996) recommendations in the definitive production of the questionnaire, experts' opinions were considered, both professional and academia. Additionally, a pre-test of the initial questionnaire was done through personal interviews to seven field sales managers, with a view to analysing semantic and technical aspects and its duration. The conclusions obtained from the pre-test suggested making a series of modifications that we considered necessary to improve understanding and the usefulness of the questionnaire.

The final questionnaire consists of seven blocks: sales control (follow-up, management, evaluation and rewards), salespeople's professionalism (attitude, competencies, motivation, recognition, strategic behaviour), salespeople's behaviour performance (technical knowledge, adaptive sale, teamwork, visit planning, sales interviews, sales follow-up), salespeople's outcome performance, effectiveness (effectiveness and satisfaction), classification of companies (remuneration, number of sales staff, sales variation, activity sector) and other classification variables.

The data were obtained through personal interviews with field sales managers. During two months, diverse field sales managers of a specific area were visited and interviewed. The use of such interviews allowed us to have better access to sales leaders and improved the veracity of the information. Non-probability sampling was employed for convenience, which provided us with 108 valid questionnaires (sampling error + 9.2 per cent); enough sample size to apply the appropriated statistical techniques.

The sample was characterised with reference to the characteristics of the firms where the 108 salespeople managers work and the characteristics of sales managers and of their own salesforce. The following characterisation elements were used:

- the sector in which they operate;
- size of the sales organisation; and
- variation in company sales and in their sector over the last two years (Piercy *et al.*, 1997).

Most of the firms operate in the consumer goods sector (42.6 per cent) and the industrial goods sector (30.6 per cent). Salesforces are larger in service sector companies, especially in consumer services (an average of 243 salespeople). This is also the sector with the greatest average increase in sales, 23 per cent in comparison to 6-8 per cent in the other sectors. The data on company sales variation does not show any big differences.

Of the team leaders interviewed, almost half were between 33 and 39 years old, with a wide experience in commercial work (more than 90 per cent have more than five years experience), while only a fourth per cent have had management duties for more than ten years. The majority are men and more than half are university educated.

To define the profile of the salesforce, we used the variables: compensation system, sales figures variation, and team size. The compensation system for salespeople is basically mixed with only 2.8 per cent using exclusively fixed compensation. Sales variation is mainly between 6 and 10 percent, and only 3.9 per cent of the teams have seen a decrease in sales. The average number of salespeople in the different teams is around nine.

3.2 Methodology

The small sample size and the nature of the different hypotheses have determined the use of different statistical analysis techniques. A structural equations model or second generation multivariate model was used – partial least squares (PLS) which does not assume a normal data distribution and permits simultaneous evaluation of the measurement model and the theoretical model (Lawson-Body and O’Keefe, 2006).

Thus, following a similar methodology to that used by other authors (e.g. Sánchez-Franco and Roldán, 2005) the PLS model was analysed and interpreted in two phases: evaluation of the reliability and validity of the measurement model; and evaluation of the structural model.

SmartPLS 2.0 was used to analyse the data. A bootstrap procedure was used with 100 sub-samples to guarantee stability of the results.

3.3 Measurement instruments

In order to measure the different elements of the relationships proposed, we used and adapted scales from previous research to ensure validity of the content, which has allowed us to draw our own conclusions and make comparisons with such studies (definitive items may be seen in the appendix). As mentioned below, all the scales have been widely used and their psychometric properties (reliability and validity) have been tested in the literature.

The behaviour control that the manager exerts on the selling staff is measured on the basis of the initial proposal by Anderson and Oliver (1987), which was later developed by Babakus *et al.* (1996), and used by other authors in their studies (Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a; Baldauf *et al.*, 2002, for example). It is a scale consisting of 13 items, in which the interviewees are required to indicate, on a scale from 1 “not at all” to 10 “to a

great extent-always”, to what extent they do their control tasks. These tasks are divided into the four basic groups of salesforce control tasks. These groups are follow-up (three items), management (four items), evaluation (three items) and reward (three items) (Anderson and Oliver, 1987).

We measure the degree of professionalism of salespeople through the analysis of their characteristics and degree of motivation in connection with the development of their professional activity. The determination of the characteristics of the salespeople allows us to know specific personal aspects that are related to their work, such as attitude, measured with four items, and professional competence, two items. Both constructs are measured on a scale from 1 “not at all” to 10 “to a great extent-always”, based on Anderson and Oliver’s (1987) studies and on research undertaken by Cravens *et al.* (1993). The salespeople’s level of motivation is analysed by using three variable groups (Anderson and Oliver, 1987) which are related to intrinsic motivation (six items), recognition (two items) and strategic behaviour (four items) and a scale from 1 “not at all” to 10 “to a great extent-always”, based on research by Cravens *et al.* (1993) and Oliver and Anderson (1994), is used.

The analysis of salespeople’s behaviour performance is measured through 26 items altogether. The first group, technical knowledge, is based on Behrman and Perreault’s (1982) scale; and has been used in later studies by authors such as Cravens *et al.* (1993); Barker (1999); Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, 2002). The second group, adaptive sale, was originally developed by Spiro and Weitz (1990); and has been used in later studies by authors such as Barker (1999), Baldauf *et al.* (2001a) and Baldauf *et al.* (2002), among others. The third group, teamwork, is based on John and Weitz (1989) and has been used in later studies by Barker (1999), Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, 2002). The fourth group, visit planning, based on Babakus *et al.* (1996), has been used in later studies by authors such as Barker (1999); Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, 2002). The fifth group, the sales interview, based on Behrman and Perreault (1982), has been used in later studies by authors such as Cravens *et al.* (1993); Barker (1999); Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, 2002). Finally, the follow-up of sales is based on a scale by Babakus *et al.* (1996) which has been used in later studies by authors such as: Barker (1999); Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, 2002).

The analysis of salespeople’s outcome performance provides information on their contribution to the company’s results and is a consequence of their behaviour. It is important to determine the influence of their own effort to reach their objectives and the effect of external factors that they cannot control (Baldauf *et al.*, 2002). The contribution of the salesforce to the company’s results is analysed through the use of seven items, with a Likert-type 7 degree scale which goes from 1 “need to improve” to 7 “exceptional”, based on the scale developed by Behrman and Perreault (1982); and which has been used in later studies by Spiro and Weitz (1990), Cravens *et al.* (1993), Suján *et al.* (1994), Román *et al.* (1998), and Barker (1999).

Salesforce financial effectiveness makes reference to aspects related to sales, their profitability and customer satisfaction. Eight items altogether, measured on a Likert-type 5 degree scale ranging from 1 “much worse” to 5 “much better”, based on previous studies by Cravens *et al.* (1993), Babakus *et al.* (1996) and which has been used in later studies by authors such as Cravens *et al.* (1993); Baldauf *et al.* (2001a) and Baldauf *et al.* (2002). This type of scale provides information on the sales organisation situation with respect to competitors and with respect to their own objectives. It is therefore a relative effectiveness measure (Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a).

Additionally, the field sales manager's satisfaction with the salesforce makes it possible to measure salesforce effectiveness from the supervisor's point-of-view. Based on a study by Baldauf *et al.* (2001a), the scale used is made up of four items with a Likert-type 7 degree scale which goes from 1 "need to improve" to 7 "exceptional".

Several phases were followed to evaluate the psychometric properties of the scales used. Individual reliability for each item is considered appropriate when an item has a factor loading above 0.7 which implies a variance between a variable and its indicators which is higher than the error variance. In this research, and to guarantee the individual reliability of all the items, 20 items were deleted: three items from the behaviour control variable, three items from the professionalism variable, ten items from the behaviour performance variable, three items from the financial effectiveness variable, and one item from the manager satisfaction variable; all of them with outer loadings below 0.7. Following the recommendations of Nunnally (1979), the composite reliability of the variables (IFC) exceeds 0.7 in the five cases. Convergent validity was evaluated by the average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). It is recommended that AVE should be greater than 0.5. All the latent variables of our model exceed this condition.

Lastly, discriminant validity was evaluated comparing the average variance extracted from each latent variable and the shared variance between the latent construct and other latent constructs in the model (i.e. the squared correlation between two constructs) (Barclay *et al.*, 1995). In this paper, all the latent variables satisfy this condition because all the AVE values are greater than 0.66. The whole process led to a reduction in the number of items used in the scales, which are described in Table II.

4. Results and discussion

After collecting the information required to produce a database according to the methodology explained in the previous section, below we present the main results obtained in the empirical research.

To evaluate the proposed theoretical model and to verify the proposed hypotheses and as mentioned in the methodology, PLS was applied. First, the suitability of this model was evaluated by the variance of the dependent variables explained. Table III shows that none of the R^2 obtained has a value below 0.1 (Falk and Miller, 1992).

In addition, following Chin's (2000) proposal, the regression coefficients were evaluated in order to verify the hypotheses posited in the model. Not all the regression coefficients reached the values over 0.2 recommended in the literature. This means a priori that the results do not support all the hypotheses posited. As Table IV shows, *H1a*, *H2b*, *H3*, and *H4a* can be supported because all their regression coefficients are greater than 0.2. With regard to *H1b*, the regression coefficient between behaviour control and manager satisfaction (β behaviour control \times manager satisfaction = 0.14) is close to the less restrictive 1.5 proposed by Falk and Miller (1992). The same happens with *H4b* where the regression coefficient between outcome performance and manager satisfaction is greater than 1.5 (β outcome performance \times manager satisfaction = 0.18). For *H2a* and *H5* the regression coefficients do not reach any recommended value. So these two hypotheses could not be accepted. But, because of the characteristics of the methodology, the analysis was completed by studying the stability of the estimations obtained.

Item	Loading	Reliability	BC	P	Correlations			MS
					BP	OP	E	
Behaviour control (BC)		$\rho_c = 0.961$ AVE = 0.71	1.00	0.80	0.81	0.62	0.75	0.66
CE1	0.775							
CE2	0.848							
CE3	0.809							
CE4	0.870							
CE5	0.770							
CE6	0.834							
CE7	0.877							
CE9	0.910							
CE10	0.844							
CE11	0.897							
Professionalism (P)		$\rho_c = 0.958$ AVE = 0.67	0.80	1.00	0.75	0.76	0.66	0.75
CAR2	0.829							
CAR3	0.735							
MOT1	0.731							
MOT2	0.846							
MOT3	0.874							
MOT4	0.825							
MOT5	0.813							
MOT6	0.809							
MOT10	0.801							
MOT11	0.877							
MOT12	0.875							

(continued)

Table II.
Evaluation of final scales

Item	Loading	Reliability	BC	P	Correlations			
					BP	OP	E	
Behaviour performance (BP)		$\rho_c = 0.975$ AVE = 0.71	0.812*	0.80	1.00	0.58	0.70	0.74
COMP3	0.810							
COMP4	0.831							
COMP5	0.850							
COMP6	0.845							
COMP7	0.750							
COMP10	0.899							
COMP11	0.896							
COMP12	0.930							
COMP17	0.864							
COMP18	0.892							
COMP20	0.831							
COMP22	0.832							
COMP23	0.815							
COMP24	0.799							
COMP25	0.735							
COMP26	0.898							
Outcome performance (OP)		$\rho_c = 0.944$ AVE = 0.71	0.61	0.76	0.58	1.00	0.63	0.66
RDO1	0.760							
RDO2	0.838							
RDO3	0.832							
RDO4	0.841							
RDO5	0.887							
RDO6	0.902							
RDO7	0.818							
Efficacy of salesforce (E)		$\rho_c = 0.902$ AVE = 0.65	0.75	0.66	0.70	0.63	1.00	0.63
EF2	0.851							
EF4	0.856							
EF5	0.858							
EF6	0.789							
EF7	0.659							
Manager satisfaction (MS)		$\rho_c = 0.876$ AVE = 0.70	0.66	0.75	0.74	0.66	0.63	1.00
SV1	0.869							
SV2	0.858							
SV4	0.785							

Note: *(Greatest correlation)² = 0.661

These results are similar to those found by other authors. For example, the work of Baldauf and Cravens (1999) in their study with 159 field sales managers in Austrian companies, the Baldauf *et al.*'s (2001a) study with chief sales executives in Austria and the UK, the research of Baldauf *et al.* (2002) with data collected from field sales managers in Australia and Austria, and the study of Piercy *et al.* (2004) with sales organisations in three developing countries (Greece, India and Malaysia). This suggests that effectiveness determinants are not related to the geographical situation of the salesforce analysed. In spite of this, and even the results among these studies are very similar, it is important to consider the possible differences among countries in order to sales managers establish appropriate strategies and actions that allow to improve sales effectiveness.

Bootstrapping was applied, a re-sampling process in which N samples are randomly generated from the original sample. After applying this procedure, the differences between the original sample and the average for the sample were analysed. As Table V shows, in this study the differences between both samples are small, but this was corroborated by analysing the *t* values that achieved values over 1.96 in all cases (Table IV), with the exception of the *t* value for the pairs corresponding to the hypotheses that had already been rejected. So, the following pairs do not reach the 1.96 accepted *t*-value: control behaviour \times manager satisfaction ($t = 0.86$), performance \times financial efficiency ($t = 0.67$), behaviour performance \times financial efficiency ($t = 1.75$), outcome performance \times manager satisfaction ($t = 1.57$), and financial efficiency \times manager satisfaction ($t = 1.06$). These results imply that there is no stability in the prediction made for the relationships under consideration.

In short, all the proposed relationships may be accepted with caution. In this sense, salespeople behaviour control, salespeople professionalism, salespeople behaviour performance and salespeople outcome performance have a positive and significant

	R^2
Efficiency	0.629
Manager satisfaction	0.661

Note: Only dependent variables' R^2 s are calculated

Table III.
Structural model
assessment (R^2)

	Hypothesis	β	<i>t</i> -value (bootstrap)
BC \rightarrow E	<i>H1a</i>	0.484	2.931*
BC \rightarrow MS	<i>H1b</i>	0.136	0.865
P \rightarrow E	<i>H2a</i>	0.105	0.660
P \rightarrow MS	<i>H2b</i>	0.359	2.08*
BP \rightarrow E	<i>H3a</i>	0.209	1.75
BP \rightarrow MS	<i>H3b</i>	0.411	3.65*
OP \rightarrow E	<i>H4a</i>	0.299	2.67*
OP \rightarrow MS	<i>H4b</i>	0.177	1.57
E \rightarrow MS	<i>H5</i>	0.094	1.06

Notes: β are in absolute value; * $p < 0.01$

Table IV.
Regression coefficients
analysis

	Original sample (O)	Simple mean (M)	Stand. deviation (STDEV)	Standard error (STERR)	<i>t</i> value (O/STERR)
CE1 – BC	0.775413	0.773493	0.042237	0.042237	18.358652
CE2 – BC	0.848275	0.850299	0.028606	0.028606	29.654003
CE3 – BC	0.809248	0.811232	0.041546	0.041546	19.478573
CE4 – BC	0.870365	0.867333	0.030516	0.030516	28.521438
CE5 – BC	0.769909	0.771988	0.052484	0.052484	14.669294
CE6 – BC	0.834041	0.829257	0.035860	0.035860	23.258054
CE7 – BC	0.877446	0.876129	0.022342	0.022342	39.273603
CE9 – BC	0.909986	0.911847	0.012714	0.012714	71.571627
CE10 – BC	0.844212	0.847296	0.026902	0.026902	31.381543
CE11 – BC	0.896568	0.898533	0.017211	0.017211	52.091823
CAR2 – P	0.828792	0.827943	0.033513	0.033513	24.730695
CAR3 – P	0.734753	0.731114	0.050471	0.050471	14.558025
MOT1 – P	0.731417	0.734266	0.050393	0.050393	14.514266
MOT2 – P	0.846050	0.845164	0.027414	0.027414	30.861705
MOT3 – P	0.874053	0.874781	0.029169	0.029169	29.965630
MOT4 – P	0.824574	0.830051	0.032576	0.032576	25.312054
MOT5 – P	0.813158	0.812232	0.026998	0.026998	30.118820
MOT6 – P	0.809369	0.811769	0.027427	0.027427	29.510024
MOT10 – P	0.801224	0.799847	0.041575	0.041575	19.271809
MOT11 – P	0.877389	0.877232	0.024990	0.024990	35.110068
MOT12 – P	0.874893	0.875033	0.021430	0.021430	40.826186
COMP3 – BP	0.810590	0.809526	0.031532	0.031532	25.706810
COMP4 – BP	0.831583	0.830829	0.034034	0.034034	24.433736
COMP5 – BP	0.850290	0.847284	0.027892	0.027892	30.485353
COMP6 – BP	0.845851	0.838472	0.052814	0.052814	16.015724
COMP7 – BP	0.749799	0.741109	0.061048	0.061048	12.282178
COMP10 – BP	0.898599	0.899082	0.014388	0.014388	62.452792
COMP11 – BP	0.896250	0.894834	0.022986	0.022986	38.990531
COMP12 – BP	0.930256	0.930490	0.010214	0.010214	91.074101
COMP17 – BP	0.864279	0.862387	0.025029	0.025029	34.531741
COMP18 – BP	0.891955	0.892435	0.020220	0.020220	44.111661
COMP20 – BP	0.831245	0.831144	0.029727	0.029727	27.962764
COMP22 – BP	0.832486	0.835699	0.032422	0.032422	25.676856
COMP23 – BP	0.814637	0.815080	0.044259	0.044259	18.406047
COMP24 – BP	0.798691	0.800843	0.047220	0.047220	16.914411
COMP25 – BP	0.734926	0.731539	0.049061	0.049061	14.979862
COMP26 – BP	0.898421	0.898299	0.019682	0.019682	45.646383
RDO1 – OP	0.760308	0.758928	0.042735	0.042735	17.791221
RDO2 – OP	0.837606	0.835633	0.039500	0.039500	21.204957
RDO3 – OP	0.831824	0.830831	0.042349	0.042349	19.642005
RDO4 – OP	0.841232	0.842552	0.024094	0.024094	34.914268
RDO5 – OP	0.887309	0.887350	0.019844	0.019844	44.714980
RDO6 – OP	0.901844	0.901176	0.020316	0.020316	44.391707
RDO7 – OP	0.818296	0.816746	0.048931	0.048931	16.723362
EF2 – E	0.851155	0.851095	0.028768	0.028768	29.586578
EF4 – E	0.855861	0.856374	0.028447	0.028447	30.086668
EF5 – E	0.857996	0.856526	0.024466	0.024466	35.069312
EF6 – E	0.789053	0.788596	0.049157	0.049157	16.051651
EF7 – E	0.659157	0.656833	0.060426	0.060426	10.908565
SV1 – MS	0.869302	0.869922	0.031067	0.031067	27.981339
SV2 – MS	0.858482	0.858231	0.027453	0.027453	31.270880
SV4 – MS	0.785056	0.772746	0.055582	0.055582	14.124281

Table V.
Analysis of the stability
of the estimations
(bootstrapping)

impact on salesforce effectiveness. It must be pointed out that this effectiveness is the result of salesforce efficacy and manager satisfaction. Furthermore, salesforce efficacy has a positive and direct effect on manager satisfaction. All these results are analysed from the field sales managers' point-of-view.

5. Characteristics of the most effective sales teams

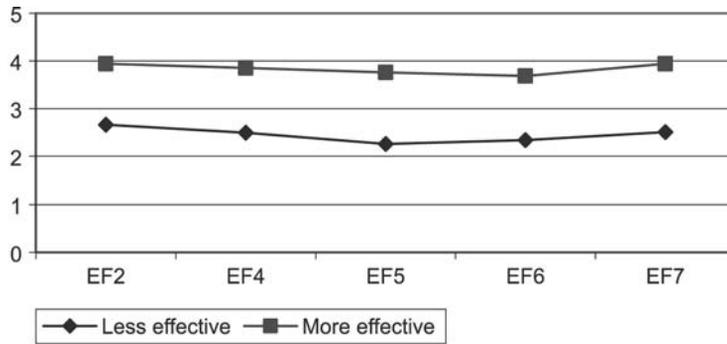
In order to achieve our second objective, to establish the characteristics of the most effective sales teams, we first proceeded to identify different segments of salesforce on the basis of the evaluation of their effectiveness; and this with the opinion of their team managers. To that end, and following the recommendations of Bigné (1990), a cluster or group analysis was carried out. In accordance with Cravens *et al.* (1992), Barker (1997) and Piercy *et al.* (1997), the variables to be included in the cluster analysis are those comparing the effectiveness of the salesforce with their objectives and with their most direct competitor, in connection with the following aspects: sales volume, market share, profitability and customer satisfaction. The use of these measures of relative effectiveness allows two important difficulties to be eliminated, such as the team managers' reluctance to provide confidential information on sales and benefits and, second, it enables comparison between different activity sectors and competitiveness situations (Piercy *et al.*, 1997).

The objective of this cluster analysis is to obtain a group of salesforce groups characterised by their degree of effectiveness. These groups must maximise their internal homogeneity (intragroup) and, at the same time, be different from the rest of the groups, that is to say, maximise their heterogeneity in comparison with the rest of the groups. Ward's variance method was used to group the individuals in a hierarchical way so as to minimise intragroup variation of the structure (Minguez and Fuentes, 2004).

In order to choose the adequate number of groups, taking into account the study to be done, we used the methodology proposed by Barker (1997), which consists in dividing the salesforce into two groups and proceeding to analyse them for significant differences. The measurement of effectiveness, as mentioned above, was made using a five-point scale, ranging from 1 "much worse" to 5 "much better". The results of both groups obtained from the assessment of the teams by the sales managers, is shown in Figure 2 (more detailed information in the Appendix). The least effective group is made up of 47 team managers and the most effective one of 61.

After that, and in accordance with Hair *et al.* (1999), we will proceed to analyse the *t*-test with a view to analysing the significance of the differences between the most and the least effective groups regarding type of control, professionalism, behaviour and individual performance.

As may be observed in Figure 2, all the differences between groups are significant and important. In addition, the most effective group obtains much higher ratings than the least effective group with respect to all the items. It should be noted that the objective of this analysis is to determine the differences between both groups, not to rate the results as good or bad; the aim therefore is to analyse the differences and identify the reasons for those differences in order to define some action lines for obtaining higher effectiveness in a salesforce. To this end, different analyses of the *t*-test were done, considering the items in each of the blocks making up the questionnaire as dependent variables.



Note: Scale used from 1 “Much worse” to 5 “Much better”

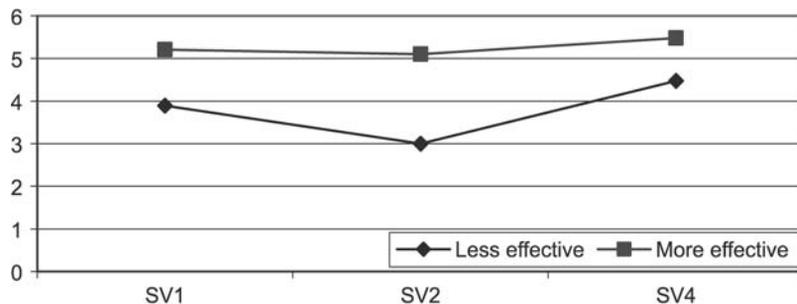
Figure 2.
Salesforce effectiveness

Baldauf *et al.* (2001a, 2002) also measure the effectiveness of the salesforce on the basis of the team manager’s opinion or subjective effectiveness. The data in our study, which are shown in Figure 3, again reveal the differences between both groups and we can therefore state that there are also differences in terms of effectiveness between the groups analysed when there is a subjective assessment of salesforce effectiveness (for more detailed information see Appendix).

In order to characterise each of the groups identified, and following the proposal in previous works (Cravens *et al.*, 1992; Barker, 1997; Piercy *et al.*, 1997; among others), the remuneration system, sales evolution (of the team, the company and the sector) and aspects related to the profile of the team manager (commercial and management experience, age, sex and academic background), as well as the company’s sector have been analysed.

We may conclude from the analysis of the items which allow definition of the profile of excellent sales organisations that there are no significant differences except for the salespeople’s type of remuneration and the variation of team sales. The main results are shown in Table VI.

Fixed remuneration of most effective teams accounts for almost 62 per cent of the total, whereas in the least effective teams the variable remuneration accounts for almost 75 per cent of the total salary, which seems logical due to the type of control to which both groups are subjected.



Note: Scale used from 1 “Needs to improve” to 7 “Exceptional”

Figure 3.
Field sales manager’s
satisfaction

	Group	Mean	Stand. Dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.
<i>Remuneration system</i>					
Fixed (%)	Less effective	41.77	23.82	16.433	0.000
	More effective	61.95	21.308		
Variable (%)	Less effective	72.45	27.76	30.461	0.000
	More effective	42.95	27.18		
<i>Number of salespeople</i>					
Company	Less effective	117.34	125.25	0.327	0.569
	More effective	97.98	203.87		
Team	Less effective	8.89	4.41	0.519	0.473
	More effective	9.60	5.47		
<i>Variation of sales</i>					
Team (%)	Less effective	4.89	6.75	4.004	0.048
	More effective	12.84	26.21		
Company (%)	Less effective	5.65	8.20	2.683	0.105
	More effective	12.25	26.27		
Sector (%)	Less effective	5.39	6.15	3.592	0.061
	More effective	7.70	5.72		

Table VI.
Salesforce effectiveness and profile

The size of sales organisations is larger in the least efficient teams, although the differences are not significant in any of the cases.

The variation in sales figures is always more significant in the most efficient group, but only regarding team sales figures, not in the case of company or sector figures. This situation might be due to the fact that the team manager is in charge of behaviour control and the situation therefore may differ between teams in the same company. We must also indicate that there are no significant differences when the sector in which the company operates is analysed. With respect to the profile of the field sales manager, there are no significant differences regarding any of the characteristics analysed.

After completing the descriptive analysis, we proceed to analyse the potential reaction of how salesforce efficacy is affected by the control system on the professionalism, behaviour and individual performance of the salespeople. For the purposes of clarification, the results are shown in graph form. For further information, see Appendix.

The results of the analysis of the control system used by both groups are shown in Figure 4. As may be observed, all the differences are significant. The least effective group does not implement an exhaustive control over their salespeople and most of the items are below 5; we can therefore conclude that the control system centres around results and not around behaviour. The most effective group usually exerts a direct control over the salespeople, all the items are above 7 or very close to this rating; that is to say, they are used to controlling both the results and the behaviour.

The biggest difference between both groups relates to the attention to salespeople's trips (CE2 and CE3) and to the aspects in connection with the evaluation process feedback (CE9), which seems to indicate that in the least effective group, interest is related to results and not to the way of achieving them. As a result, salespeople in most effective teams are subject to greater control, especially of their behaviour. These

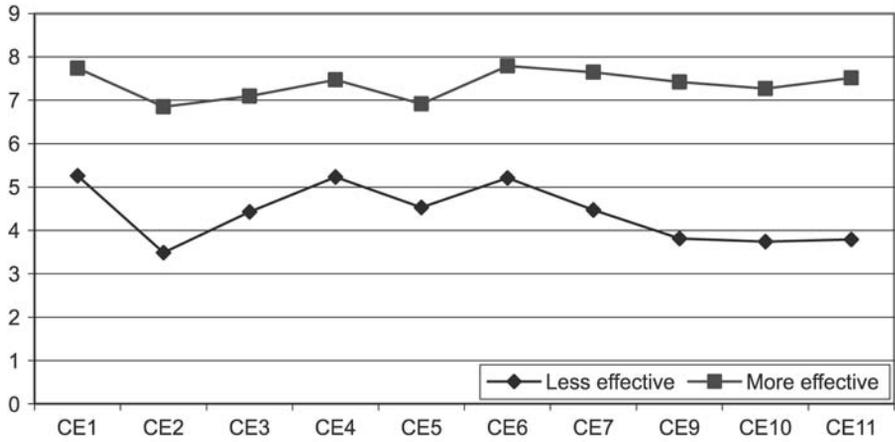


Figure 4.
Effectiveness and
behaviour control

Note: Scale used from 1 “Nothing at all” to 10 “To a great extent-Always”

results are similar to those achieved in the works of Piercy *et al.* (1997) and Baldauf *et al.* (2001a).

The analysis of specific characteristics related to attitude, professional skills and motivation determine salespeople’s degree of professionalism (Anderson and Oliver, 1987; Churchill *et al.*, 2000; Cámara and Sanz, 2001; Baldauf *et al.*, 2001a; Manning and Reece, 2004). The results in Figure 5 show higher than average values in the most effective group. In addition, all the differences are significant.

The biggest differences between the groups are related to the salesperson’s feeling as a member of the company (CAR2 and CAR3) and to those not directly connected with sales (MOT9 and MOT12). This may be due to the follow-up, whose scope is smaller, to which the salespeople in the least effective group are subject in comparison with those in the most effective group. The most effective group rejects potential

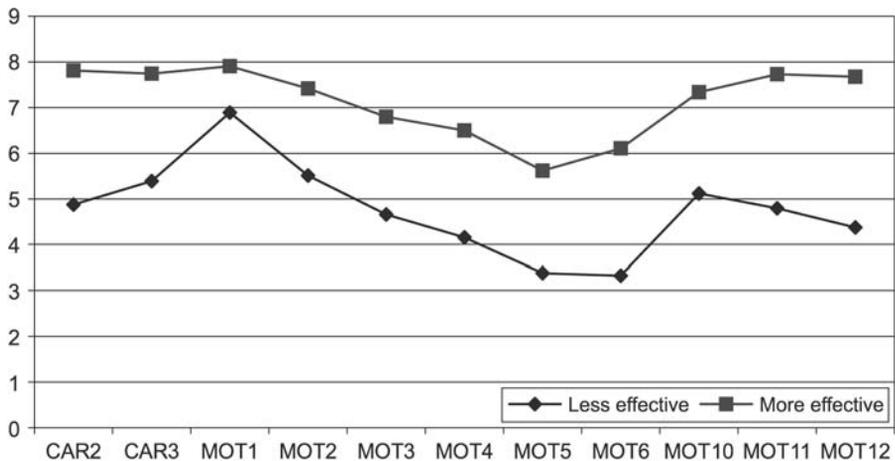


Figure 5.
Effectiveness and
professionalism

Note: Scale used from 1 “Nothing at all” to 10 “To a great extent-Always”

changes to a lesser extent. This may be due to the fact that the company assumes the risk.

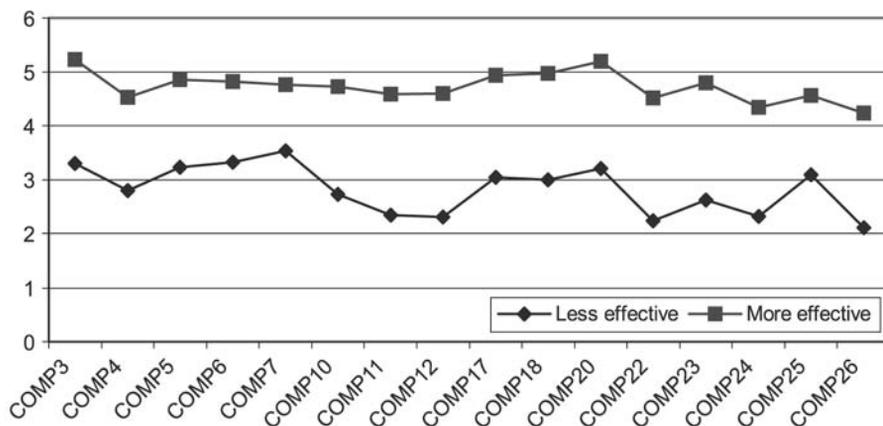
As mentioned above, the performance of salespeople's behaviour makes reference to tasks over which they can exert some type of control and which are directly or indirectly related to sales (Baldauf *et al.*, 2002).

The high number of items which analyse salespeople's behaviour show significant differences. We can therefore confirm that the performance of a salesperson's behaviour is different depending on the effectiveness level. Furthermore, in all the cases, the least effective group presents average values that are lower than those in the most effective group, as shown in Figure 6. The most effective teams develop a behaviour which leads to the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Such results are similar to those obtained by Cravens *et al.* (1992) and Piercy *et al.* (1997).

The biggest differences are found in aspects related to collaboration of salespeople with the staff in other areas of the company (COMP10, COMP11 and COMP12) and to tasks related to actions beyond the sale (COMP22, COMP23 and COMP24). This may be due to the fact that the least effective teams are especially concerned about clinching deals and not so much about long-term relationships with customers. This situation may also be observed through the differences in dealing with customers (COMP17 and COMP18).

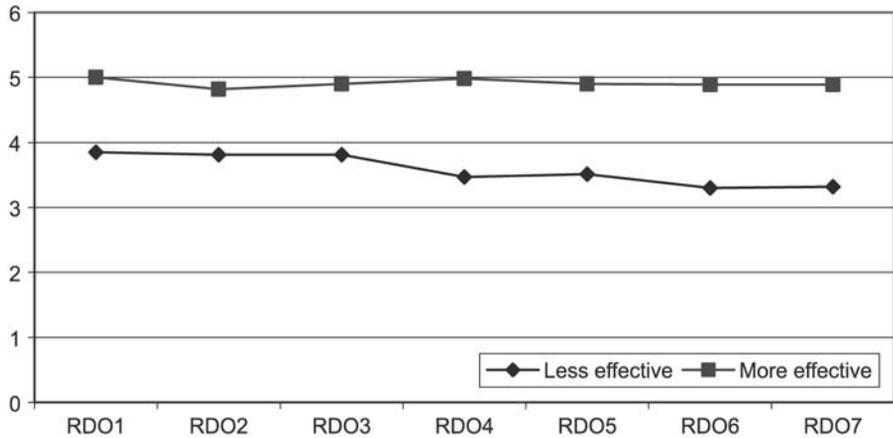
Finally, outcome performance means the salesperson's contribution to company objectives, and is determined by factors which the salesperson may control (Grant and Cravens, 1999; Piercy *et al.*, 2001). This group of items presents important and significant differences between both groups. The average values in the most effective group are much higher than those in the least effective group, as shown in Figure 7. This was the result expected given the group's condition as the most effective one. Thus, the most effective group provides significantly higher results and therefore contributes to a greater extent to the achievement of company objectives.

The results are similar to the study of Cravens *et al.* (1992) with 99 Australian sales organisations, the study of Barker (1997) with 250 Canadian sales executives, and the study of Piercy *et al.* (1997) with field sales managers located in the UK.



Note: Scale used from 1 "Needs to improve" to 7 "Exceptional"

Figure 6.
Effectiveness and
behaviour



Note: Scale used from 1 “Needs to improve” to 7 “Exceptional”

Figure 7.
Effectiveness and performance

6. Conclusions and managerial implications

This study has been developed with a view to furthering knowledge in one of the most important aspects of business activity, sales team management, which is not always given appropriate treatment in marketing literature. We have focused on studying some antecedents of salesforce effectiveness from the opinion of 108 field sales managers (supervisors).

First, this study shows how salespeople behaviour based control and their outcome performance are associated with higher salesforce effectiveness; and especially with financial effectiveness. The reasons for this can be found in two facts: behaviour based control needs a previous definition of the tasks the salesperson has to carry out to achieve his/her sales objectives, and the results of each salesperson will affect the effectiveness of the whole company.

Second, salespersons’ professionalism (attitude, motivation and strategic behaviour) has a direct and positive effect on salesforce effectiveness; and specially with field sales manager (supervisor) satisfaction. So, maybe, salespeople professionalism must not always compensated with a sale. In this way, the subjective valuation of the field sales manager of their work is important.

Third, our results show the strong link between salespeople’s behaviour performance and salesforce effectiveness; perhaps because this concept is formed by numerous items direct or indirectly related to sales, and simultaneously both objective in character (financial effectiveness) and subjective (sales manager satisfaction).

Also, and because the study shows the opinions of field sales managers, a positive relationship between the financial effectiveness and field sales manager satisfaction has been found. It is logical to think that field sales managers will be more satisfied when their salespeople achieve better economic results.

The cluster analysis has allowed us to obtain two groups on the basis of their effectiveness. The later analysis of the *t*-test has detected important significant differences between both groups, especially related to the figure of the field sales manager, to the salespeople’s behaviour, their individual performance and the effect of the salespeople remuneration system.

Management by field sales managers has important effects on the effectiveness of the teams they are in charge of. That is why the field sales manager must help to define the salespeople's tasks to reach the company's objectives in the most effective way. This situation implies, logically, that control is exerted over behaviour and to a lesser extent over the results achieved by the salesperson. In the most effective teams, the team manager is more of a coach and a communicator than the traditional manager mainly looking for results; on the contrary, the most effective team managers have a long-term vision, and place more emphasis on work quality than on amount of work.

On another issue, salespeople's behaviour in the most effective teams centres around a greater knowledge of what they sell and how they sell it, but also around attention and follow-up of the selling process, besides feeling more integrated in the salesforce and in the company as a whole. This involves an important challenge in selecting and training company salespeople. In addition, salespeople in the most effective teams are more motivated by factors inherent to work than in the least effective teams.

This better behaviour, as it fits what has been planned by the company's management, improves the salespeople's individual performance and therefore increases the company's effectiveness. On the contrary, there are no differences, regarding salesforce effectiveness, related to the process of work planning by salespeople.

The salespeople's remuneration system (fixed or variable) is a very important factor in connection with salesforce effectiveness. When salespeople are remunerated on the basis of a high percentage of fixed salary, they may concentrate on those tasks favouring a customer-focused approach and do not need to be so concerned about sales figures, which favours long-term relationships and improves effectiveness. This does not mean that the variable part of the salary is ignored, as this variable salary will motivate a salesperson to work harder in order to achieve a higher total remuneration.

Besides, salesforce effectiveness is not affected by aspects related to the team manager's profile, company size or the team themselves. Nor have we come across differences related to the activity sector in which the companies for which the salespeople work, operate.

From the point of view of business practices we can also offer some considerations. First of all, it provides a vision on the type of control that sales managers, and especially those who are in direct contact with salespeople, may exert to evaluate salespeople. The traditional control based on sales figures, which may be adequate in some circumstances, may conceal circumstances which affect the results of a salesperson's work. On top of that, behaviour control will demand a greater attention to tasks implemented by the salesperson before, during and after sales visits. Furthermore, the implementation of behaviour control systems improves the salespeople's individual performance, as they know exactly what they have to do, and the organisation's effectiveness therefore improves. However, the company should not stop controlling results, as the most efficient organisations develop both control systems as a normal routine. Another important implication for management may be found in the process of selecting and training salespeople. More professional salespeople are more efficient at doing their job. Management must therefore select and, if required, train those salespeople whose attitude tends to be more positive towards sales work, who are more motivated towards achieving the objectives and who share the company's strategic vision.

Related to the implications for Spanish companies, the results in this study point out the need to make an important change with respect to the accomplishment of tasks related to the evaluation and control of salespeople. Previous studies (e.g. Canales and Küster, 2006) contrast the frequent use of the results based systems to control and evaluate the salesforce, instead of using more behavioural systems. Results show that these results based systems have no positive effects on sales effectiveness and salesperson performance. So companies, more especially sales managers have to control and supervise sales results but also, and even more so, behavioural aspects.

As in any research, the paper shows different limitations. First of all, some of the concepts used when designing the model proposed may have not gone through a sufficient test stage. The reason lies in the restrictions involved in any gathering of information. However, these aspects may become future research lines. In this sense, during the development of the theoretical review and the later empirical analysis, some new research lines have come up, which may lead to future analysis, some of which would find a solution to the limitations mentioned above.

Thus, for example, first of all it would be convenient to analyse the importance awarded by sales managers to the different tasks related to salespeople's control, not only whether they are implemented or not. In the same way, this work analyses the effects of behaviour control, but it might also be interesting to study the direct effects of outcome control on professionalism, performance and company effectiveness. Second, the information has been gathered on a unique hierarchical level – team managers –, which is a partial approach. In this line, future research might look for an extension of the study to other hierarchical levels in the sales organisation, that is to say, analysing both the sales managers' and the salespeople's opinions. Nonetheless, given the interest in behaviour control, and in accordance with existing literature, team managers represent the most adequate level to obtain more direct information. Finally, we must also make reference to the analysis of the control relationship, the performance and the effectiveness on the basis of the company's activity sector and even depending on the type of salesperson. This analysis might indicate which type of control is more adequate for each different situation.

It is also to be highlighted that the size of the sample has limited the potential application of specific statistical techniques and even the generalisation of the results obtained.

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Appendix. Statistical analysis of the items used

	Group	Mean	Std. dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.
EF2 Sales volume compared with sales unit objectives	1	2.66	1.01		
	2	3.94	0.85	51.573	0.000
EF4 Market share compared with sales unit objectives	1	2.49	0.98		
	2	3.85	0.85	60.998	0.000
EF5 Profitability compared with major competitor	1	2.26	0.85		
	2	3.76	0.69	103.676	0.000
EF6 Profitability compared with sales unit objectives	1	2.34	0.94		
	2	3.68	0.74	69.05	0.000
EF7 Customer satisfaction compared with major competitor	1	2.51	0.800		
	2	3.94	0.600	112.795	0.000

Note: Scale used ranges from 1 "much worse" to 5 "much better"

Table AI.
Salesforce effectiveness

	Group	Mean	Std. dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.
SV1 Annual sales average by salesperson	1	3.89	1.24		
	2	5.21	0.91	41.03	0.000
SV2 Gaining new clients	1	3.00	1.30		
	2	5.10	1.35	66.39	0.000
SV4 Maintenance of current clients	1	4.47	1.23		
	2	5.48	1.01	22.50	0.000

Note: Scale used ranges from 1 "need to improve" to 7 "exceptional"

Table AII.
Sales force leader satisfaction

	Group	Mean	Std. dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.
CE1 Regularly review call reports from salespeople	1	5.26	1.80	48.484	0.000
	2	7.74	1.88		
CE2 Pay attention to extent to which salespeople travel	1	3.49	1.84	63.103	0.000
	2	6.85	2.42		
CE3 Closely watch salespeople's expense account	1	4.43	2.35	38.592	0.000
	2	7.10	2.12		
CE4 Actively participate in training salespeople on the job	1	5.23	2.38	29.993	0.000
	2	7.47	1.88		
CE5 Regularly spend time coaching salespeople	1	4.53	2.10	30.863	0.000
	2	6.92	2.31		
CE6 Discuss performance evaluation with salespeople	1	5.21	2.25	42.789	0.000
	2	7.79	1.86		
CE7 Help salespeople develop their potential	1	4.47	2.10	72.203	0.000
	2	7.65	2.31		
CE9 Evaluate the professional development of salespeople	1	3.81	2.21	72.508	0.000
	2	7.42	2.18		
CE10 Provide performance feedback to salespeople on a regular basis	1	3.74	2.44	53.880	0.000
	2	7.27	2.52		
CE11 Compensate salespeople based on the quality of their sales activities	1	3.79	2.37	72.140	0.000
	2	7.52	2.19		

Table AIII.
Effectiveness and control

Note: Scale used ranges from 1 "not at all" to 10 "to a great extent – always"

	Group	Mean	Std. dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.
CAR2 Cooperate as team members	1	4.87	2.46	52.743	0.000
	2	7.81	1.75		
CAR3 Are loyal to their company	1	5.38	2.86	30.321	0.000
	2	7.74	1.56		
MOT1 Obtain a sense of accomplishment from their work	1	6.89	1.66	13.506	0.000
	2	7.90	1.21		
MOT2 Feel a sense of personal growth and development in their work	1	5.51	1.63	40.894	0.000
	2	7.42	1.48		
MOT3 Feel they do creative work	1	4.66	1.83	35.404	0.000
	2	6.79	1.87		
MOT4 Feel they are innovative	1	4.15	2.11	38.058	0.000
	2	6.50	1.86		
MOT5 Are ready to assume risks	1	3.38	2.47	26.060	0.000
	2	5.61	2.08		
MOT6 Are stimulated by changes in their working environment	1	3.33	2.11	42.674	0.000
	2	6.11	2.27		
MOT10 Perform sales support activities	1	5.11	2.71	27.185	0.000
	2	7.34	1.75		
MOT11 Focus on satisfying customer needs	1	4.79	2.08	73.035	0.000
	2	7.73	1.51		
MOT12 Build customer royalty	1	4.37	1.79	107.444	0.000
	2	7.68	1.53		

Table AIV.
Effectiveness and professionalism

Note: Scale used ranges from 1 "not at all" to 10 "to a great extent – always"

	Group	Mean	Std. dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.
COMP3 Are updated on the company's production and technology issues	1	3.30	1.25		
	2	5.23	1.34	58.850	0.000
COMP4 Experiment different sales techniques	1	2.79	1.22		
	2	4.53	1.51	41.602	0.000
COMP5 Approach sales in a flexible way	1	3.23	1.11		
	2	4.85	1.44	41.262	0.000
COMP6 Adapt sales technique to each client	1	3.32	0.91		
	2	4.82	1.49	37.318	0.000
COMP7 Varying sales style from situation to situation	1	3.53	1.00		
	2	4.76	1.49	23.750	0.000
COMP10 Build strong working relationships with other persons in the company	1	2.72	1.50		
	2	4.73	1.60	44.158	0.000
COMP11 Work close to no-sales staff	1	2.34	1.42		
	2	4.58	1.77	50.611	0.000
COMP12 Coordinate themselves in an adequate way with other employees to handle after-sales and service issues	1	2.30	1.41		
	2	4.60	1.53	64.400	0.000
COMP17 Listen carefully to identify and understand actual clients' concerns	1	3.04	1.06		
	2	4.94	1.16	76.688	0.000
COMP18 Convince their clients that they have understood their special needs and problems	1	3.00	1.22		
	2	4.97	1.17	72.899	0.000
COMP20 Using established contacts to develop new customers	1	3.21	1.38		
	2	5.19	1.41	53.559	0.000
COMP22 Control delivery of orders	1	2.23	1.39		
	2	4.52	1.38	73.059	0.000
COMP23 Manage client complaints	1	2.62	1.69		
	2	4.79	1.47	51.298	0.000
COMP24 Provide after-sales service	1	2.32	1.37		
	2	4.34	1.57	48.379	0.000
COMP25 Troubleshooting application problems	1	3.09	1.49		
	2	4.56	1.54	25.357	0.000
COMP26 Analysing product use experience to identify new product ideas	1	2.11	1.22		
	2	4.23	1.54	60.239	0.000

Note: Scale used ranges from 1 "need to improve" a 7 "exceptional"

Table AV.
Effectiveness and
behaviour performance

Table AVI.
Effectiveness and
performance

	Group	Mean	Std. dev.	<i>t</i>	Sig.
RDO1 Provide a high market share to the company	1	3.85	1.02	28.188	0.000
	2	5.00	1.19		
RDO2 Achieve high mark-up product sales	1	3.81	1.23	19.568	0.000
	2	4.82	1.15		
RDO3 Generate a high level of sales (in money)	1	3.81	1.65	15.820	0.000
	2	4.90	1.22		
RDO4 Identifying and selling to major accounts	1	3.47	1.43	35.587	0.000
	2	4.98	1.22		
RDO5 Achieve profitable long-lasting interactions	1	3.51	1.32	33.999	0.000
	2	4.90	1.17		
RDO6 Outdo their objectives all through the year	1	3.30	1.23	54.716	0.000
	2	4.89	1.01		
RDO7 Quickly generating sales of new products	1	3.32	1.35	40.319	0.000
	2	4.89	1.22		

Note: Scale used ranges from 1 “need to improve” to 7 “exceptional”

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