

# How sales controls affect job-related outcomes: the role of organizational sales-related psychological climate perceptions

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**Abstract** In this study, the authors propose a theory that incorporates the mediating effects of three important organizational sales-related psychological climate perceptions (e.g., the organization's customer orientation, sales innovativeness, and sales supportiveness) to explain how sales force controls affect sales-related outcomes. Based on a survey of 293 salespeople and using path analysis, the authors find that the inclusion of these psychological climate perceptions allows for explanatory improvement in linking sales controls to salesperson job satisfaction and performance. These results complement previous studies in that formal controls were found to affect outcomes directly. However, they also provide important insight into the indirect effects of sales controls—through salespeople's perceptions of managerial commitment to making the salespeople effective (i.e., the sales-related psychological climate).

**Keywords** Sales control systems · Psychological climate · Sales performance · Job satisfaction · Sales management

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## Introduction

Organizations devote considerable thought and energy toward understanding effective sales force control systems—the aggregate of policies, rules, and procedures used to monitor, direct, evaluate, and reward salespeople (Anderson and Oliver 1987). “Formal” controls, the most widely researched type in sales management, are those that are prescribed and initiated by management with the goal of aligning employee behavior with organizational goals (Jaworski 1988). Such controls, though often plagued by discrepant research concepts and measures, have in common the notion that management formally attempts to direct sales force performance.

To understand sales performance, it is important to explore how these controls influence the individual salesperson. Naturally, then, much of the research on sales control has focused on the individual salesperson as the unit of analysis (see Baldauf et al. 2005). Considering that the sales profession frequently entails operating autonomously—with a substantial portion of time spent outside the organization to sell varied products to varied customer types—the complexity in formulating an effective control system becomes apparent. Unfortunately, research on sales controls to date has produced mixed findings with regard to the effects of various types of controls on sales-related outcomes. It is possible that the mechanism through which the two groups of variables are linked may be more complex than the simple direct relationships, and that the effects of controls on sales-related outcomes may be mediated by salespeople's perceptions of the sales environment (Challagalla and Shervani 1996).

In this study, we investigate the psychology behind the sales control system/sales outcome relationship. In particular, we explore how salespeople's organizational

sales-related psychological climate perceptions (OSPCPs) help explain the influence of sales controls on outcomes. OSPCPs, such as organizational sales innovativeness, customer orientation, and sales supportiveness, are how salespeople perceive the firm's commitment to making them effective. Such perceptions are proposed both to derive from environmental feedback mechanisms, such as formal controls, and to link with job outcomes, such as satisfaction and motivation. A basic tenet of psychological climate perspective is that these perceptions serve as a medium through which members interpret and understand their environment (Glick 1985). Hence, we suggest that controls affect important sales outcomes not only directly but also indirectly through the climates that they help engender. By merging complementary insight from control and climate theories, this study contributes to a more robust understanding of the effects of sales controls on important sales-related outcomes.

## Background

### Control systems

The research reported here considers two specific types of controls that are the most frequently researched in the literature: output and process controls (Baldauf et al. 2005). *Output controls*, the most commonly researched control type both within and outside the sales literature, focus on end results. For example, a salesperson's sales volume, revenue, or quota attainment might be monitored and used to evaluate his/her performance. One drawback to an end-results focus is that managers exercise little control over non-sales behaviors. *Process controls* emphasize sales behaviors and typically involve extensive monitoring and directing feedback to salespeople about their behaviors in performing the sales role.

Challagalla and Shervani (1996) have also proposed *capability controls* as another important type of behavior-based control for sales. Capability controls emphasize improving competence through assessing and suggesting where changes should be made to improve selling skills. An improved skill set, it is argued, leads to greater intrinsic motivation and thus has a positive impact on many job-related outcomes. Remedies for these capability shortcomings may be thought of as forms of input control and include training, apprenticeships, mentoring, coaching, and job enrichment programs. These particular control types were selected for this research because they appear to cover the range of "formal" controls from Jaworski's (1988) concept of inputs, to processes, to outputs. Each of these types is also "practical" because each is under the direct control of the sales manager (Merchant 1985). Although the control types often derive from differing philosophies of

management, they are most often used in combination, in a sales control system, to achieve complex sales objectives (Anderson and Oliver 1987).

### Climate perceptions

Climate refers to a set of measurable properties of a work environment assumed to influence employees' attitudes and behaviors (Glick 1985). Importantly, climate (1) permits investigation into complex social situations, such as work environments, (2) simplifies the problems of measuring situational determinants by allowing individuals to consider more integrated "chunks" of their experience, and (3) serves as a medium through which members interpret and understand their environment (Litwin and Stringer 1968). Climate perceptions help relate the effects of a formal management system to important *personal* outcomes such as the attitudes, beliefs, values, and motivations of people within a work environment (Litwin and Stringer 1968).

This study includes three important subsystem-level OSPCPs held by salespeople: (1) the organization's customer orientation; (2) its sales innovativeness; and (3) its sales supportiveness. These perceptions reflect the public face of the selling efforts of a firm to its customers and, in turn, the firm's commitment to making salespeople effective in their marketplace role. Consistent with other researchers, we have focused on a select number of psychological climate variables specific to the context under study (James et al. 1978). In a recent meta-analysis of psychological climate perceptions and work outcomes, Parker et al. (2003) found no study that included all of the climate dimensions (job characteristics, role characteristics, leadership characteristics, work group and social attributes, and organizational subsystem characteristics). Critical to any focal study of an organizational subsystem such as sales, however, is to identify those climate dimensions relevant to the work unit/individual (Parker et al. 2003).

*Organizational customer orientation* is an OSPCP dimension that captures a salesperson's perception of the extent to which the sales organization promotes and engages in activities aimed at providing quality services and satisfaction to the customer. It has long been recognized that a company-wide customer orientation is key to the success of the sales force (Narver and Slater 1990). Deshpandé et al. 1993 advanced the importance of this psychological climate perception by suggesting that a simple focus on information about the needs of customers is inadequate without considering the pervasive set of values and beliefs that serve to consistently reinforce the organization's customer focus.

*Sales supportiveness* is an OSPCP dimension that reflects salespeople's perception that their organization cares for their well-being and appreciates their contributions

(see Wayne et al. 1997). Sales efforts that call upon various functional units in the firm to provide the services that satisfy customer needs necessitate an environment in which support is timely and effective (e.g., delivery, installation, financing). Failure to receive this support undermines the selling effort, reducing performance and job satisfaction. Considered an aspect of a “climate for safety” in some studies, supportiveness has proven to be an important predictor of job-related outcomes such as involvement, in-role behavior, and effort (Brown and Leigh 1996).

*Sales innovativeness* is an OSPCP dimension that reflects the extent to which salespeople perceive an organization as demonstrating flexibility and willingness to accept new ways of problem solving with regard to the sales function (see Strutton et al. 1993a). Salespeople in these organizations are confident that their firm will assist them in finding a way to meet the customer’s needs, irrespective of routine/traditional practices (Rouzies et al. 2005). In general, psychological climates that are perceived as innovative are likely to promote employee adaptation, which in turn positively affects work-related outcomes (Hellriegel and Slocum 1974).

**Conceptual framework and operational model**

This study acknowledges that sales roles are not completely homogenous (see Jaworski and MacInnis 1989) and considers salespeople’s impressions and interpretations of the environment as mediating factors that help explain why a control type would influence a sales attitude or behavior. The basic tenet of the study is that controls directly influence salespeople’s perceptions of their environment, which in turn better explains *why* controls affect important job outcomes.

Exploring the mediating effects of OSPCPs has also been triggered by the somewhat complex results of several previous control studies that are not easily explained by the direct effects of controls alone (e.g., Fang et al. 2005b). In addition, there have been some incompatibilities in findings when linking control systems directly to sales-related

outcomes. For example, performance has been found to be directly related to controls in some studies (e.g., Piercy et al. 2001) but not in others (e.g., Lusch and Jaworski 1991). Likewise, end-result oriented controls (i.e., outcome and output controls) have been shown to *both* enhance and hurt job performance (e.g., Jaworski et al. 1993; Oliver and Anderson 1994). Such inconsistent findings certainly reflect the difficulty of designing effective control systems, and present an opportunity to further theory on sales controls and their effects.

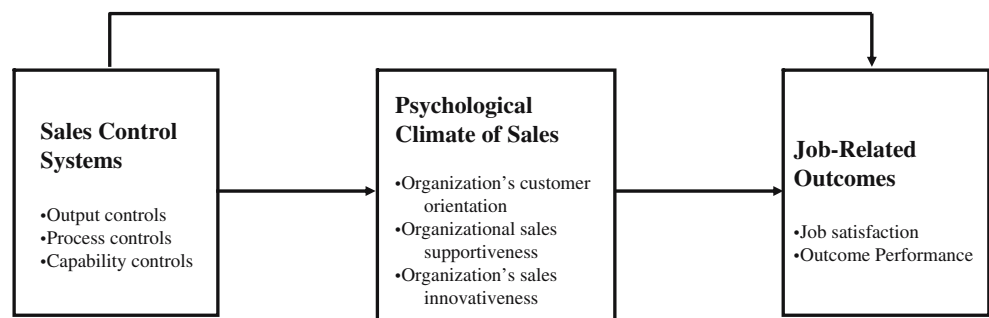
Building on the psychological climate literature and responding to the specific call for investigating the role of employee/unit-specific culture as a mediator between controls and job-related outcomes (see Parker et al. 2003), we propose a new conceptual framework in Fig. 1. We posit that sales control systems may not only directly affect salesperson job satisfaction and performance but also may affect organizational sales-related psychological climate perceptions, which in turn affect salesperson job outcomes. Our framework is consistent with the notion that the effects of controls on employee outcomes intuitively depend on conditions under which the controls are perceived to relate realistically to those outcomes (Parker et al. 2003). Psychological climate provides a means of understanding how the environment might give rise to such conditions.

Drawing on the literature on sales controls and psychological climate, we operationalize the conceptual framework in Fig. 1 by proposing a specific testable model (see Fig. 2). In this model, we specify the effects of sales controls on OSPCPs and on job-related outcomes, and the effects of OSPCPs on job-related outcomes. The model’s key constructs and their relationships are discussed in the remainder of this section.

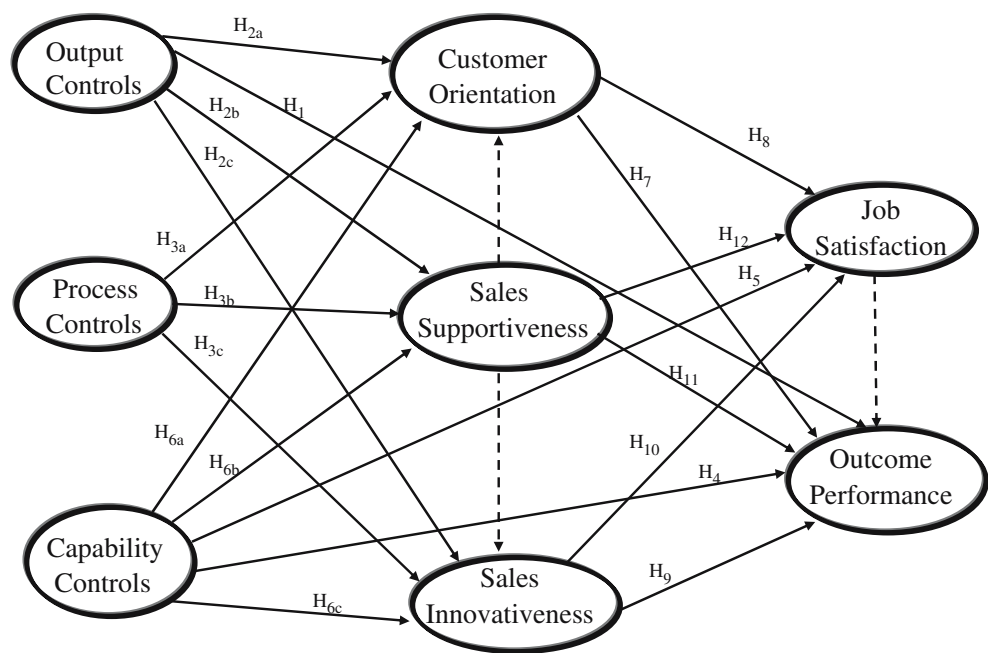
**Job-related outcomes**

Two important job outcomes often related to sales control systems are job satisfaction and job performance (e.g., Challagalla and Shervani 1996). Because they help address the long-term viability of a sales force, these two outcomes are the most widely researched in studies of sales control

**Figure 1** Framework of organizational sales-related psychological climate’s partial mediation on the relationship between sales controls and job related outcomes.



**Figure 2** Organizational sales-related psychological climate's partial mediation of the relationship between sales controls and job related outcomes.



systems (Baldauf et al. 2005). *Job satisfaction* is seen here as a global, summary attitude reflecting a salesperson's satisfaction with his/her job. It has been demonstrated to have important relationships with a number of job outcome variables, such as intention to leave, stress, turnover, and performance (Childers et al. 1990). Salesperson job performance is also a fundamental concern for sales managers because it determines a sales organization's ultimate effectiveness (Cravens et al. 1993). While performance may be conceptualized in various ways, this study focuses on *outcome performance*, or the extent to which the salesperson meets sales requirements set by the selling organization (Anderson and Oliver 1987).

Obviously, job satisfaction and performance are interrelated. We posit that outcome performance results from job satisfaction. A formal hypothesis is not advanced, however, since it is not central to examining the proposed theoretical contribution of climate-as-mediator.

#### The effect of controls

##### *Output controls*

As suggested by goal theory (Locke and Latham 1990), output controls should motivate salespeople to seek effective solutions for achieving their sales goals. When control systems spell out specific outcome-oriented goals, good salespeople appear to focus extensively on tasks leading toward achievement of those goals (Cravens et al. 1993). Moreover, the presence of specific output goals, coupled with feedback from monitoring that achievement,

appears to increase salesperson performance (Fang et al. 2005b). Merchant (1985) contended that employees should work harder when they believe the organization is placing a great weight on outcomes and intends to reward them. In keeping with this contention, output controls have been found to increase salespeople's attributions that effort expenditures are needed for goal achievement. Control systems that emphasize end results increase salespeople's awareness of sales expectations by providing feedback showing that outcomes and effort are important (Fang et al. 2005a). Hence, output controls not only provide achievement standards but instruct salespeople to increase their efforts, with the presumed result of improved sales performance.

The relationship between *output controls* and *job satisfaction*, however, is less clear. Challagalla and Shervani (1996) suggest that because output-based controls convey the explicit expectations of management, they may improve the role clarity of salespeople, resulting in more job satisfaction. In contrast, other researchers contend that, when output controls emphasize end results, salespeople tend to be held responsible for their results, culminating in higher job-related stress (Jaworski and MacInnis 1989) and contributing to lower job satisfaction (Anderson and Oliver 1987). All told, competing theories and contradictory findings linking output controls and job satisfaction suggest a complexity not revealed though a direct-effect hypothesis. Thus, we hypothesize a direct effect only for outcome performance:

H1: Salesperson perceived influence of output controls positively affects a salesperson's outcome performance.

Smyth (1968) proposed that firms that assume a short-term results orientation might reduce salespeople's likelihood of developing long-term relationships with customers. A salesperson may perceive a pressure to focus on shorter-term objectives as defined by the output-related control system (Anderson and Oliver 1987). Output controls thus may prioritize sales efforts in favor of activities that bring about individual recognition and rewards at the expense of relationship building and customer satisfaction (Porter and Lawler 1968). Although they may have a positive direct influence on salespeople's outcome performance by focusing specifically on meeting objectives, such controls might engender the perceptions that the organization is more concerned with meeting sales objectives than looking out for the best interests of its clientele. These controls have been shown to encourage salesperson beliefs that the firm considers effort expenditure, rather than problem solving, as the means to achieve sales success (Fang et al. 2005a). Thus, output controls are proposed to negatively affect salespeople's OSPCP of customer orientation.

Output controls are proposed to have a negative effect on the OSPCP of sales supportiveness for at least two reasons. First, they do not result in salespeople focusing on skill improvements or changes in selling behaviors (Fang et al. 2005a). Rather, they are likely to be perceived as goals that stress productivity and increased effort. This, in turn, may result in salespeople perceiving their relationship with the firm as utilitarian rather than supportive (Anderson and Oliver 1987). Second, output-based controls are often characterized by highly quantitative measures of outputs (e.g., sales volume, market share, dollar quota), some of which may be beyond the salesperson's control (Jaworski 1988). Salespeople may perceive such an orientation as focusing too heavily on ends (outputs) rather than means (support) (Churchill et al. 1985).

High end-result performance expectations may also engender perceptions of low organizational innovativeness. Oliver and Anderson (1994) found only behavioral controls (process controls) to be positively related to an organization's innovativeness. Anderson and Oliver (1987) rationalize that perceptions of organizational innovativeness are less likely under results-oriented controls because they focus sales efforts on short-range goals rather than long-range problem solving, which would be characteristic of innovative climates. From the individual salesperson's perspective, however, an organizational focus on output controls could instill a sense that management trusts the salesperson to find the best ways to reach outcome goals, including being personally innovative. Thus, output controls should send a signal that innovation is valued. Although the impact of output controls on a perceived climate of innovativeness is a bit ambiguous, the extant

control literature seems biased toward theorizing a negative relationship. Hence, the following hypotheses are offered:

H2: Salesperson perceived influence of output controls negatively affects salesperson psychological climate perceptions of:

- (a) Organizational customer orientation
- (b) Sales supportiveness
- (c) Sales innovativeness

#### *Process controls*

Anderson and Oliver (1987) have noted a negative relationship between *behavior controls* and outcome performance. (Their use of this term is similar to the concept of process controls used in most control studies, such as Challagalla and Shervani 1996.) One reason for positing this relationship is that sales generation could be marginalized due to the non-selling demands often found in behavior-related controls (e.g., relationship maintenance and customer service behaviors). Further, some argue that the close monitoring of behaviors reduces salespeople's creativity and adaptability in selling, with the result that their outcome performance suffers (Oliver and Anderson 1994). Empirical evidence, however, is also available to support a positive link between process controls and sales performance (Cravens et al. 1993). Challagalla and Shervani (1996) have suggested that because process-related controls (process and capability controls) involve extensive supervisory input and direction, salespeople performance should be bolstered, assuming a match between the controls and the sales environment (i.e., the correct controls are being employed).

The findings are also mixed regarding the relationship between process controls and job satisfaction. Some research in sales and related boundary-spanning contexts has provided evidence that such a relationship is positive. For example, Churchill et al. (1976) suggested that such supervision may reduce salesperson role ambiguity and conflict, which in turn enhances job satisfaction. Jaworski et al. (1993) also proposed that an extensive amount of control over task procedures is positively related to satisfaction. In contrast, rigid guidelines and close monitoring may be seen as an imposition of excessive controls, thus reducing job satisfaction (Yukl 1989). Because responding to sales situations may require flexibility, which behavioral controls potentially inhibit, resulting in perceived loss of autonomy, behavioral controls could also have a negative impact on job satisfaction. Collectively, the extant evidence on process controls' relationship to sales performance and job satisfaction is mixed, which suggests a

complexity that might be better explained when considering the mediating effects of OSPCPs than by direct effects alone. Thus, no direct effect hypotheses are offered.

Process-related controls have been shown to engender perceptions that problem-solving and strategy are valued by firms as a means to achieve sales success (Fang et al. 2005a). Process controls may increase the likelihood of salespeople perceiving their organization as customer-oriented because of its concern over directing and controlling the sales force's actual selling behaviors. Because process-related controls are likely implemented to promote customer service and further long-term customer relations (Anderson and Oliver 1987), a salesperson's perceptions of an organizational customer focus should be enhanced. Likewise, Oliver and Anderson (1994) proposed and found some evidence to support the relationship between behavioral controls and innovative, supportive organizational cultures. Although their inquiry was focused more on an evaluation of broader *organizational* support and innovativeness, salespeople were the primary respondents. In addition, Piercy and Vorhies (2006) found that behavioral control is positively correlated with perceived organizational support—derived in part from enhanced relationship quality between management and salespeople, brought about by behavioral monitoring, communication, and the attention paid to the salesperson. Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect a positive relationship between process controls and sales-specific perceptions of sales supportiveness and innovativeness. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H3: Salesperson perceived influence of process controls positively affects salesperson psychological climate perceptions of:
- (a) Organizational customer orientation
  - (b) Sales supportiveness
  - (c) Sales innovativeness

### *Capability controls*

An emphasis on capability controls is a more recent contribution to the empirical research on sales controls (Challagalla and Shervani 1996). Because they deal with deficiencies in sales skills, or inputs into the sales role (e.g., presentation, negotiation, interpersonal communication, and customer relationship management skills), capability controls should improve salespersons' performance (Challagalla and Shervani 1996; Jaworski 1988). Apart from "excessive" training scenarios, it seems that capability controls positively relate to sales performance (Fang et al. 2005b). However, identifying the relevant sales skills and emphasizing the correct type of training appears critical to implementing

these controls. Some evidence suggests that salespeople do not equate the acquisition of skills with the capability controls that are often implemented by management (Fang et al. 2005a). So, a direct relationship between capability controls and performance may be tenuous—depending, perhaps, on how those controls are interpreted by the salesperson.

Researchers tend to agree, however, that controls emphasizing the attainment of skills should positively affect job satisfaction by improving salesperson competency (Jones et al. 1996). Moreover, capability controls are likely to enhance a salesperson's feelings of professional growth through the acquisition of new sales skills. It is natural to assume that with increased competence, as directed through capability controls, salespeople will feel more confident in their sales roles. Challagalla and Shervani (1996) also posit that their job satisfaction increases as a result of improved opportunities to succeed in their careers. Thus, consistent with the conceptual and empirical evidence, we hypothesize that:

- H4: Salesperson perceived influence of capability control positively affects outcome performance.
- H5: Salesperson perceived influence of capability control positively affects job satisfaction.

Capability controls may also be used to identify and provide feedback to the sales force about the knowledge and competencies essential for providing quality customer service (Fang et al. 2005a). Through the transfer of particular customer relationship management skills (e.g., building trust and facilitating disclosure), the organization helps solidify the importance of customer satisfaction, thereby helping to generate a salesperson's OSPCP of customer orientation (Challagalla and Shervani 1996).

The literature on supportive organizational climates also suggests that perceptions of supportiveness mediate the impact of capability controls on attitudinal and behavioral job-related outcomes. For example, Wayne et al. (1997) posited and identified a positive relationship between "developmental experiences" and perceptions of organizational supportiveness, which in turn was shown to positively affect performance and affective commitment to the organization. Capability controls provide valuable experience for the salesperson by imparting selling skills through supervisory feedback, coaching, and mentoring (Kohli et al. 1998). Such investments in the sales force should engender an organizational psychological climate perception of organizational supportiveness.

An OSPCP of sales innovativeness is, in part, influenced by the capacity of the salesperson to engage in innovative activity (Strutton et al. 1993b). Capability controls provide salespeople with skills to adapt within their sales role, some of which certainly involve adaptation and innovation. A

similar perspective is advanced in the service literature regarding the concept of empowerment. Empowering service employees to solve non-routine problems requires careful oversight in terms of both performance measurement and ongoing training to assure that they are operating both creatively and effectively on behalf of the organization (Bowen and Lawler 1992). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Salesperson perceived influence of capability control positively affects salesperson psychological climate perceptions of:

- (a) Organizational customer orientation
- (b) Sales supportiveness
- (c) Sales innovativeness

The effects of organizational sales-related psychological climate perceptions

#### *Organizational customer orientation effects*

Perceived organizational customer orientation has been shown to be an important determinant of job satisfaction and performance among employees in boundary spanning roles (Schneider 1990; Siguaw et al. 1994). When salespeople perceive a psychological climate of customer orientation, they should feel that the organization, by focusing on the customer, is in line with their own personal goals. This congruence should enhance feelings of job satisfaction and likewise motivate them to perform. Drawing from Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) concept of a firm's market orientation, of which customer orientation is a part, Siguaw et al. (1994) found a strong positive relationship between salespeople's perceptions of their firm's customer orientation and their job satisfaction. Likewise, in the psychological climate literature, researchers have proposed the need to capture an "organizational service orientation" (i.e., a climate for customer orientation) to fully describe the nature of organizational boundary-spanning work environments and employees' psychological responses to feedback from those environments (Burke et al. 1992). Aside from greater satisfaction, the perception of a psychological climate of customer orientation implies that the salesperson is immersed within an organization among dedicated activity targeted at meeting customer needs (Deshpandé et al. 1993). Synergies between the salesperson and the sales organization are likely to be found given such psychological climates because salespeople are boundary spanning and at the forefront of meeting customer needs (Schwepker 2003). It is only natural, then, that salespeople who perceive a psychological climate of organizational

customer orientation would be able to achieve greater levels of individual performance. Thus:

- H7: An OSPCP of organizational customer orientation positively affects salesperson's outcome performance.
- H8: An OSPCP of organizational customer orientation positively affects salesperson's job satisfaction.

#### *Organizational sales innovativeness effects*

An OSPCP of sales innovativeness is posited to be an important determinant of both outcome performance and job satisfaction (Bowen and Lawler 1992). A psychological climate of innovativeness may be perceived when an organization demonstrates its flexibility and willingness to accept new ways of problem solving (Hellriegel and Slocum 1974). In general, such a climate is proposed to promote employee adaptation, which in turn has a positive impact on work-related outcomes (Strutton et al. 1993a). In particular, given the rapid changes to the sales role brought about by customer relationship management and increased applications of technology (Jones et al. 1996), a psychological climate of sales innovativeness should encourage salespeople to engage in new and better ways of serving their customers and thus should improve individual salespeople's performance. A classic study of industrial salespeople found that a sense of accomplishment through adapting to variety and challenge (i.e., innovation) was second only to financial compensation as the most attractive outcome of the sales job (Ford et al. 1985). Thus, the following hypotheses are offered:

- H9: An OSPCP of sales innovativeness positively affects salesperson's outcome performance.
- H10: An OSPCP of sales innovativeness positively affects salesperson's job satisfaction.

#### *Organizational sales supportiveness effects*

An employer is perceived by its employees as supportive when it demonstrates care for their well-being and appreciates their contributions (Shore and Tetrick 1991). An OSPCP of supportiveness may be bolstered when an organization expresses its approval, recognition, and respect for "a job well done" when meeting management expectations (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Considered an aspect of a "climate for safety" in some studies (e.g., Brown and Leigh 1996), organizational supportiveness has proven to be an important predictor of sales-related outcomes such as job involvement and sales effort. In other studies, "concern for employees," evinced in part through

the supportiveness of managers, has been shown to be a significant predictor of boundary-spanner job outcomes (Burke et al. 1992). In addition, prior research in human resource management found that employees who see their work environment as supportive tend to find their job experience rewarding and satisfying (Cropanzano et al. 1997; Shore and Tetrick 1991). Perceptions of supportiveness have also been linked to the attainment of goals, a less threatening work environment, and feelings of confidence in investing personal effort on behalf of the organization (Cropanzano et al. 1997). Some researchers suggest that employees tend to express job attitudes and job-related effort commensurate with the degree of the employer's commitment to and support of its employees (Wayne et al. 1997). Thus, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H11: An OSPCP of sales supportiveness positively affects salesperson's outcome performance.

H12: An OSPCP of sales supportiveness positively affects salesperson's job satisfaction.

#### *Relationship between climate perceptions*

Sergeant and Frenkel (2000) suggested that certain psychological climate dimensions may actually affect perceptions of others (i.e., climate perceptions are not necessarily orthogonal). In this study, we do consider the interrelationships between the OSPCP dimensions investigated but do not formally hypothesize them, since they have already been addressed in parallel literatures.

## **Method**

To test our theoretical model and the related hypotheses, we implemented a cross-sectional mail survey. Salespersons were selected as the unit of analysis because organizational psychological climate perception pertains to an individual's assessment of the sales organization's internal work environment.

### **Sampling and data collection**

Identifying sample participants consisted of a two-step process. First, sales managers/executives were identified and contacted to request their participation in the study by volunteering qualified salespeople in their respective organizations. Second, those qualified salespeople who were picked by the sales managers/executives, in turn, served as the respondents for the study. Two sampling frames were used to generate a sufficient number of subjects. One group of prospective sales managers/executives was identified using the American Marketing Associ-

ation (AMA) directory. This sampling frame is commonly used to identify sales/marketing managers largely because of its broad-based representation. Further, particularly in light of the objectives of this study, the AMA directory may under represent lower level marketers/sales personnel, as well as very senior-level managers, thereby increasing the likelihood of reaching mid-level managers (Ho et al. 1997). From the AMA membership directory, we identified 612 U.S. members whose job titles were Vice President, Manager, or Director of Sales and sent a letter inviting them to volunteer salespeople in their firms to participate in the study. Forty-seven firms (each employing an average of about 100 salespersons) agreed to participate.

Response rate limitations for AMA-based samples, particularly for lengthy surveys, have been noted by previous researchers (e.g., Goolsby and Hunt 1992). This necessitated the identification of a second sampling frame from select trade associations. Specifically, the North American Lumber Association and the National Association of Sales Professionals formed the study's second sampling frame. Telephone calls were initiated with sales executives from firms in these associations. Interested executives were then sent an invitation letter similar to that sent to the AMA sampling frame. As an incentive, the executives were offered an opportunity to receive a summary of the study's findings. This resulted in 35 firms expressing a willingness to volunteer their salespeople for the current study.

Combining the two sources, we identified 82 interested sales executives. The data collection started when a package containing letters of introduction, survey questionnaires, and business reply envelopes was mailed to each participating executive for distribution to qualified salespeople in that firm. Specifically, the recipients were instructed to select salespeople who (1) must currently be working in the field, (2) may either work independently or with a group, but should not have any supervisory responsibility, and (3) must have at least one year of experience at the firm. Overall, 540 salespeople who met these criteria were volunteered by the participating sales executives.

Two weeks later, a second wave of mailing was conducted. Specifically, another set of survey materials was sent to each participating executive whose firm's response rate was lower than 50% of the initially volunteered number of salespersons. In addition, these participating executives were contacted by phone immediately after the package was sent, asking them to provide additional assistance.

Of the 540 salespersons identified by the executives as potential respondents, 310 from the 82 different firms completed and returned the survey questionnaires, for a response rate of 57.4%. Of these, 120 respondents came

from the AMA group and the remaining 190 from the non-AMA group. The salespeople came from a wide variety of businesses, including 26 manufacturers of consumer goods and industrial goods (e.g., office equipment, poultry products, sporting goods, toys and novelties, auto parts, aerospace parts, electrical supplies, packaging equipment, telecom equipment, and computer parts), 38 service providers (e.g., educational services, printing, health insurance, management services, and data management services), and 18 wholesaling companies. About 82% of the respondents were male, more than 90% were between ages 25 and 55, and nearly 72% had worked 2 or more years with their current firm. Later, 17 questionnaires were excluded from the analysis either because the respondents were found to hold a supervisory position or because of excessive missing data in their responses. Hence, the effective sample size for this study was 293.

When we compared the AMA and the non-AMA samples with regard to company revenue, number of employees, and the study's focal constructs, the *t*-test results indicated that there was no significant difference between the two. Consequently, the samples were combined for subsequent analysis.

## Measures

All constructs in this study were measured by multiple items drawn from previous research. For sales force control systems, measures of output control and process control were adapted from Jaworski and MacInnis (1989) using a five-point Likert-type scale. Measures of capability control were taken from Kohli et al. (1998), also using a five-point Likert-type scale.

Measures for the OSPCP of customer orientation were adapted from one component of Narver and Slater's (1990) market orientation scale dealing with customer orientation. Though typically not used as a measure of psychological climate per se, this scale provides an excellent overall assessment of salespeople's perceptions of their firms' concern for customers. Responses to the five items were recorded on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Measures of the OSPCP of sales supportiveness were taken from Wayne et al. (1997) and adapted to the sales context by framing the items with regards to employees' sales roles. Responses to the nine items were recorded on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Measures for the OSPCP of sales innovativeness were borrowed from Strutton et al. (1993a) study of psychological climate and adapted for the sales context.

Salesperson's job satisfaction was measured using a modified version of the items used by Dubinsky et al. (1986) and Dubinsky et al. (1995) on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Measures of outcome performance were taken from Cravens et al. (1993). A seven-point scale anchored

by "I am very ineffective" (1) and "I am very effective" (7) was used to record the response of the subjects to several aspects of their outcome performance.

The questionnaire was pretested before it was sent to the participating sales executives. In the first stage of the pretest, two marketing academics with several years of industrial selling experience were asked to comment on the readability and clarity of the questions. Their feedback was used to modify unclear questions. In the second stage, the preliminary questionnaire was sent to three sales executives from three different firms for further refinement. The final version of the questionnaire was then prepared for distribution.

## Analysis and results

A three-stage data analysis was performed to assess the measurement quality of the constructs and test the proposed model and related research hypotheses. In the first stage, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the measurement model of the constructs. In the second stage, a series of structural path models were fitted to test the partial mediating roles of the OSPCP variables in the effects of control systems on salesperson's job satisfaction and outcome performance, as specified in Fig. 1. The goal in this stage was to establish the general soundness of the framework in Fig. 1 before testing the operational model in Fig. 2 and the related hypotheses. In the third stage, the structural path model in Fig. 2 was fitted to test the research hypotheses. The advantages of separating measurement model from structural model over simultaneous assessment of the two models had been well articulated by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Hunter and Gerbing (1982). These include the ability to pinpoint model misspecification and the opportunity to minimize the potential for interpretational confounding.

### Stage 1: assessment of the measurement model

A maximum likelihood (ML) CFA was conducted for all eight factors included in the proposed model, using the EQS for Windows program (Bentler 1995). The standardized factor loadings and the corresponding *t*-statistics for all items, as well as the model fit indices and coefficient alphas for the factors, are presented in Table 1. To assess the fit of confirmatory measurement model, the multi-step procedure recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) was followed.

First, the univariate and multivariate statistics of the input variables were examined to detect potential violations of the normality assumption underlying the ML procedure. No apparent violation of the normality assumption was found, since the skewness and kurtosis of the items and the

**Table 1** Constructs, measures, and results of confirmatory factor analysis

Factor	Scale items	Alpha	St. factor loading	<i>t</i> -value
Output controls		0.849		
	1. Specific quantitative performance goals are established for my job		0.806	15.96*
	2. The extent to which I attain my quantitative performance goals is critically evaluated		0.868	17.85*
	3. If my quantitative performance goals were not met, I would be required to explain why		0.773	15.02*
	4. Feedback concerning the extent to which I achieve the assigned goals is provided to me on a regular basis		0.649	11.87*
	5. My pay increases are based upon how my performance compares with my goals		0.604	10.84*
Process controls		0.816		
	1. The extent to which I follow established sales procedures is critically monitored		0.757	14.01*
	2. The procedures used to accomplish a given selling task are explicitly regulated		0.722	13.15*
	3. My immediate boss modifies my work procedures when desired results are not obtained		0.676	12.07*
	4. Feedback on <i>how</i> I accomplish my performance goals is frequently communicated to me		0.749	13.80*
Capability controls		0.908		
	1. My supervisor has standards by which my selling skills are evaluated		0.695	13.21*
	2. My supervisor provides guidance on ways to improve my selling skills and abilities		0.814	16.53*
	3. My supervisor evaluates <i>how</i> I make sales presentations and communicate with customers		0.877	18.59*
	4. My supervisor periodically evaluates the selling skills I use to accomplish a task		0.862	18.09*
	5. My supervisor assists me by suggesting why using a particular sales approach may be useful		0.832	17.10*
Organizational customer orientation		0.889		
	1. My company's business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction		0.797	15.86*
	2. My company closely monitors and assesses employee commitment to serving customers' needs		0.796	15.84*
	3. My company pays close attention to after-sales service		0.742	14.30*
	4. Our competitive edge is based on understanding customers' needs		0.778	15.32
	5. Our business strategies are driven by the goal of increasing customer values		0.812	16.32*
Sales supportiveness		0.935		
	1. My company strongly considers my goals and values		0.824	17.04*
	2. When I have a problem, my company provides needed help		0.794	16.13*
	3. My company really cares about my well-being		0.834	17.39*
	4. My company is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability		0.847	17.80*
	5. Even if I did the best job possible, my company would fail to notice		0.713	13.83*
	6. My company cares about my general satisfaction at work		0.824	17.06*
	7. My company shows very little concern for me		0.700	13.51*
	8. My company cares about my opinions		0.726	14.19*
	9. My company takes pride in my accomplishments at work		0.801	16.32*
Sales innovativeness		0.931		
	1. My management encourages new ideas for sales		0.840	17.55*
	2. My company favors new ways to do business		0.874	18.73*
	3. My company keeps improving on customer services		0.778	15.63*
	4. My company encourages new approaches in selling		0.911	20.09*
	5. My management encourages innovation and creativity		0.878	18.87*
Job satisfaction		0.898		
	1. Generally speaking, I am satisfied with this job		0.891	19.27*
	2. I frequently think of quitting this job		0.669	12.69*
	3. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job		0.647	12.15*

**Table 1** (continued)

Factor	Scale items	Alpha	St. factor loading	t-value
Outcome performance	4. I am happy with the job I have	0.852	0.926	20.59*
	5. My present job is interesting and rewarding		0.895	19.42*
	1. Contributing to your company's acquiring a good market share		0.760	14.48*
	2. Making sales of those products with the highest profit margins		0.672	12.28*
	3. Generating a high level of dollar sales		0.804	15.69*
	4. Quickly generating sales of new company products		0.586	10.33*
	5. Identifying major accounts in your territory and selling to them	0.684	12.55*	
	6. Exceeding sales targets and objectives during the year	0.701	12.97*	

Model fit indices: chi-square=1657.25, *df*=874, *p*<0.01; Bentler–Bonett Non-Normed Fit Index=0.905; Comparative Fit Index=0.912; Bentler–Bonett Normed Fit Index=0.833; Bollen (IFI) Fit Index=0.913  
 \**p*<0.05

Multivariate kurtosis were all small. Thus, the ML appeared to be an appropriate procedure to use. Second, EQS outputs were inspected and no anomalies (such as condition codes or improper solutions) or special problems in the minimization process were detected. In addition, as expected, the variance estimates for independent variables were all significant and positive. These findings suggested that the program converged properly. Third, the model fit statistics and indices were checked. Though the chi-square of the measurement model was statistically significant at the 0.05 level, chi-square is dependent on the sample size and should not be used as the sole measure of model fit (Bentler 1995). After checking other measures, the Bentler–Bonett Non-Normed Fit Index was found to be 0.905, the Bentler–Bonett Normed Fit Index was 0.833, the Comparative Fit Index was 0.912, Bollen's IFI Fit Index was 0.913, and RMSEA was 0.082. Given the large number of items and factors included in the CFA model, it was concluded that these model fit indices suggested an adequate fit of the measurement model. Fourth, the internal structure of the measurement model and the convergent validity of the factors were examined. The standardized factor loadings of all items on their respective factors were all positive, high in magnitude, and statistically significant. In addition, the coefficient alphas for all factors were found acceptable. All these findings combined strongly indicated that the internal structure of the CFA model was sound and all factors possessed strong convergent validity (Anderson 1987; Anderson and Gerbing 1988).

Finally, the discriminant validity of the factors was assessed by testing whether, for every pair of factors, a two-factor model fit significantly better than a one-factor model (Anderson 1987). This was done by fitting two CFA models for each pair of factors, one with the two factors remaining separated and another with the two factors

combined into one. Because the two CFA models were nested, the chi-square difference test was used (Anderson and Gerbing 1988) and found that, in all cases, the two-factor model fit significantly better than the one-factor model (*p*<0.05). Thus, it was concluded that the eight factors in the measurement model possessed strong discriminant validity (Anderson 1987).

Combining all aspects of the model evaluation described above, we concluded that, on both theoretical and statistical grounds, the eight factors in the CFA model had both convergent and discriminant validity, and that the CFA model fit the data well. Using the standardized factor loadings, factor scores for all eight constructs in the proposed model were obtained.

Because the data was collected from a single source—salespeople—there was a possibility of common method variance bias in the data. We performed a one-factor analysis by fitting a second-order CFA in which a common method factor was hypothesized as the second-order factor that drives all other factors in our measurement model (Avolio et al. 1991). Our results indicated that the second-order CFA model had an inferior fit, with all major fit indices below 0.75 and a significant chi-square. Therefore, we concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that common method variance bias was present in our data.

Stage 2: the mediating role of organizational sales-related psychological climate variables

To determine the importance of OSPCPs in explaining how control systems affect sales outcomes, a model of partial mediation had to be tested. To assess the mediating role of the OSPCP variables, a series of structural path models were fitted and compared. In one path model, hereafter labeled as the direct-effect model, the paths from sales

control systems to the OSPCP variables were fixed, while the paths from sales control systems and OSPCP variables to salesperson job satisfaction and outcome performance were freed. Essentially, this model suggested that OSPCP variables have no mediating role on the effects of sales control systems on salesperson job satisfaction and performance. Only the direct effects of sales control systems and OSPCP variables were included in the model.

In another model, hereafter labeled as the partial-mediation model, all paths were freed, including those from sales control systems to the OSPCP variables. Thus, the partial-mediation model contained not only the direct effects of sales control systems but also the indirect effects through the OSPCP variables. A third structural path model of full mediation, in which no direct path from control systems to salesperson's job satisfaction and performance was allowed, was also fitted and compared to the partial-mediation model.

Because the direct-effect and full-mediation models were nested within the partial-mediation model, chi-square difference tests could be used to compare them to the partial-mediation model. If the partial-mediation model fit the data significantly better than the direct-effect and full-mediation models, it would suggest that, in addition to their direct effects, sales control systems would also have indirect effects on a salesperson's job satisfaction and performance through the OSPCP variables.

Using the ML procedure in the EQS program, we found that the direct-effect model had a poor fit. Its chi-square was 133.975, which was significant with 10 degrees of freedom. The Bentler–Bonett normed and non-normed fit indices, the Comparative Fit Index, and Bollen's IFI Fit Index were also low. In contrast, the partial-mediation model provided a significantly better fit, having a chi-square of 18.128 with 1 degree of freedom. The Bentler–Bonett Normed Fit Index, the Comparative Fit Index, and Bollen's IFI Fit Index were 0.980, 0.981, and 0.981,

respectively. Comparing the two models' chi-squares, it was found that the difference was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the findings indicated that the partial-mediation model fit the data significantly better than the direct-effect model. Similarly, the full-mediation model also had a poor fit on the data, with major fit indices around 0.80. In addition, the chi-square difference between the full-mediation and partial-mediation models was also statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that the partial-mediation model fit the data significantly better. These findings suggested that the OSPCP variables did partly mediate the effects of sales control systems on a salesperson's job satisfaction and performance. Therefore, the proposed framework, whereby control effects on sales-related outcomes are better understood when considering OSPCPs, was supported.

### Stage 3: test of the hypotheses

To assess the operational model in Fig. 2 and test the related research hypotheses, ML path analysis in EQS was applied to fit the path model in Fig. 2. Table 2 shows the correlations between the constructs in the model. The ML estimates of the path coefficients as well as the model fit statistics are shown in Table 3. Similar to the CFA process discussed earlier, the multi-step procedure recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) was followed to assess the fit of the path model to the data. Specifically, it was found that the ML estimation procedure encountered no special problems and converged properly. All variance estimates were positive and significant. When the model fit statistics were examined, it was found that the chi-square of the model was 18.3, which, with 4 degrees of freedom, was significant at .05. However, the Bentler–Bonett Normed Fit Index, Comparative Fit Index, and Bollen's IFI Fit Index were 0.980, 0.984, and 0.984, respectively, suggesting a good fit of the model. Moreover, the internal structure

**Table 2** Correlations between the factors

	OUTCON	PROCON	CAPCON	CUSTOM	SUPPORT	INNOVA	SATISF	OUTPERF
OUTCON	1.000							
PROCON	0.448*	1.000						
CAPCON	0.393*	0.453*	1.000					
CUSTOM	0.209	0.324*	0.397*	1.000				
SUPPORT	0.277*	0.183	0.395*	0.626*	1.000			
INNOVA	0.370*	0.232*	0.454*	0.614*	0.768*	1.000		
SATISF	0.207	0.113	0.204	0.420*	0.612*	0.582*	1.000	
OUTPERF	0.214*	0.114	0.078	0.231*	0.274*	0.220*	0.422*	1.000

Factor label: *OUTCON* output controls, *PROCON* process controls, *CAPCON* capability controls, *CUSTOM* organizational customer orientation, *SUPPORT* organizational sales supportiveness, *INNOVA* organizational sales innovativeness, *SATISF* job satisfaction, *OUTPERF* outcome performance

\* $p < 0.05$ ;  $n = 293$

**Table 3** Results of path analysis

Path	Hypothesis	St. coefficient	t-value
OUTCON → OUTPERF	H <sub>1</sub>	0.183	3.145*
OUTCON → CUSTOM	H <sub>2a</sub>	-0.085	-1.681
OUTCON → SUPPORT	H <sub>2b</sub>	0.159	2.602*
OUTCON → INNOVA	H <sub>2c</sub>	0.134	3.240*
PROCON → CUSTOM	H <sub>3a</sub>	0.208	4.032*
PROCON → SUPPORT	H <sub>3b</sub>	-0.049	-0.775
PROCON → INNOVA	H <sub>3c</sub>	-0.016	-0.387
CAPCON → OUTPERF	H <sub>4</sub>	-0.084	-1.347
CAPCON → SATISF	H <sub>5</sub>	-0.063	-1.219
CAPCON → CUSTOM	H <sub>6a</sub>	0.112	2.113*
CAPCON → SUPPORT	H <sub>6b</sub>	0.354	5.775*
CAPCON → INNOVA	H <sub>6c</sub>	0.141	3.254*
CUSTOM → OUTPERF	H <sub>7</sub>	0.119	1.745
CUSTOM → SATISF	H <sub>8</sub>	0.012	0.195
INNOVA → OUTPERF	H <sub>9</sub>	-0.170	-1.942
INNOVA → SATISF	H <sub>10</sub>	0.291	3.999*
SUPPORT → OUTPERF	H <sub>11</sub>	0.057	0.604
SUPPORT → SATISF	H <sub>12</sub>	0.407	5.213*

Model fit indices: chi-square=18.3,  $df=4$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; Bentler–Bonett Normed Fit Index=0.980; Comparative Fit Index=0.984; Bentler–Bonett Non-Normed Fit Index=0.887; Bollen (IFI) Fit Index=0.984. Variance explained for endogenous variables: *CUSTOM* 45%, *SUPPORT* 18%, *INNOVA* 63%, *SATISF* 41%, *OUTPERF* 22%. \* $p<0.05$

of the model appeared to fit the theoretical expectations. These results combined indicated that the path model demonstrated an acceptable fit with the data and that the path coefficients could be used to test the related research hypotheses.

To test the hypotheses, we examined the sign and significance of the path coefficients in the fitted path model. With regard to the effects of sales controls, we found that output controls had a positive and significant effect ( $p<0.05$ ) on outcome performance, supporting H<sub>1</sub>. Contrary to the hypotheses, however, output controls had a positive and significant effect on the OSPCP of sales supportiveness and sales innovativeness, refuting H<sub>2b</sub> and H<sub>2c</sub>. In addition, the effect of output controls on the OSPCP of organizational customer orientation was not significant, so H<sub>2a</sub> was not supported. Process controls were also found to have a positive and significant effect on the OSPCP of organizational customer orientation, supporting H<sub>3a</sub>; however, H<sub>3b</sub> and H<sub>3c</sub> were not supported because the paths from process controls to the OSPCP of sales supportiveness and sales innovativeness were found to be insignificant. Capability controls had positive and significant effects on the OSPCPs of organizational customer orientation, sales supportiveness, and sales innovativeness, respectively; however, their effects on job satisfaction and outcome

performance were not significant. Therefore, H<sub>6a</sub>, H<sub>6b</sub>, and H<sub>6c</sub> were supported, whereas H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> were not.

With regard to the effects of OSPCP variables, it was found that the effects of an organization's customer orientation on outcome performance and job satisfaction were not significant. Thus, H<sub>7</sub> and H<sub>8</sub> were not supported. It was also found that the OSPCP of sales innovativeness had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, but an insignificant effect on outcome performance. Consequently, H<sub>10</sub> was supported, whereas H<sub>9</sub> was not. Finally, we found that the OSPCP of sales supportiveness had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, but an insignificant effect on outcome performance. Therefore, H<sub>12</sub> was supported, whereas H<sub>11</sub> was not supported.

## Discussion and conclusions

The overarching theme of our research is that sales controls engender a psychological climate of varying degrees of organizational supportiveness, customer orientation, and innovativeness. Salespeople's psychological climate perceptions, in turn, shape their motivation and sales behavior, leading to various sales-related outcomes. The nested models demonstrate empirically that the inclusion of OSPCPs is important to explain *how* sales controls affect important outcomes. With a single exception (i.e., the direct effect of output controls on outcome performance), the relationships between controls and sales-related outcome were made clearer by considering indirect effects from three OSPCPs (as mediators).

Of the nine hypotheses relating controls to OSPCPs, the results are mixed. Perhaps the most intriguing findings are those showing the positive effects of output controls on the OSPCP of sales supportiveness and sales innovativeness—results that were largely unexpected. The extant literature appears to suggest negative relationships between output controls and the OSPCPs, but these results support the idea that output controls *positively* affect both organizational supportiveness and innovation. It may be that effective output controls are found most often in organizational settings where firms assume responsibility for providing adequate sales support and innovation. This interpretation makes sense given that output controls are often assigned under conditions in which sales force behavioral monitoring would be difficult or impossible (Anderson and Oliver 1987).

Although similar logic could be applied to explain the sales innovativeness finding, an alternative explanation is in keeping with the lone-wolf characterization of salespeople—that an individual salesperson would be biased to believe that he or she knows best how to be “innovative,” and output control simply allows that role performance to take place

more easily. In that sense, the innovation is actually the invention of the salesperson, more than the organization. A study that would more objectively quantify organizational sales innovativeness, apart from salespeople's construal of their own personal sales innovativeness, would help to test such a proposition.

We find that output controls affect performance over and above the effects of OSPCPs. The findings have also revealed that sales supportiveness and innovativeness both mediate output controls' effect on job satisfaction. Thus, while output controls clearly have a direct effect on outcome performance, they evince indirect effects on job satisfaction as well. In tracing those indirect effects, we find that the relationship between organizational sales supportiveness and job satisfaction is as predicted. Process controls have no effect on sales innovativeness perceptions. Finally, process controls show no significant effect on job satisfaction or outcome performance.

Three limitations in the method of this study should be noted. First, the data were collected solely via a survey instrument, thus introducing the possibility of a common method bias. Although our one-factor analysis did not show any evidence of the presence of common method variance bias, we could not entirely rule out this possibility. Second, the self-report measure of performance adds to the possibility of inflated estimates with the OSPCP variables and especially with satisfaction, since those measures tend to be more personal and subjective on the part of the salesperson respondent. Thus, the possibility of a self-serving bias should be considered when interpreting the strength of the study's results. Finally, this study explored only three OSPCPs. Other relevant sales-specific psychological climate variables would contribute to a richer understanding of the effects of controls on salesperson attitude and behavior. Further, individual difference and context variables (e.g., competitive intensity) might offer additional refinement and clarity regarding the relationships explored in this study. Finally, an exploration into the impact of different types of output, process and capability controls might provide additional managerial insight into some of the nuances of the sales control-climate relationship.

This study advanced and successfully demonstrated the mediating influence of a sales-related psychological climate on the effect of sales controls on salespeople's job satisfaction and job performance. Sales-related outcomes are influenced, at least in part, by how control systems are interpreted by the sales force. Thus, sales managers should consider how each control type contributes to creating a climate for sales success. The study's results suggest that the use of sales controls that are best aligned with a psychological climate for selling is an important strategy in obtaining desirable sales-related outcomes.

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