Inside Sales Force and Gender: Mediating Effects of Intrinsic Motivation on Sales Controls and Performance

By Anne Gottfried, Scott Ambrose and Richard Plank

Business-to-business sales organizations are experiencing inside sales growth as well as increased importance and utilization of their inside sales people. This dynamic role change towards inside sales is resulting in organizations re-thinking their sales control structure. To fill this gap, data was collected from 183 inside sales professionals representing a variety of industries. Utilizing Partial Least Square Analysis (PLS), this study analyzed the influences of gender on the relationship between sales controls and job performance to include measuring the effects of intrinsic motivation, both challenge seeking and task enjoyment, on the model relationships. Findings suggest that differences do exist between males and females. Practitioners are given greater insight into how role and gender variables along with control systems and intrinsic motivation work together in the design and implementation of more effective sales control systems.

INTRODUCTION

The importance and utilization of inside sales positions within business-to-business organizations has been growing. For example, the results of a 2009 survey of more than 400,000 U.S. companies predicted 7.5% growth in inside sales positions (sales agents meeting with customers remotely by phones and computers), compared with 0.5% growth in outside sales positions (sales agents meeting with customers in the field) by 2012 (Rosenbaum, 2013). Researchers have attributed this significant growth of inside sales jobs to several factors, including the introduction of new technologies, increased buyer preferences for virtual relationships, and the need for organizations to reduce operating expenses (Boyle, 1996; Marshall, Moncrief, Rudd, & Lee, 2012; Piercy, 2006). In order for business firms to remain competitive, it is becoming vital for managers to understand issues that may arise from the growing relevance of the inside sales representative. Besides motivational concerns, issues such as gender differences and role positions and how an integration of these influences along with other factors effect performance are worthy of consideration (Marshall & Vrendenburg, 1991; Rapp, Beitelspacher, Schillewaert, & Baker, 2012; Rutherford, Marshall, & Park, 2014). Rutherford et al. (2014) investigated separately the relationships of gender (male/female) and sales positions (inside/outside) and noticed increasing trends of both females and inside sales positions in B2B sales organizations and the need for future research in these areas.

The seminal work of Anderson and Oliver (1987) introduced the concept of two opposite types of sales control systems, with behavior-based high managerial participation on one end of a continuum and output-based low managerial participation on the other end. A great deal of empirical work has followed, and while some, such as that of Fatima (2015), has argued that behavior-based systems provide more performance improvement, other research indicates that both systems are used, often in combination. Typically, organizations use some combination of the two systems often referred to as hybrid sales controls in which elements of both types are present (Challagalla & Shervani, 1997; Oliver & Anderson, 1994). This article similarly views sales control systems as combinations of activity, capability, and output controls (Miao, Evans, and Shaoming, 2007; Murtha, Shervani, Challagalla, & Kirkman, 2014).

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The literature has established the integration of sales controls and motivation on sales productivity (Baldauf, Cravens, & Piercy, 2005; Oliver & Anderson, 1994), with customer relationship building and salesperson intrinsic motivation (Mallin & Pullins, 2009; Walker, Churchill, & Ford, 1977). Researchers investigating the global measure of intrinsic motivation found a positive relationship between behavior controls and the selling process due to lower pressure for immediate sales outcomes (Cravens, Ingram, LaForge, & Young, 1993; Oliver & Anderson, 1994). Building on this foundation, the work of Miao, Evans, and Shaoming (2007) expanded the intrinsic motivation construct to include the multi-dimensional effects of challenge seeking and task enjoyment on performance. While these prior sales control studies have primarily focused on outside B2B sales reps, little is known about how *inside* B2B sales reps, governed by different control systems, respond to the different facet measures of intrinsic motivation. Also, as will be noted in the literature review, the extrinsic/intrinsic motivation paradigm is, in reality, not well understood or explicated in the existing research.

The purpose of this article is thus to examine the relationship between sales force control systems and outcome performance as mediated by intrinsic motivation and further moderated by gender. We include in this evaluation a two-group subsample moderation on the two mediating effects of intrinsic motivation, challenge seeking and task enjoyment, on the modeled relationships. An added dimension of our research is that we use only B2B salespeople and assesses their performance using the industry practice of establishing sales quotas. This ensures that the inside sales representatives are not merely servicing existing accounts and generating new leads for outside sales representatives, which is the traditional view of the role of the inside sales rep (Marshall & Vredenburg, 1991). The inside sales representatives in this study are responsible for the full selling process, including closing sales and fostering customer relationships. It should be noted that research on inside salespeople has not always been clear on the exact roles of the inside salespeople being studied. This has produced results that can be confounded depending on the set of roles an inside salesperson plays. This article explores the frontier of research on sales controls, an area that lacks empirical research examining potential links between inside sales roles and gender variables.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Role Theory

Role theory describes the forces influencing people to develop expectations of their own and others' behaviors (Biddle, 1986). Role theory considers the ways in which role expectations for specific job positions (e.g., pilot, doctor, lawyer) influence a person's behavior toward those occupations. It finds that a person's behavior in relation to that job position is somewhat predictable (Walker, Churchill, & Ford, 1975). Different job positions or roles influence beliefs and attitudes and individuals will change their beliefs and attitudes to match a given job position or role. Inside salespeople, for example, may experience different forms of office conflict than will outside salespeople, who spend more time traveling, away from the office, since these two positions have different job descriptions or role expectations (Marshall & Vrendenburg, 1991; Narus & Anderson, 1986; Walker et al., 1975). The particular role demands of inside salespeople should be considered when examining job expectations and performance (Boyle, 1996). As we noted above, we explicitly define the roles being played by the respondents.

Inside Sales Role

Research on the role of inside sales begins with the groundbreaking work of Narus and Anderson (1986). These authors examined B2B sales and compared inside and outside sales roles in terms of responsibilities and compensation programs. Their results suggest several trends based on improvements in telecommunications equipment, which will increase inside sales force capabilities to include growth in this sales force, which will assume new responsibilities and increased status in the future. Results from Boyle's (1996) customer survey show inside sales force performance to have a greater impact on overall company satisfaction than that of field salespeople in several operational areas, such as technical expertise, product quality and assortment, and resolution of conflict. These results can be explained in

terms of the customers' demand for the greater listening and speaking skills of the inside rep when constrained by telephone communication as opposed to face-to-face communication with outside sales and (Boyle, 1996). Other sales role researchers examined B2B inside sales programs and noted the increased use of business intelligence tools to help inside sales teams manage costs and generate sales (Gessner & Scott, 2009; Rapp et al., 2012). Beyond these contributions, a complete explication of the roles and role combinations played by various types of inside salespeople does not exist at this time.

Gender

Beginning with Mason's (1995) seminal work, researchers have found gender differences in the job-related values of men and women. Mason (1995) found that women are more satisfied in jobs that enable them to interact with others in a supportive and cooperative way. Men are more "agentic" in their orientation, preferring to interact in a more self-assertive manner (Mason, 1995).

In the sales literature, Lane and Crane (2002) explain the prevailing stereotype of women in sales as lacking in the "harder," conventionally male aspects of the selling process, such as closing deals, making tough decisions, and being assertive. Women are commonly understood as more concerned with the "soft" and "relational" aspects of selling. Such characteristics, at one time considered a disadvantage, are now viewed as an advantage in a sales profession that is shifting from more transaction-based selling to more relationship-based selling (Cravens et al., 1993; Piercy, 2006). This hints at the possibility that the stereotypical characteristics of females in sales, which have previously had the effect of disadvantaging them in sales, could potentially turn out, in the future, to be viewed in a positive light (Lane & Crane, 2002).

Other sales and gender research examine the moderating effects of gender on facets of job satisfaction (e.g., Babin & Boles, 1998; Boles, Wood, & Johnson, 2003; Boles & Scheurer, 2007; Comer & Jolson, 1991; Ladik, Marshall, Lassk, & Moncrief, 2002; Macintosh & Krush, 2014; Rutherford, Marshall, & Park, 2014). Rutherford et al. (2014) find that female salespeople are more relationship-focused than men. Examining gender effects on social networking, the research of Macintosh and Krush (2014) found that men and women benefit differently from relationships at work. Men benefit more instrumentally (e.g., peer relationships help them do their jobs better) and women benefit relationally. The sales control research of Mallin and Pullins (2009) examined motivation and incentives, and although gender effects were not a focal point of their study, their results suggest that female salespeople are indeed more intrinsically motivated towards a customer relationship orientation than are their male counterparts.

Sales Force Control Systems (SFCS)

Jaworski's (1988) article on sales force control systems defines sales controls as sets of activities that increase the probability that stated plans will be executed and preferred outcomes achieved. Challagalla and Shervani (1997) extended Jaworski's (1988) framework to include directing people toward task-relevant behaviors that are aligned with organizational goals. These conceptualizations have resulted in the forming of three different types of sales force control systems: *output controls*, *activity controls*, and *capability controls*. Output controls include less managerial supervision and high job autonomy with an emphasis on end results such as sales volumes or quotas. Activity controls and capability controls both require more managerial supervision and involvement and are often referred to as behavior-based controls, although the two are otherwise quite distinct. Activity controls encompass less job autonomy and place more emphasis on achieving routine sales activities, such as sales calls and specific sales procedures. Capability controls, on the other hand, include more job autonomy than activity controls with the focus on the development of employee sales knowledge, skills, and ability (Evans, McFarland, Dietz, & Jaramillo, 2012; Miao et al., 2007).

Intrinsic Motivation

In the sales control literature, intrinsic motivation has been examined as an antecedent of performance (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996; Mallin & Pullins, 2009), as a consequence of performance (Oliver & Anderson, 1994; Weitz, Sujan, & Sujan, 1986), and as a mediator between control systems and performance (Miao et al., 2007). Traditionally, the intrinsic motivation of a

salesperson was viewed as a global measure, but more recently it has been separated out into its cognitive and affective dimensions (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994) of challenge seeking (cognitive) and task enjoyment (affective) (Mallin & Pullins, 2009; Miao et al., 2007).

Theories of motivation have been in development for a long time. Many theoretical approaches to the question of how to get other people to do something or why people do things on their own have evolved. The predominant approach in the sales management literature is expectancy valence theory (Vroom, 1964; Walker et al., 1977). Pervin (1994) provides three basic categories of motivational theories: hedonic pleasure, cognition, and growth/actualization. One cognitive perspective, concerned with the source driving the cognitive activity, contrasts extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation. Its premise is that motivation comes from either internal or external sources. Simply stated, intrinsic motivation is internal and individuals have various and differing levels; whereas extrinsic motivation concerns their reaction to external rewards and individuals also have differing levels of response to rewards. In a sales context, it could be said that salespeople have different intrinsic motivation levels and varying degrees of response to extrinsic rewards.

A key question, originally brought up by Deci (1971), concerns the relationship of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Within their theory of self-determination, Deci and many colleagues have essentially argued that extrinsic motivational activities can and do negatively affect levels of inherent intrinsic motivation. Pullins (2001) has expressed this same idea in the sales literature, suggesting that reliance on extrinsically based compensation may well be driving down intrinsic motivation levels in salespeople.

Cerasoli, Nicklin and Ford (2014) have recently reignited this forty-year-old debate. These authors address the basic question of whether intrinsic and extrinsic motivation jointly determine performance. They argue that the relationship between intrinsic motivation and performance is positively moderated by the presence of indirect performance-salient incentives and negatively moderated by the presence of direct performance-salient incentives. They found no omnibus effect of the presence of incentives. They also note that this is to some extent irrelevant when it comes to the effect of intrinsic motivation on the prediction of performance. They support these general notions using multiple studies and a meta-analysis of those studies. We base our treatment of intrinsic motivation in this research on their findings. We essentially presume that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation patterns drive performance and that higher levels of intrinsic motivation in an individual will lead to higher levels of performance, all other factors being equal. Thus, intrinsic motivation is viewed as a mediating variable, the effects of which vary with other factors, notably gender and the nature of the control system.

Performance

Sales control research, beginning with Jaworski (1988), supports the idea that sales controls are determinants of salesperson performance (Cravens et al., 1993; Oliver & Anderson, 1994; Verbeke, Dietz, & Verwaal, 2011). Direct-effect results have been contradictory in this field, leading researchers to examine indirect effects (Evans et al., 2007; Joshi & Randall, 2001). The B2B sales control research of Miao et al. (2007) examined the indirect effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on both behavioral performance (i.e., the activities, knowledge, and skills of salespeople) and outcome performance (i.e., compensation-seeking). Similar to Miao et al. (2007), this study will examine the indirect effects of intrinsic motivation by breaking it into two separate categories: challenge seeking and task enjoyment.

Hypotheses

Consistent with previous research, this study anticipates that sales controls will impact outcome performance. Prior research, however, has exhibited mixed results as to whether sales controls affect outcome performance directly or do so through intervening variables. Thus, in keeping with recent studies, we test sales controls for both direct effects on performance and indirect effects through intrinsic motivation (Evans, Landry, Li, & Zou, 2007; Miao et al., 2007). We thus examine the direct relationship effects of sales controls on outcome performance. This study anticipates the role variable of inside sales to provide sales reps with more inherent

organizational and relationship support than outside sales. This additional evidence of the strength of inner sales, compared to the lack of evidence in favor of field sales, is expected to create a greater need for autonomy in quota-driven inside sales reps whose performance is evaluated using outcome-based measures. In addition, sales reps in general are not motivated to perform tasks that take their attention away from direct selling or tasks that are not included in how they are evaluated or compensated (Anderson & Oliver 1996; Challagalla & Shervani, 1996; Miao et al., 2007).

Direct effects of activity controls on outcome performance.

In this study, we view activity controls as more applicable to the traditional role of the inside sales rep with task requirements not related to direct selling (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). We conceptualize quota-driven inside sales reps as responsible for the entire selling process. We thus anticipate that activity controls with high monitoring and low autonomy, as well those that require time away from direct selling, will not have a relationship to the outcome performance of inside, quota-driven sales reps, whether male or female (Evans et al., 2007).

Direct effects of capability control on outcome performance.

Inside sales and females who are also evaluated by quota are expected to prefer more relationship support from their firm than are their male counterparts (Lane & Crane, 2002). Females are viewed as preferring the development of essential selling skills as part of an organization's relationship support network (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). Less assertive females may view the development of their capabilities as empowering them toward landing sales or more indirectly improving the selling process. Hence, one would expect a stronger relationship for females with capability controls on outcome performance. Males, meanwhile, are not as likely to be interested in relational support as females are. They will not prefer capability controls since these tasks divert their attention away from direct selling, especially when their performance is evaluated by outcome performance measures (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996).

Direct effects of output control on outcome performance.

We anticipate that inside sales reps and quota-driven male reps with the stereotype desire to be more assertive, independent, and transaction-focused than females will exhibit a positive impact with output controls on outcome performance (Jaworski & Kohli, 1991; Lane & Crane, 2002). At the same time, quota-driven female inside sales reps who are already receiving organizational support will also likely desire more autonomy in the selling process than field-based female sales reps. One would thus also expect a positive relationship between females and output controls on outcome performance (and less so for males).

This study tests direct effect linkages between sales control dimensions and outcome performance for inside salespeople and gender through the following hypotheses (see Figure 1). These hypotheses are informed by previous empirical research, role theory, and motivation theory.

H1: Gender moderates the relationship of (a) activity control; (b) capability control; (c) output control on outcome performance.

The following hypotheses will extend the research of Miao et al. (2007) by accounting for the heterogeneity effects of inside sales and gender on the modeled relationships to include the mediating effects of challenge-seeking intrinsic motivation on the relationship between sales controls and outcome performance. Task enjoyment was not conceptualized in the Miao et al. (2007) study of outcome performance, but will nevertheless be tested here in an exploratory manner.

Examining the broader view of sales controls and intrinsic motivation on outcome performance, we anticipate that inside and quota-driven male sales reps will be more intrinsically motivated towards challenge seeking and task enjoyment on the relationship between output sales controls and outcome performance. Inside sales and quota-driven females will be more intrinsically motivated towards challenge seeking and task enjoyment on the relationship between capability sales controls and outcome performance.

Activity control and intrinsic motivation on outcome performance.

Within the inside sales context, we do not anticipate gender to influence the mediating influence of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between activity sales controls and outcome performance. Activity controls monitor, direct, evaluate, and control sales reps through behavioral tasks that inside sales reps, both male and female, view as separate from the direct selling process (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). Activity controls involve high monitoring and low autonomy, which inside sales reps may experience (more than would field reps, who naturally experience more autonomy than inside sales reps do) as counterproductive and detached from their quota goals and performance measures (Evans et al., 2007; Jaworski & Kohli, 1991). Neither gender will therefore find this type of sales control intrinsically challenging or task enjoyable when examining gender's impact on performance.

Capability control and intrinsic motivation on outcome performance.

Inside sales and females, who "relate to others in a supportive and cooperative way" and prefer more "soft" selling and a higher need for perceived organizational support, will be more intrinsically motivated than males towards outcome performance with capability controls (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Lane & Crane, 2002). Relationship-oriented females will deem it easier to build a closer bond with their managers inside the office versus outside the office (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). Capability controls are conceptualized as learned skills applied in an autonomous manner (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996; Kohli et al., 1998). The need for autonomy is greater for inside sales reps than for field sales reps. We therefore anticipate that capability controls will be viewed as more intrinsically challenging and enjoyable to female inside sales reps than to outside female sales reps.

Output control and intrinsic motivation on outcome performance.

Inside and male sales reps, who are more "self-assertive" and prefer more "hard" selling and less organizational support than females, will be more intrinsically motivated towards outcome performance with output controls (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Lane & Crane, 2002). Outcome controls offer the highest form of autonomy and lowest form of monitoring compared to the other types of sales controls (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). They are viewed as more intrinsically motivating and challenge-seeking for the more independent nature of males versus females (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lane & Crane, 2002). Both male and female inside sales reps, more than field reps, will find the high-autonomy aspect of this type of sales control, having the least discrepancy between goals and performance measures, more intrinsically task-enjoyable than will field reps (Jaworski & Kohli, 1991).

H2: The moderating effect of gender influences the relationship between (a) activity controls, (b) capability controls, (c) output controls and salesperson perceptions of intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking).

H3: The moderating effect of gender influences the relationship between (a) activity controls, (b) capability controls, (c) output controls and salesperson perceptions of intrinsic motivation (task enjoyment).

H4a: The moderating effect of gender influences the relationship between intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking) and outcome performance.

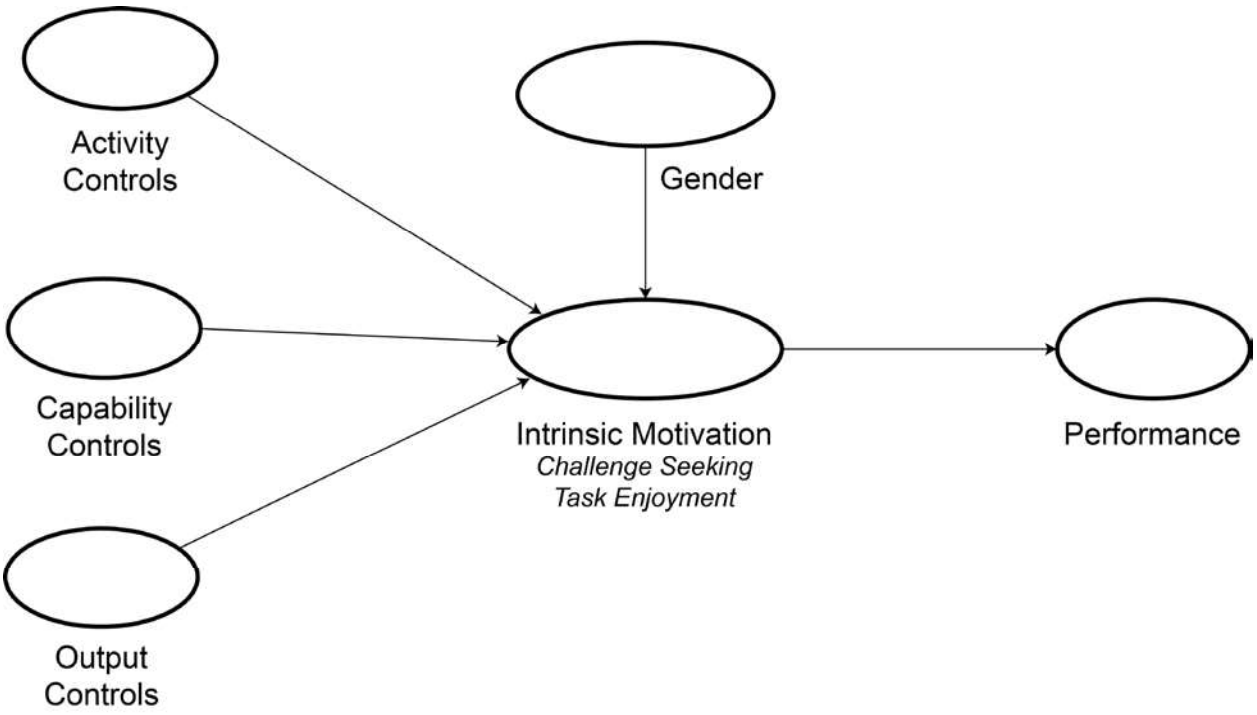
H4b: The moderating effect of gender influences the relationship between intrinsic motivation (task enjoyment) and outcome performance.

Mediation

H5: The moderating effect of gender influences the mediating relationship of intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking) between (a) activity controls, (b) capability controls, (c) output controls, and outcome performance.

H6: The moderating effect of gender influences the mediating relationship of intrinsic motivation (task enjoyment) between (a) activity controls, (b) capability controls, (c) output controls, and outcome performance.

Figure 1: Structural Model



METHODOLOGY

Sample

We conducted an empirical study using data obtained from B2B sales representatives and collected by Qualtrics, a third-party collection agency. *Sales representatives* or *sales agents* implies a generic term for independent reps, including manufacturing reps. Sales agents were asked survey-type questions about their present sales job. Respondents rated their perceptions of the degree to which output, activity, and capability controls were present in their job function. The cross-sectional survey was obtained from U.S. firms in a variety of industries, not including retail (Grewal, Levy, & Marshall, 2002; Hite & Bellizzi, 1985).

Screener questions required the following conditions: (1) currently employed in a business-to-business sales position (2) employed with their current employer for at least one full year, (3) having at least one year of salesperson experience, (4) not the owner of the firm, (5) employed in a firm with more than 25 sales employees, (6) devoting at least 40 hours or more per week to performing their sales duties and (7) having their sales performance evaluated by their firm using quotas.

There was a pretest of the questionnaire followed by 295 potential responses. Out of the 295 potential respondents, 3 responses were removed for incompleteness and 10 were removed for straight-lining, leaving 282 final respondents. Out of these 282, 183 were inside salespeople according to their responses to a screening question asking where they spent most of their time performing sales activities. This represented 65% of the final sample. Within this inside sales sample, 74 respondents were females and 109 were males. Based on the principles of power analysis provided by Cohen (1988), the sample sizes are sufficient to assess the model and test the hypotheses. Table 1 in the Appendix provides a profile of the data characteristics of the respondents.

Measures

All constructs were measured using multi-item reflective scales modified from the existing literature and are consistent with past research in this area. All

items in this study are measured on 7-point Likert-type scales. Measures for sales control dimensions of output and activity controls were adapted from Jaworski and MacInnis (1989). Capability controls were adapted from Kohli, Shervani, and Challagalla (1998). Measures for both the challenge-seeking and task-enjoyment dimensions of intrinsic motivation used scales originally developed by Amabile et al. (1994) and advanced by Miao et al. (2007). Outcome performance measures were drawn from Miao and Evans (2014), based on measures originating from Behrman and Perreault (1982).

Analytical Approach

In this study, we employed the statistical technique partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using *SmartPLS 3* (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) to investigate the model relationships (see Figure 1). This is the statistical technique preferred in social sciences research over other covariance-based methodologies when the research is exploratory in nature and when sample sizes are small or when complex models with many indicators and model relationships are being estimated (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Sarstedt, Hair, Ringle, Thiele, & Gudergan, 2016). The data analysis uses the PLS-SEM multigroup guidelines (Sarstedt, Henseler, & Ringle, 2011; Chapter 8).

We began the analysis of the data by examining the full data set for reliability and validity measures. Once we completed this analysis, we divided the full data set into two distinct gender subsamples. We performed a multigroup analysis on the subsamples using the same structural model (i.e., the same constructs, indicators and sequencing). This is followed by a comparison of the two subsample models analyzing significant similarities and differences between the models.

PLS-SEM is a nonparametric structural modeling method that does not require the data to be normally distributed. The only condition is verifying whether the data is extremely abnormal The recommendation is the evaluation of two measures of distribution: skewness and kurtosis. All measures were within the recommended guidelines of +1 and -1 for both skewness and kurtosis. The full data set measurement model was further evaluated for reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. We subsequently analyzed the structural model for predictive accuracy, explanatory power, and effect size (Hair et al., 2016).

Measurement Model

We performed an evaluation of the measurement model first on the full data set, then on the subsample data sets. After examining the full data set, we deleted only three construct indicator items due to poor factor loadings: one from the sales capability control scale and two from the performance construct. Table 2 in the Appendix lists all items in the questionnaire and indicates which items were deleted. All constructs were within the acceptable ranges (.70–.95) of reliability with respect to composite and Cronbach alpha measures (Nunnally, 1978). Average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct was above (.50), indicating convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). We analyzed the discriminant validity for the full data set using several evaluation measures, including cross loadings, Fornell & Larcker (1981) criteria (Green, Salkind, & Akey, 2000) and the preferred approach, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). The discriminate validity met the respective thresholds for both cross loadings and HTMT.

Common Methods Variance

Common methods variance (CMV) is a potential problem that arises with cross-sectional research designs involving self-reporting of the measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). This research utilizes the Lindell and Whitney (2001) marker variable technique allowing for post-hoc detection of undue CMV influence. We collected data for the marker variable that was theoretically unrelated to the focal constructs: *It is useful to feel "hostility" when interacting with an angry supervisor.* We positioned the marker variable as the mediating construct between sales force control systems and the measure of performance. We estimated the correlations between the marker variable and the model variables. This resulted in low and nonsignificant correlations in both the full and subsample data sets. The bootstrapping technique demonstrated nonsignificant pairs of mediating path coefficients for the marker variable for gender (male

and female). The mediating paths of the marker variable were not meaningful, producing no systematic error variance that could confound effects on the results.

Structural Model

We performed an evaluation of the structural models on the full data set first before analyzing the subsample data sets. The steps performed were (1) collinearity (2) significance testing using Bootstrapping [5,000 subsamples; complete; no sign change; bias corrected; two-tail at .05 significance level] (3) R^2 variance extracted (4) f^2 effect size and (5) predictive relevance Q^2 (Hair et al., 2016). All inner variance inflation factor values were below the threshold, meaning that collinearity issues are unlikely among the predictor constructs. The R^2 variance-extracted measure was strongest, with the subset male and outcome performance (0.575). Effect sizes were mostly weak, with only male and intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking) demonstrating a moderate effect (0.034). In addition, we evaluated the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value for predictive power (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). The strongest Q^2 value is male and performance (0.407). For a summary of the results of the structural model in statistical form (see Table 3 in the Appendix).

The results of the full data set without moderation for statistical significance are as follows: Sales controls and outcome performance yielded variance extracted (R^2=0.382) with path coefficients (a) activity controls (B =0.030; t-value=0.204); (b) capability controls (B= (-0.147); t-value=1.094; and (c) output controls (B=0.357***; t-value=2.90). Sales controls and intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking) yielded variance extracted (R^2=0.169) with path coefficients (a) activity controls (B= (-0.187); t-value=1.023); (b) capability controls (B=0.345**; t-value=1.950; and (c) output controls (B=0.251; t-value=1.537). Sales controls and intrinsic motivation (task enjoyment) yielded variance extracted (R^2=0.104) with path coefficients (a) activity controls (B=0.137; t-value=0.772); (b) capability controls (B= (-0.025); t-value=0.114; and (c) output controls (B=0.227; t-value=1.560). Intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking) to performance yielded path coefficients (B=0.338***; t-value=3.564). Intrinsic motivation (task enjoyment) to performance yielded path coefficients (B=0.181*; t-value=1.818).

Multigroup Results

When conducting multigroup analysis (MGA), it is important to also evaluate measurement invariance of composite models (MICOM). Measurement invariance is important to confirm group differences within a model are indeed true differences. MICOM tests were performed on the subsample models (Hair et al., 2016; Sarstedt, Henseler, & Ringle, 2011). All predictor variable permutation p values in the subsample models were higher than .05, confirming multigroup compositional invariance. (For a summary of the results, in statistical form, of the multigroup analysis on the structural model, see Tables 4 & 5 in the Appendix; for a summary of the hypothesis results, see Table 6 in the Appendix.)

Results for the hypothesized direct effects relationships on outcome performance indicate that neither male nor female were statistically significant, not supporting H1(a), (b) or (c). The model evaluations of gender were performed on the paths from sales controls to intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking). Male and output controls was supportive H2(c) (B=0.612***; t-value=3.094;), female and capability controls was supportive H2(b) (B=0.697***; t-value=3.460). The model evaluations of gender were performed on the paths from sales controls to intrinsic motivation (task enjoyment) and none of the paths were statistically significant. Next, examining the paths of intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking) on performance only male H4(a) was supportive (B=0.503***; t-value=4.993). Meanwhile, the intrinsic motivation (task enjoyment)-to-performance direct linkages were not statistically significant. Lastly, the models were evaluated for mediation effects (Hair et al, 2016; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). For males, intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking) fully mediated the association between output controls and performance, supporting H5(c). Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation did not exhibit mediating effects for females (see Table 5 in the Appendix).

SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study adds to the existing research on the impact of the different effects of intrinsic motivation on the relationship of sales controls and job performance

when B2B inside salespeople are controlled by sales quotas. More specifically, this research examines gender variances among inside salespeople. The results suggest gender differences in the implementation of sales controls with cognitive dimensions of intrinsic motivation shaping the behavior of male inside salespersons. The significant overall support for gender on output controls is most probably attributable to the job autonomy characteristic of this type of sales control. Research supports job autonomy as an antecedent of creativity, which in turn leads to higher levels of satisfaction and performance (Evans et al., 2012). Intrinsic motivation variables of challenge seeking significantly affected the inside sales role for males. The significant support for the male inside salesperson with output controls and intrinsic motivation reveals a greater need in this gender of perceived self-determination and competence in achieving specific sales goals (Mallin & Pullins, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Not surprisingly, females were more intrinsically motivated (challenge seeking) with capability controls. However, neither challenge-seeking nor task-enjoyment intrinsic motivation related to outcome performance for women, suggesting the need to explore other outcome measures.

With respect to differences in how sales control systems may work between inside and outside salespeople, this study establishes key differences. Whereas capability controls had a positive influence on the affective element of intrinsic motivation (i.e., task enjoyment) in an outside sales context (Miao et al., 2007), capability controls for both males and females did not exhibit a relationship with task enjoyment in this study of inside salespeople. Furthermore, Miao et al. (2007) did not test for an association between output controls and intrinsic motivation (challenge seeking); yet, in this study, the strongest association existed between output controls and challenge seeking among males. At the same time, the positive linkage between challenge seeking and outcome performance found by Miao et al. (2007) was reaffirmed here among male inside sales representatives.

As B2B sales organizations continue to shift toward the utilization of more inside salespeople, some role re-thinking and restructuring will need to take place (Gessmer & Scott, 2009; Rapp et al., 2012). This research gives managers insight into how the inside sales role and gender relate to sales controls and job performance. Inside sales representatives, being by definition in closer proximity to other workers, may feel less need for direct supervision on behavioral measures as they have more opportunity to discuss norms and best practices with others in the office. In fact, a key distinction between the inside and outside sale role is often the geographic distance involved, which can impact psychological climate. Rutherford et al. (2014) found differing interaction effects between perceived organizational support and satisfaction with supervision between inside and outside sales representatives, indicating that outside salespeople may experience inherent supervisory disconnects created by distance.

Insights for supervisors include the need to avoid the temptation to over-manage their inside salespeople. Considering that output controls had the most impact on both intrinsic motivation and performance, it is important that sales managers foster an environment in which inside salespeople are given adequate job autonomy. This may be difficult or perhaps even counterintuitive for managers, given that inside salespeople are likely to be more accessible for hands-on supervision. Furthermore, while it is puzzling that intrinsic motivation served no significant role in fostering performance for females, it is important that males consider their jobs to be inherently challenging. Perhaps the very nature of inside positions that can effectively achieve the full sales process suggests some reduction in complexity compared to positions of the outside salespeople. The pressure associated with output-based sales controls can thus lead to creative problem-solving, and ultimately to better sales performance by inside salespeople. Too much supervision associated with behavioral controls can likewise stifle challenge seeking and inhibit sales performance. While these prescriptions are tentative, given the exploratory nature of this research, the findings do signify that differences do indeed exist between males and females and are worthy of further research.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Since little research has been done on the management of inside salespeople, little is known about their behaviors and performance. What we do know is there are some

contextual particularities to this research field, the most obvious being that inside salespeople have a very different supervisory situation than outside salespeople. A manager can potentially supervise and directly contact inside salespeople on a much more frequent basis than field reps. Control systems provide the basis for most such supervisory behavior. Given this distinction, it is reasonable to ask whether we need to treat salespeople differently according to gender. The results found here tentatively suggest that we do. This is significant because it is not common to distinguish supervisory systems based on gender (Miao et al., 2007). While this is an exploratory first step, more research is needed to articulate clear and meaningful gender differences. A broader question is: does the inside sales context require different control systems? Panagopoulos and Avlonitis (2008) develop and extensively test a measure along the lines of what was advanced by the work of Anderson and Oliver (1987). Research using this alternative conceptualization needs to be done in order to examine not only the questions here, but questions that address a broader context as well. With regard to intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation as a frame of reference for motivational processes and effects, the research done to date has been sparse and unorganized. A concentrated research program on this motivational framework is required in order to better organize the role of motivation as it relates to performance, as well as to better relate the other variables that are likely to act as moderators.

Finally, there is further evidence to be garnered by examining the breadth of research dealing with inside salespeople that their role mix are likely to differ. For example, some may investigate both inbound and outbound contacts with customers or potential customers while others may only operate in one of these environments. Some may focus only on lead generation and some on direct selling, while others may have a variety of roles. Better delineation of the role mix through a comprehensive discovery-oriented research program followed by further examination with a grounded theory context is likely to go a long way toward improving our knowledge (O'Reilly, Paper, & Marx, 2012). We encourage marketing scholars to explore these relevant role mix areas in their future research.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Data Characteristics

Screener Questions	Male median number	Male percent	Female median number	Female percent
Current employment: B2B sales position (Yes)				
Own firm (No)				
Performance evaluated using sales quota (Yes)				
Salespeople employed at your organization (25+)	55		150	
Age (18+)	34		35	
Years worked in sales (1+)	7		7	
Years with current employer (1+)	4		5	
Weekly hours performing your sales duties (40+)	40		40	
Classification Questions				
Gender				
Male/Female	109	59.60%	74	40.40%
Yearly Sales Volume (US $)	$750,000		$136,500	
Yearly Compensation (US $)	$50,000		$40,000	
Commission % Compensation	50%		32%	
Industry				
Industrial Goods	43	39%	13	18%
Consumer Goods	32	29%	25	34%
Computers/Software	8	7%	6	8%
Health/Medical	1	9%	2	3%
Food/Beverage	4	4%	6	8%
Communications	5	5%	5	7%
Electronics	8	7%	2	3%
Other	8	7%	15	20%
	109	100%	74	100%
Education				
Some high school (no degree)	0	0%	0	0%
High school (high school degree)	2	2%	13	18%
Some college (no degree)	18	17%	22	30%
College (undergraduate degree)	35	32%	26	35%
Some graduate school (no graduate degree)	23	21%	3	4%
Graduate school (graduate degree)	31	28%	10	14%
	109	100%	74	100%

Table 2. Inside Sales and Gender with mediation – constructs (alpha & AVE)

Indicators	Questionnaire	Male Loadings	Female Loadings
Exogenous	Inside Sales Male - Output Controls - alpha = .92; AVE = .75; 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree		
	Inside Sales Female - Output Controls - alpha = .85; AVE = .63		
SFC-oc_1	Specific quantitative performance goals are established for my job	0.880	0.896
SFC-oc_2	The extent to which I attain my quantitative performance goals is	0.919	0.862
SFC-oc_3	If my quantitative performance goals were not met, I would be required to explain why	0.884	0.841
SFC-oc_4	Feedback concerning the extent to which I achieve goals is provided to me on a regular basis	0.867	0.701
SFC-oc_5	My pay increases are based upon how my performance compares with my goals	0.758	0.628
Exogenous	Inside Sales Male - Activity Controls - alpha = .91; AVE = .78; 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree		
	Inside Sales Female - Activity Controls - alpha = .82; AVE = .64		
SFC-ac_1	The extent to which I follow established sales procedures is critically monitored	0.859	0.811
SFC-ac_2	The procedures used to accomplish a given selling task are explicitly regulated	0.872	0.829
SFC-ac_3	My immediate boss suggests changes in my sales activities when desired results are not obtained	0.921	0.769
SFC-ac_4	Feedback on how I accomplish my performance goals is frequently communicated to me	0.881	0.797
Exogenous	Inside Sales Male - Capability Controls - alpha = .93; AVE = .83; 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree		
	Inside Sales Female - Capability Controls - alpha = .91; AVE = .77		
SFC-cc_1	My supervisor has standards by which my selling skills are evaluated	0.907	0.907
SFC-cc_2	My supervisor provides guidance on ways to improve my selling skills and abilities	0.907	0.833
SFC-cc_3	My supervisor evaluates *how* I make sales presentations and communicate with customers	deleted	deleted
SFC-cc_4	My supervisor periodically evaluates the selling skills I use to accomplish a task	0.917	0.903
SFC-cc_5	My supervisor assists me by suggesting why using a particular sales approach may be useful	0.907	0.866
Mediator	Inside Sales Male - Intrinsic Motivation - alpha = .89; AVE = .76; 1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree		
IM-cs	Inside Sales Female - Intrinsic Motivation - alpha = .89; AVE = .76		
IM-cs_1	I enjoy tackling sales problems that are completely new to me	0.840	0.894
IM-cs_2	I enjoy trying to solve complex sales problems	0.922	0.928
IM-cs_3	The more difficult the sales problem, the more I enjoy trying to solve it	0.895	0.902
IM-cs_4	I want my work to provide me with opportunities for increasing my knowledge and skills	0.816	0.738
Mediator	Inside Sales Male - Intrinsic Motivation - alpha = .82; AVE = .64; 1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree		
IM-te	Inside Sales Female - Intrinsic Motivation - alpha = .87; AVE = .72		
IM-te_1	What matters most to me is enjoying what I do	0.787	0.823
IM-te_1	It is important for me to have an outlet for self-expression through my job	0.831	0.911
IM-te_1	No matter what the outcome of a sales task, I am satisfied if I feel I gained a new experience	0.791	0.751
IM-te_1	It is important for me to be able to do what I most enjoy	0.799	0.895
Marker	It is acceptable to feel "hostility" when interacting with an angry supervisor		
Endogenous	Inside Sales Male - Performance - alpha = .89; AVE = .75; 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree		
	Inside Sales Female - Performance - alpha = .81; AVE = .64		
PER_1	Generating a high level of dollar sales	0.844	0.900
PER_2	Exceeding sales targets	0.899	0.821
PER_3	Contributing to my company's market share	0.877	0.818
PER_4	Generating sales of new products	0.835	0.647
PER_5	Selling high profit margin products	deleted	deleted
PER_6	Identifying major accounts and selling to them	deleted	deleted

Standard t-values two-tailed test: 1.65 (.10), 1.96 (.05**), 2.57 (.01***)*

Table 3. Structural Model Results

	Full Data Set			Male			Female		
	R^2	Q^2	f^2	R^2	Q^2	f^2	R^2	Q^2	f^2
IM-cs	0.169	0.121	0.110	0.213	0.140	0.344	0.259	0.137	0.014
IM-te	0.140	0.060	0.034	0.128	0.065	0.073	0.103	0.059	0.019
Performance	0.382	0.250		0.575	0.407		0.235	0.116	

Model Accuracy Strength of R2 (R2 ≈ 0.25: weak; R2 ≈ 0.50: moderate; R2 ≈ 0.75: substantial)
Model Predictive Relevence Q^2: ($0.02 \leq Q^2 < 0.15$ weak; $0.15 \leq Q^2 < 0.35$ moderate; $Q^2 \geq 0.35$ strong)
Model Effect Size f^2: ($0.02 \leq f^2 < 0.15$ weak effect; $0.15 \leq f^2 < 0.35$ moderate effect; $f^2 \geq 0.35$ strong effect)

Table 4. Moderating Effects of Gender – Sales Controls on Performance with Intrinsic Motivation Mediation

		Male				Female			
		R^2	*B*	*t*- values		R^2	*B*	*t*- values	
	Performance	0.575				0.235			
H1 (a)	*activity controls ⟶ performance*		0.042	0.234			0.024	0.095	
H1 (b)	*capability controls ⟶ performance*		(-0.110)	0.606			(-0.061)	0.234	
H1 (c)	*output controls ⟶ performance*		0.234	1.411			0.352*	1.828	
	IM-cs	0.213				0.235			
H2 (a)	*activity controls ⟶ IM-cs*		(-0.084)	0.389			(-0.347)	1.251	
H2 (b)	*capability controls ⟶ IM-cs*		(-0.109)	0.412			0.697***	3.460	*supported*
H2 (c)	*output controls ⟶ IM-cs*		0.612***	3.094	*supported*		0.092	0.378	
						0.259			
H4 (a)	*IM-cs ⟶ performance*		0.503***	4.993	*supported*		0.144	0.759	
	IM-te	0.128				0.235			
H3 (a)	*activity controls ⟶ IM-te*		0.115	0.588			0.146	0.491	
H3 (b)	*capability controls ⟶ IM-te*		(-0.086)	0.351			0.020	0.706	
H3 (c)	*output controls ⟶ IM-te*		0.333*	1.853			0.185	0.783	
						0.103			
H4 (b)	*IM-te ⟶ performance*		0.220*	1.786			0.154	0.926	

Standard *t*-values, two-tailed test: 1.65 (.10*), 1.96 (.05**), 2.57 (.01***)
Intrinsic Motivation (IM); challenge seeking (cs); task enjoyment (te)

Table 5. Moderated Mediation

		Male				**Female**			
		R^2	*B*	*t*- values		R^2	*B*	*t*- values	
	Intrinsic Motivation-challenge seeking mediates the relationship between (a) activity controls, (b) capaiblity controls, (c)output controls and performance.								
		direct		*SFCS-IM-cs*	*IM-cs-Per*		*direct*		*SFCS-IM-cs*	*IM-cs-Per*
H5 (a)	*activity controls ⟶ performance*	(-0.000)	0.042	(-0.084)	0.503***		0.013	0.024	(-0.347)	0.144
H5 (b)	*capability controls ⟶ performance*	(-0.158)	(-0.110)	(-0.109)	0.503***		0.039	(-0.061)	0.697***	0.144
H5 (c)	*output controls ⟶ performance*	0.613***	0.234	0.612***	0.503***	*full mediation*	0.386*	0.352*	0.092	0.144
	Intrinsic Motivation-task enjoyment mediates the relationship between (a) activity controls, (b) capaiblity controls, (c)output controls and performance.								
		direct		*SFCS-IM-te*	*IM-te-Per*		*direct*		*SFCS-IM-te*	*IM-te-Per*
H6 (a)	*activity controls ⟶ performance*	(-0.000)	0.042	0.115	0.220*		0.013	0 .024	0.146	0.154
H6 (b)	*capability controls ⟶ performance*	(-0.158)	(-0.110)	(-0.086)	0.220*		0.039	(-0.061)	0.020	0.154
H6 (c)	*output controls ⟶ performance*	0.613***	0.234*	0.333*	0.220*		0.386*	0.352*	0.185	0.154

Standard t-values two-tailed test: 1.65 (.10), 1.96 (.05**), 2.57 (.01***)*
Intrinsic Motivation (IM); challenge seeking (cs); task enjoyment (te)

Table 6. Hypotheses Testing Moderated Mediation Summary

Hypothesis	Outcome
H1(a) Gender moderates the activity controls correlate to performance	Not Supported
H1(b) Gender moderates the capability controls correlate to performance	Not Supported
H1(c) Gender moderates the output controls correlate to performance	Not Supported
H2(a) Gender moderates the activity control to intrinsic motivation relationship with IM defined as challenge seeking	Not Supported
H2(b) Gender moderates the capability control to intrinsic motivation relationship With IM defined as challenge seeking	Supported
H2(c) Gender moderates the output control to intrinsic motivation relationship with IM defined as challenge seeking	Supported
H3(a) Gender moderates the activity control to intrinsic motivation relationship with IM defined as task enjoyment	Not Supported
H3(b) Gender moderates the capability control to intrinsic motivation relationship With IM defined as task enjoyment	Not Supported
H3(c) Gender moderates the output control to intrinsic motivation relationship with IM defined as task enjoyment	Not Supported
H4(a) Gender moderates the relationship between IM as Challenge seeking and Performance	Supported
H4(b) Gender moderates the relationship between IM as Task Enjoyment and Performance	Not Supported
H5(a,b,c) Intrinsic motivation as challenge seeking mediates the relationship between Controls and performance	Full Mediation
H6(a,b,c) Intrinsic motivation as task enjoyment mediates the relationship between Controls and performance	