International Business Review 19 (2010) 292–305

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Business Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ibusrev

Antecedents to managerial trust and sales control in Malaysian salesforce

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 14 October 2008
Received in revised form 1 December 2009
Accepted 30 December 2009

Keywords:
International sales management
Sales control
Sales performance
Transaction cost
Trust
Uncertainty

ABSTRACT

This study proposes and empirically tests an integrated framework investigating the antecedents to managerial trust and sales control in Malaysian salesforce. The theoretical framework of transaction cost analysis (TCA) serves as the main paradigm for suggesting that uncertainty is the basis for managers making decision to trust and/or use sales control to manage their salesforce. Sales managers from Malaysia were sampled to test hypotheses relating six uncertainty variables to managerial trust and sales control strategies. Our empirical evidence suggests that managerial trust plays an important mediating role in how Malaysian sales managers utilize sales control strategies to deal with uncertainty. The cultural implications for researchers and sales managers are discussed.

How managers direct the activities of the salesforce to ensure the attainment of sales performance objectives is a quintessential issue in salesforce management. The salesforce management literature focuses on *sales control* to accomplish this (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Cravens, Ingram, LaForge, & Young, 1993; Krafft, 1999; Oliver & Anderson, 1994). Sales control has been conceptualized as either *behavior-based* (i.e., close supervision of salesperson subjective behaviors or activities), *outcome-based* (i.e., little supervision allowing the salesperson freedom to attain objective outcomes or results) or a combination of both (Oliver & Anderson, 1995). Trust, however has been shown to be an important element in building and maintaining business relationships – especially between intra-organizational members (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Unlike the focus of sales control, which is the degree that managers monitor and supervise salespeople in order to constrain them, trust is often defined mainly in terms of positive future expectations (Mollering, 2005). When a manager trusts a salesperson, he/she is bestowing upon them certain freedoms to take action. Thus, the choice of sales control strategy is related to the degree of trust a manager has in his/her salespeople.

Whether managers use more sales control to ensure performance goals are met and/or consider the extent that salespeople are trusted to perform as expected will depend upon the degree of uncertainty that managers face (Williamson, 1985). Since uncertainty stems from multiple sources (e.g., individual, organizational, environmental – Anderson & Oliver, 1987), managers must first assess the uncertainty conditions and then decide how best to utilize sales control to manage the salesperson. However, because salesforce management involves interpersonal relations between a sales manager and his/her salespeople, the role of trust cannot be ignored – in fact it may be magnified. Instead, the research and managerial problem is determining under what conditions it is appropriate to consider salesperson trust when using a particular sales

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0969-5931/$ – see front matter
doi:10.1016/j.ibusrev.2009.12.009

control strategy. Addressing this problem is particularly relevant to sales managers. Properly utilized sales control can serve to maximize salesforce efficiencies by increasing output while preserving resources and containing costs (Ingram, LaForge, Avila, Schwepker, & Williams, 2006). Likewise, a manager's decision to trust a salesperson can lead to more productive manager–salesperson relationships (Graen & Schiemann, 1978; Lagace, 1990) and can be a necessary intermediary when utilizing sales control to manage uncertainty.

To date, international business research on integrating trust and control has been conducted primarily in the domains of multinational headquarters-subsidiary relationships (Barner-Rasmussen, 2003), supplier relationships (Dong, Tse, & Cavisgil, 2008; Hedaa, 1993), export channel relationships (Li & Ng, 2002; Marshall, 2003; Solberg & Nes, 2002), and joint venture partnerships (Kwon, 2008) to mention a few. However, in the domain of managing a non-U.S. salesforce, the combined role of trust and sales control still remains an under-researched topic.

To contribute to this area of research, our study addresses the question as to what antecedent conditions of uncertainty managers consider when choosing to trust and control their salesforce. In addition, we explore the mediating relationship of trust (in this context) to sales control. To do this, we propose a model of managerial trust and sales control and test hypothesized relationships using a sample of sales managers from Malaysia. By examining such management strategies, in this Asian culture, we are contributing to the call for more behavioral sales research in an international context (Money & Graham, 1999; Rouzies & Macquin, 2003). This also supports a better understand of companies' globalization initiatives of growing a worldwide salesforce (Baldauf, Cravens, & Grant, 2002).

Malaysia was selected as the focal country for it represents a nation on the move, from a country dependent on agriculture and primary commodities to become what is known today as an export-driven economy spurred on by high-technology, knowledge-based and capital-intensive industries (MIDA, 2009). The nation's economic success is a model upon which many developing economies try to emulate in their efforts to become more industrialized. Today, Malaysia is regarded by foreign investors as one of the world's top investment destinations for offshore manufacturing operations. More than 5000 foreign companies from more than 40 countries have established operations in the country (MIDA, 2009). While 2008 was a very challenging year worldwide, it appears that the Malaysian economy emerged the least affected by the global financial and economic crisis. Compared to many world economies, the Malaysian economy grew by 4.6% in 2008, spurred by growth in the services (7.9%) and manufacturing (4.8%) sectors, and the nation recorded a trade surplus for the eleventh consecutive year valued at U.S. $39.4 billion (MIDA, 2009). The country ranked 18th (among 57 surveyed countries) in global competitiveness (IMD, 2009). Malaysia is now moving up the value chain as the nation focuses on attracting high-technology, high value-added, knowledge-based and skill intensive industries, incorporating activities such as design and development and research and development (MIDA, 2009). The Government of Malaysia through its investment promotion agency (the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority) is actively wooing foreign investors to set up shop in Malaysia. Thus, Malaysia represents a natural and attractive choice for U.S. and other foreign multinational companies seeking offshore manufacturing sites. The findings from this study will be most helpful to marketing managers in companies whose market scope spans multiple cultures and borders, and are challenged with understanding the issues of managerial trust and control in salesforce management.

This paper begins with a review of the sales control and trust literature. Transaction cost analysis (TCA) will be used to suggest that uncertainty is the basis for a model of salesperson trust and managerial sales control. This model will be empirically tested followed by a discussion, implications for research and practitioners, and ideas for further research.

1. Background

1.1. Sales control systems

Sales control systems are used by managers to ensure the attainment of desired organizational objectives (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996). In one particular view, Anderson and Oliver (1987) developed a series of research propositions suggesting that managers should choose strategies to manage their salespeople using a balance of behavior-based and outcome-based sales control systems. This research integrated the theories of transaction cost analysis – TCA (Williamson, 1985), agency theory – AT (Eisenhardt, 1989), and organization theory – OT (Ouchi, 1979) to suggest that by choosing the most appropriate sales control system, salespeople will be more motivated, organizationally committed, and satisfied with their jobs. This research sparked further study on the use of salesforce control systems as a means to manage the salesforce (Cravens et al., 1993; Oliver & Anderson, 1994, 1995; Piercy, Cravens, & Morgan, 1998). A direct benefit of managerial sales control is that by adjusting the mode and level of salesperson supervision, monitoring, and compensation, managers can affect salesperson efficiency levels (Ingram et al., 2006; Oliver & Anderson, 1995).

Although much work has been done to understand forms and antecedents of sales control systems, the research to date stops short of fully considering the interpersonal nature of the manager–salesperson interaction. Similar to long-term customer relationship building, trust between manager and salesperson is an important relationship building block (Rich, 1998). Thus, an area needing further exploration is the role of trust in salesforce management.

1.2. Managerial trust

Williamson (1985) suggested that a complementary approach to marketplace control is trust. Trust cannot completely replace control since it is absent of safeguards and lacks the monitoring and reporting that control uses to reduce opportunistic behavior (i.e., one exchange member acting in his own best interest). However, trust could act as a means to determine the appropriate level of control necessary to discourage partner opportunism (Williamson, 1985). For example, an exchange member left unsupervised potentially could waste time or shirk responsibility. Furthermore, without measures of performance, an individual might engage in activities that are not profitable to the organization. Given some level of trust in the subordinate, a manager could choose some degree of monitoring, supervision, or performance measurement to deter undesirable behaviors. However, research indicates that trust is an important mechanism to building productive relationships between members of an organization (Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002; Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2003; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore, a better understanding of the role of trust in managing salesperson behaviors is important to both sales researchers and managers.

Trust comes from the psychology literature and has applications to sociology, economics, management, and sales. Early definitions (from psychology) include viewing trust as "a generalized *expectancy* held by an individual that the word, promise, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon" (Rotter, 1967, 1971, 1980). More recently, Mollering (2005) notes that a common definition associates trust with positive future expectations. *Social exchange theory* (SET) integrates trust by suggesting that one individual will voluntarily provide a benefit to another thereby invoking an obligation of the other party to reciprocate by providing some benefit in return (Atuahene-Gima and Li, 2002; Blau, 1964; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). To summarize these definitions, trust emphasizes social interactions involving repeated exchanges, future obligations, and the belief that each party will fulfill his/her obligations in the long run. This implies that in sales, a manager may trust a salesperson if previous interactions between the two have resulted in favorable outcomes, some of which translate directly into measurable sales performance (e.g., sales outcomes) and some of which may be more difficult to measure (e.g., selling behaviors).

Trusting a salesperson may leave a manager more vulnerable to salesperson opportunistic behavior. If the salesperson decides to shirk or lie about his/her accomplishments, little can be done to verify performance. As a result, sales may suffer. Therefore, sales managers must avoid the temptation to base salesperson control decisions solely on the basis of trust (in the salesperson). Instead, "an interplay" between control, trust, and factors relative to the salesperson and his/her environment must be considered (Huemer, Bostrom, & Felzensztein, 2009) – that is, trust can be used to *support* (or mediate) the decision as to how sales control can be used to manage salespeople.

Prior sales research has shown that trust leads to benefits including an increase in salesperson cooperative behavior, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Jones & George, 1998; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; McAllister, 1995) to mention a few. To confirm this, studies from the sales literature point to some specific factors that lead a manager to place trust in his/her salespeople. For example, motivation and commitment (Castleberry & Tanner, 1986), integrity (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000), and value/goal congruence (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998) are some important salesperson characteristics that a sales manager considers when assigning trust to an individual salesperson. In fact, studies (see Brashear, Boles, & Brooks, 2003; Brashear, Manolis, et al., 2003; Lewicki et al., 1998; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Whitener et al., 1998) found that shared values and goals between a manager and his/her salesperson were among some of the most important trust-building factors.

Prior research also finds that knowledge of salesperson trust-relevant work experiences (Lines, Selart, Espedal, & Johansen, 2005) serve to reduce the uncertainty needed to facilitate higher levels of trust between managers and salespeople. Based on this notion, the manager's perceived risk that a salesperson will act opportunistically is reduced by having knowledge of the salesperson (and his/her past performance and behavioral tendencies). Consistent with this perspective, McAllister (1995) identifies familiarity based on length of attachment as main sources of trust.

Some of the managerial trust antecedents discussed here (e.g., motivation and shared goals) have been shown to directly impact the sales control strategies that managers choose to direct the activities of their salespeople (see Krafft, 1999; Oliver & Anderson, 1994). Others (trust antecedents such as prior behaviors and performance) have provided inconclusive evidence that they affect managerial sales control strategy (Oliver & Anderson, 1995). Given this, it is likely that trust provides an intermediary or mediating role that enables a manager to better assess the likelihood that a particular sales control strategy will be effective. Such assessment may be based on conditions relative to the individual salesperson and the organizational environment. Following this premise, we proceed to develop a set of hypotheses using the framework of *transaction cost analysis* and its key dimension of *uncertainty* as the basis for proposing antecedent conditions to managers' assessment of salesperson trust and trust's mediating role in the relationship between these antecedent conditions and managerial sales control strategies.

1.3. Transaction cost analysis and uncertainty

Economics provides a transaction cost analysis (TCA) framework for examining control mechanisms (Williamson, 1985, 1996a,b). Relative to management of subordinates, the goal is to minimize costs and managers should make choices in order to reduce the transaction costs that include both the *direct costs* of managing subordinate relationships (i.e., having to replace a salesperson) as well as the *opportunity costs* of making inferior governance decisions (i.e., poor market coverage due to lackluster salesperson effort). A key dimension of TCA, *uncertainty*, may be conceptualized as the basis for such managerial governance decisions. Two key dimensions of uncertainty involve some variability and some unknown distribution of potential outcomes (Libby & Fishburn, 1977; Vlek & Stallen, 1980). Relative to directly managing salespeople, these uncertainty dimensions stem from the relationship between sales manager and salesperson. It is noteworthy to mention that a third uncertainty dimension exists. *Uncontrollability* of outcomes pertains to the market uncertainty in a sales environment. Examples of this include the economic conditions, concentration of competitors, legal and regulatory environment, rapid changes in technology, and other external macro marketing factors. Because of the many variables that this uncertainty dimension may present and the inability for manager's to control them, we limit the focus of this paper to the two dimensions that they manager can affect.

In an international context, the role of uncertainty in managerial decision making can vary based on cultural differences. For example, one of the main culture value differences identified by Hofstede (1980, 1983) is uncertainty avoidance. Members of a particular culture will be more willing to accept risk and tolerate uncertain situations (e.g., Greece, Portugal, Guatemala) while others are considerably averse (e.g., Singapore, Jamaica, Denmark). This becomes relevant when managers from different cultures decide to trust salespeople or utilize sales control to manage them. Therefore, studying uncertainty reduction management strategies across various cultures provide researchers and practitioners additional insight as to how global managerial practices may differ.

In Malaysia (a culture characterized as lower in uncertainty avoidance based on its index rating of 36 out of 112), sales managers may tend to be more willing to trust their salespeople (relative to U.S. and other non-U.S. cultures). This is because of a higher tolerance to uncertainty and perception that opportunistic behavior on the part of the salesperson will be less likely. Thus, studying trust among Malaysian sales managers may provide a justifiable lens to test the relationships between uncertainty and how managers utilize sales control to minimize its negative effects. The theoretical and practical implication here is that in lower uncertainty avoidance cultures, trust may provide an important mediating role. This premise is advanced in the next section to develop a set of testable hypotheses.

1.4. Hypotheses development

1.4.1. Trust–sales control relationship

There is a well-established body of literature (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Krafft, 1999; Oliver & Anderson, 1994, 1995) suggesting that managers rely on sales control methods that focus on performance outcomes (i.e., outcome-based sales control) when results can be readily measured/verified and in selling environments where salespeople may put their own interests before those of their customer's. At higher levels of uncertainty (i.e., the manager knows little about the salesperson or how she/he will act in certain situations), research (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Krafft, 1999; Oliver & Anderson, 1994) suggests that managers may rely more on direct monitoring and close supervision (i.e., behavior-based sales control) to ensure that the salesperson properly performs his/her duties. This latter form of control is appropriate when there is little basis for managers to feel that they can count on salespeople to demonstrate the expected selling behaviors (e.g., make a certain number of sales calls, follow up with customers after the sale, etc.).

Because of sales control's reliance on managerial monitoring, evaluation, and supervision of subordinate performance and behaviors, an inverse relationship between sales control and trust has been posited throughout the literature. For example, Williamson (1985) uses TCA theory to infer that control mechanisms can be functional substitutes for trust and Harrison (2004) suggests that "the absence of formal contractual agreements (i.e., controls) is occasionally taken as proxy for trust." According to Lewicki et al. (1998), low levels of trust typically result in social constraints involving increased monitoring and regulatory mechanisms.

The implication from the trust-control paradox illustrated here is that as the relationship between a manager and salesperson develops over time, the sales manager will know how a salesperson is likely to act and will rely less on formal control to manage the salesperson. Prior empirical research is supportive of this. For example (Lines et al., 2005) found that knowledge of salesperson trust-relevant work experiences and length of attachment (McAllister, 1995) tends to reduce the uncertainty needed to facilitate higher levels of trust between managers and salespeople. Such knowledge (of past performance and behavioral tendencies) in turn, reduces the manager's perceived risk that a salesperson will act opportunistically and impacts the extent to which formal control mechanisms need to be used. The three-stage process described here implies that trust plays a mediating role in the degree to which managers utilize sales control.

Variations of trust's impact on a managerial sales control strategy are also depicted in the situational leadership literature (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Based on this model of leadership behavior, managers choose an appropriate style based on an individual employee's need for direction and support. For example, a "directing" leadership style is exemplified by a sales manager's use of behavior-based sales control because higher levels of monitoring and supervision are required due to the feeling that there may not have been sufficient transactions with the salesperson to assign high levels of trust (Mallin & Pullins, 2006). Thus, a manager's decision to use sales control will be based not only on uncertainty (stemming from the individual subordinate), but also based on the degree that the individual is trusted (based on knowledge from prior transactions). All of this discussion can be summarized in our first set of hypotheses that suggest that trust and control have an inverse relationship and that trust should have a mediating effect between uncertainty and managerial sales control strategy:

H_1. Managerial trust in the salesperson will (a) be inversely related to the manager's use of (behavior-based) sales control and (b) mediate the relationship between uncertainty and the manager's use of (behavior-based) sales control.

H_2. Managerial trust in the salesperson will (a) be inversely related to the manager's use of (outcome-based) sales control and (b) mediate the relationship between uncertainty and the manager's use of (outcome-based) sales control.

Next, we develop the basis for defining some of the uncertainty conditions that managers must assess when making decisions to utilize trust and sales control to manage their salesforce. Such uncertainty conditions stem from the individual salesperson and the manager's prior transactions with the salesperson.

1.4.2. Salesperson (uncertainty) variables

Sales performance *variability* refers to how each salesperson differs relative to their individual character traits. Based on these differences each salesperson will perform at different levels. Salesperson performance variability is a source of uncertainty to the sales manager and poses a major impediment to achieving sales organizational goals. Without a clear understanding of what motivates each individual salesperson to achieve their sales goals, the sales manager is merely left to guess which sales management strategies will be most effective. Thus the source of uncertainty tied to such outcome variability is the *salesperson* and the basis for the variability will be salesperson characteristics (i.e., motivation, goal orientation, etc.). Three uncertainty variables used for this study stemming from the individual salesperson are *intrinsic motivation orientation*, *extrinsic motivation orientation*, and *goal congruence*. These variables were chosen based on previous sales control and trust studies that use these salesperson factors (Krafft, 1999; Levin & Cross, 2004; Oliver & Anderson, 1994).

Intrinsic motivation orientation (*IM*) refers to an individual's preference for rewards that provide a sense of accomplishment, self-actualization, and self worth. Examples of such rewards are leadership opportunities and fulfilling work assignments (Walker, Churchill, & Ford, 1977). Based on this, the intrinsically motivated salesperson can be expected to participate in selling "input" activities such as customer service, high quality customer presentations, and mentoring of newer employees (to mention a few).

In the case of the IM salesperson, engaging in selling behaviors that benefits the customer is a priority because he/she enjoys the rewards that a satisfied customer will bear (e.g., building long-term relationships, reaping future sales, receiving referrals, etc.). Such activities, performed repeatedly will provide a sales manager with the confidence that this salesperson can be trusted to do what is best for the customer and the sales organization in the future (Flaherty & Pappas, 2000; Tyagi, 1985). Going forward, the manager can be more confident that during periods where the salesperson cannot be directly monitored, closely supervised, and coached – the salesperson will still fulfill their selling responsibilities. For this reason, it is likely that managers would have higher levels of trust in a salesperson that they consider to be intrinsically motivated.

In a Malaysian salesforce, we expect that managerial trust in the salesperson will be an important consideration to reduce the uncertainty due the IM of the salesperson. Based on Hofstede's (1983) relative low country scale rank in uncertainty avoidance, Malaysian sales managers will likely be willing to accept the moderate levels of risks associated with trusting a salesperson in this case. This argument can be summarized in the following hypothesis:

H_3. Salesperson *intrinsic motivation* will be positively related to managerial trust in the salesperson.

A salesperson with an *extrinsic motivation orientation* (EM) differs in that he/she will be focused on aspects of selling that produce rewards that are tangible and desired. Such extrinsic rewards include compensation, incentives, and recognition (to mention a few). Because such rewards are typically achieved via the generation of sales output (e.g., revenue, units, profit margins, etc.) salespeople who have demonstrated that they can be depended upon to reach these sales output goals will more likely be trusted by their sales manager (Castleberry & Tanner, 1986). Likewise, a consistent track record of producing sales will increase managerial confidence in the salesperson's ongoing ability to produce. As a result, a manager may feel more confident in assigning challenging (and lucrative) customer accounts, delegating important selling tasks, and relying on the salesperson to deliver on sales that are forecasted. Based on this argument, our next hypothesis is as follows:

H_4. Salesperson *extrinsic motivation* will be positively related to managerial trust in the salesperson.

A manager and salesperson may have divergent goals (i.e., one may desire to increase company profits while the other is primarily interested in increasing personal income, respectively), thus *goal congruence* (GC) is an uncertainty factor stemming from the goal orientation of the individual salesperson. For example, if the sales manager is evaluated on bottom-line profitability but the salesperson is compensated based on sales units or sales revenue, their goals are unlikely to be congruent (e.g., a salesperson may sell a large quantity of product at low profit margins). Anderson and Oliver (1987) use agency theory to suggest that as long as sales output goals (between the principal and agent) are congruent then outcome-based control systems may be used. Because of this goal alignment, the risks of opportunistic behavior are low and close monitoring and supervision is unnecessary. The same rationale is used to suggest that when more subjective selling behaviors and activities are necessary to build lasting customer relationships, a sales manager will use behavior-based sales control to reduce uncertainty. Utilization of this form of sales control is necessary because the closer monitoring and supervision is required to observed such hard to measure behaviors like making sales calls, demonstrating products, and follow up after the sale.

A trust argument can also be formed based on the alignment of goals. For example, when manager and salesperson share the same goals, communication is open, frequent, and focused on achieving those mutual goals. Understanding that the goals of each party are aligned, the uncertainty associated with the salesperson behaving opportunistically is reduced and there is an increased likelihood that the salesperson's future actions can accurately be predicted (Lewicki et al., 1998). As long as the salesperson has a demonstrated track record of dependability under these circumstances, the manager is likely to trust the salesperson. These relationships are hypothesized as follows:

H$_5$. Salesperson *goal congruence* will be positively related to managerial trust in the salesperson.

H$_6$. Salesperson *goal congruence* will be positively related to the manager's use of (behavior-based) sales control.

H$_7$. Salesperson *goal congruence* will be positively related to the manager's use of (outcome-based) sales control.

1.4.3. Prior transaction (uncertainty) variables

An unknown *distribution* of potential outcomes suggests that there is the probability that salespeople may not achieve their sales objectives every month and it is difficult for managers to be certain of this. The less knowledge a sales manager has (about a salesperson) the more difficult it becomes to predict how that salesperson will perform over time. Not knowing the likelihood of potential outcomes is a source of uncertainty to the sales manager because it increases the risk of inconsistent sales organization performance. Managers must be able to count on salespeople to make the required number of calls, provide customers with the right solutions to meet their needs, fulfill their promises, and meet sales goals. Thus, the importance of being able to confidently predict which salespeople will consistently deliver on their sales objectives is paramount and should impact the sales management strategy deployed.

To increase such predictive capacity, a manager may assess previous interactions, prior salesperson performance, and/or general knowledge of how the salesperson is likely to act in certain situations. One of the variables relative to the prior (governing) transaction between the sales manager and the salesperson is the level of *knowledge that the sales manager has of the salesperson* (KS). This knowledge comes primarily from past performance and a history of repeated governing transactions between the two individuals and can be tested by a sales manager's claim "based on past experiences, I know how this salesperson will act." For example, during the course of several years the salesperson has responded appropriately to fulfill the expectations and performance demands of his sales manager. Recognizing this, the sales manager may feel that he/she "knows" the salesperson and can be confident that future "governing transactions" between the two will continue to turn out favorably thus providing the basis to trust the salesperson.

There is a body of literature that suggests that trust perceptions are based on trust-relevant work experiences and that an individual with a long history working with another organizational member has experienced more relevant episodes to base his/her trust (Lines et al., 2005). Other studies confirm that familiarity between parties emanates from their length of attachment, which serves to enhance effective communications and trust (McAllister, 1995; Perrone, Zaheer, & McEvily, 2003; Van Dam, Oreg, & Schyns, 2008). Thus, in Malaysia where the preferred mode of communication is high-context, the common bond and prolonged positive interactions lead to the establishment of behavioral predictability, thereby helping to reduce uncertainty. The sales management inference from these studies suggests that the knowledge that a manager has about a particular salesperson's likely sales behaviors acts to mitigate informational uncertainty because more is known about the salesperson. Such knowledge allows for managers to focus on providing guidance relative to selling behaviors rather than restrictions (Huemer et al., 2009) and by doing so assigns trust (to a salesperson). Such knowledge about the salesperson also enables the manager to determine the most appropriate form of sales control to use. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H$_8$. Sales manager's *knowledge of the salesperson* will be positively related to managerial trust in the salesperson.

H$_9$. Sales manager's *knowledge of the salesperson* will be positively related to the manager's use of (behavior-based) sales control.

Managerial sales control decisions may also be based on a salesperson's past performance (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). Performance may be delineated as based on activities leading up to a sale (e.g., making sales calls, demonstrations, presentations, etc.), that is *behavior performance* (BP). Alternatively, performance may be relative to generation of sales outputs (e.g., units, revenue, profit margin, etc.), that is, *output performance* (OP). Prior performance has been linked to a manager's sales control strategy (BP's relationship to behavior-based and OP's relationship to outcome-based – see Krafft, 1999). In addition, as a salesperson demonstrates consistent performance over time, managerial trust in the salesperson should increase because the salesperson has established a "track record" of dependability and instills a high level of confidence that he/she can be counted on to perform at similar levels in the future.

Recognizing that past performance is no guarantee of future performance, trusting that a salesperson will continue to perform at consistent levels does pose risk (sales and/or levels of customer service can deteriorate). However, based on the relatively low uncertainty avoidance tendencies of managers from a Malaysian culture, we can predict that managerial trust in the salesperson can be based on an assessment of prior performance and will be a consideration in choosing a sales control strategy. Seeing that performance can be assessed relative to *both* selling behaviors and outcomes, we present the following pair of hypotheses:

H$_{10}$. Salesperson *past behavior performance* will be positively related to managerial trust in the salesperson.

H$_{11}$. Salesperson *past behavior performance* will be positively related to the manager's use of (behavior-based) sales control.

H$_{12}$. Salesperson *past outcome performance* will be positively related to managerial trust in the salesperson.

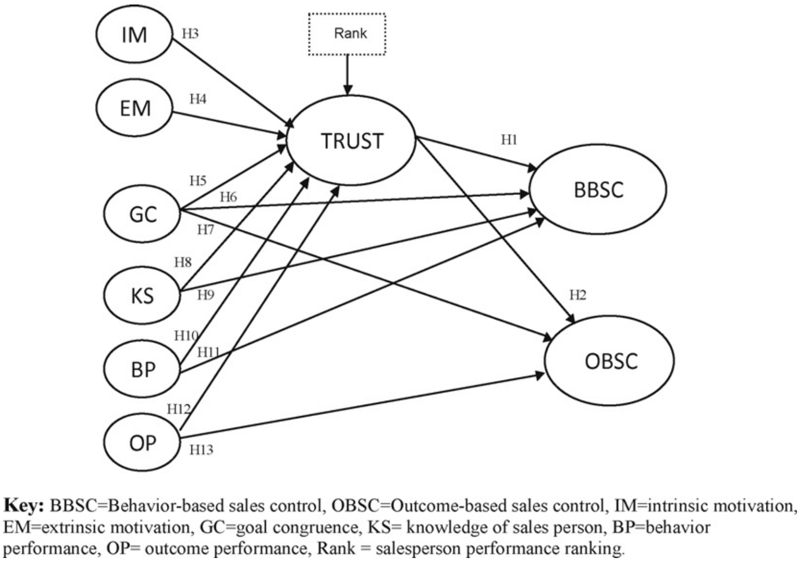

Fig. 1. Proposed structural model of antecedents to sales control and trust. *Key*: BBSC = behavior-based sales control, OBSC = outcome-based sales control, IM = intrinsic motivation, EM = extrinsic motivation, GC = goal congruence, KS = knowledge of sales person, BP = behavior performance, OP = outcome performance, Rank = salesperson performance ranking.

H_{13}. Salesperson *past outcome performance* will be positively related to the manager's use of (outcome-based) sales control.

All of these hypothesized relationships are illustrated in Fig. 1. Overall, the uncertainty dimension of TCA provides a sound theoretical basis for proposing a model of salesforce management integrating sales control, trust, and its antecedents (uncertainty). The next section presents a methodology for empirically testing these proposed relationships.

2. Methodology

2.1. Data collection and sample

A questionnaire survey was provided to business-to-business sales managers across different firms and industries in Malaysia. The data were collected from a convenience sample of salesforce managers through interviews conducted by a group of local graduate students and e-mail responses from participants. One of the authors, a Malaysia national was in Malaysia during the data collection and oversaw the interview process. Overall, 194 managers were invited to participate in the study of which 40 granted interviews and 47 opted for an e-mail response for an overall response rate of (45%). Statistical comparison of the variables of interest between the two data collection methods revealed no statistical differences. To maximize the sample size, non-responders were re-contacted and asked to participate. This yielded an additional 8% increase to the sample. An analysis of variance between the initial and late responders showed no significant differences for any of the 9 variables used in the study. In all, 94 sales managers provided data representing 276[1] salespeople. Our sales manager sample was 100% Malaysian, 80% male, and was from 60 different companies. The average years of sales management experience was 9.1 and the average span of control was 25 salespeople. The top industries represented in the sample included: business and professional services (39%), healthcare (21%), financial services (11%), transportation (8%), and publishing (4%).

Managers were asked questions pertaining to his/her entire salesforce (to establish the type of sales control used) as well as questions pertaining to *any* three individual (manager-identified) salespeople within their salesforce. This latter step was necessary in order to measure the interpersonal variables (i.e., salesperson characteristics variables, prior transaction variables, and trust). The rationale for asking a manager to pick any three salespeople (versus a high, medium, and low performer) was to prevent response bias that might stem from a manager thinking about a salesperson's performance level when responding to questions. This method also allowed us to capture a broader cross-section of salespeople relative to their level of performance. To control for the possibility that a manager chose salespeople based on their level of performance (potentially yielding all high/low performers) we included the manager's relative ranking of the salesperson's overall performance as a control variable in the model. Because asking a sales manager about *every member* of his/her sales team was impractical, the aggregate responses relative to these three salespeople served as a surrogate measure of *salesforce* for each manager respondent. Sample questionnaire items are included in the paper's appendix.

[1] Six salesperson's records were removed from the dataset due to missing data.

Table 1
Correlation of dependent and independent variables.

	BBSC	OBSC	Trust	IM	EM	GC	KS	BP	OP
BBSC	1.00								
OBSC	0.73**	1.00							
Trust	0.25	0.20	1.00						
IM	0.32	0.41	0.64*	1.00					
EM	0.10	0.26	0.57*	0.57*	1.00				
GC	0.26	0.30	0.68*	0.46	0.42	1.00			
KS	0.38	0.41	0.73**	0.68*	0.50*	0.59*	1.00		
BP	0.33	0.34	0.76**	0.76**	0.47*	0.49*	0.74**	1.00	
OP	0.22	0.37	0.62*	0.74**	0.63*	0.46	0.67*	0.72**	1.00

Key: BBSC = behavior-based sales control, OBSC = outcome-based sales control, IM = intrinsic motivation, EM = extrinsic motivation, GC = goal congruence, KS = knowledge of sales person, BP = behavior performance, OP = outcome performance.
* Correlation is significant at level: $p < 0.05$.
** Correlation is significant at level: $p < 0.01$.

Table 2
Measurement model analysis (means, std. dev., CITC, AVE and Cronbach alpha).

	Mean	Std. Dev.	CITC	Items deleted	Cronbach alpha	AVE
BBSC	4.56	1.23	0.47–0.71	0	0.81	0.56
OBSC	4.63	1.12	0.58–0.77	1	0.87	0.45
Trust	4.99	0.98	0.60–0.80	0	0.94	0.60
IM	5.09	0.8	0.46–0.73	0	0.91	0.47
EM	5.31	1.08	0.71–0.75	0	0.90	0.66
GC	4.8	0.89	0.43–0.65	2	0.80	0.43
KS	4.8	1.11	0.74–0.83	0	0.93	0.68
BP	5.1	0.74	0.47–0.78	0	0.91	0.44
OP	5.11	0.91	0.62–0.77	0	0.87	0.61
PERF.	5.99	0.46	NA	0	1.00	1.00

Key: BBSC = behavior-based sales control, OBSC = outcome-based sales control, IM = intrinsic motivation, EM = extrinsic motivation, GC = goal congruence, KS= knowledge of sales person, BP = behavior performance, OP = outcome performance, CITC = corrected item total correlation, AVE = average variance extracted.

2.2. Dependent variables

Sales control was measured using scales adapted from the research of (Cravens et al., 1993). Outcome-based sales control (OBSC) was computed by averaging eight items and behavior-based sales control (BBSC) was computed by averaging six items. Using scale items developed by Zaheer, McEvily, and Perrone (1998) and Morgan and Hunt (1994), managerial *trust* (TR) was computed as the average of four items. To determine sales manager (overall) trust (in his/her salesforce), an average of the three individual salespeople (that managers reported trust) were used.

2.3. Independent variables

Individual salesperson variables included *intrinsic motivation orientation* (IM), *extrinsic motivation orientation* (EM), and *goal congruence* (GC). Salesperson IM and EM was measured using questions from Oliver and Anderson's (1994) empirical study of sales control. Salesperson GC was measured by adapting questions (to the salesforce management domain) from Jap's (1999) study of buyer–seller relationships. These variables were computed for each of the three manager-identified salespeople, and averaged to represent scores for the manager's entire salesforce. Variables describing the manager's prior transactions with the salesperson were measured by asking questions pertaining to the manager's *knowledge of each salesperson* (KS), *salesperson output performance* (OP), and *salesperson behavior performance* (BP).

KS was considered an important measure to capture since it has been shown in previous studies (Jackson, Hollmann, & Gallan, 2006; Lines et al., 2005; Van Dam et al., 2008) that a manager's trust in a salesperson is a function of the tenure of their relationship. Since, measures for KS were developed for this study, they were pre-tested (Cronbach's alpha = 0.93) with 10 sales managers prior to data collection. Salesperson OP and BP was measured by averaging two and four items, respectively (adapted from Oliver & Anderson, 1994). Table 1 lists the correlations among all of the dependent and independent variables outlined in this section.

2.4. Analysis techniques and measurement validation

The statistical packages SmartPLS and SPSS were used to estimate the measurement model prior to examining the full structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1982, 1988). The measurement model provided us with estimates of the observed

Table 3
Path analysis results from structural model.

Hypothesis	Path	Beta (*t*-value)	Finding/notes on mediation effects
H_{1a} √	Trust → BBSC	−0.24 (2.09)**	N/A
H_{2a} √	Trust → OBSC	−0.23 (1.83)**	N/A
H_3	IM → Trust	−0.04 (0.50) n.s.	N/A
H_4 √	EM → Trust	0.20 (3.55)***	N/A
H_5 √	GC → Trust	0.33(6.23)***	N/A
H_6	GC → BBSC	0.13 (1.14) n.s.	Trust fully mediates this relationship
H_7 √	GC → OBSC	0.28 (1.91)**	Trust partially mediates this relationship
H_8 √	KS → Trust	0.19 (3.03)***	N/A
H_9 √	KS → BBSC	0.33 (2.67)***	Trust partially mediates this relationship
H_{10} √	BP → Trust	0.47 (6.13)***	N/A
H_{11} √	BP → BBSC	0.21 (1.89)**	Trust partially mediates this relationship
H_{12} √	OP → Trust	−0.10 (1.34)*	N/A
H_{13} √	OP → OBSC	0.38 (4.50)***	Trust has no mediating effect in this relationship

Key: BBSC = behavior-based sales control, OBSC = outcome-based sales control, IM = intrinsic motivation, EM = extrinsic motivation, GC = goal congruence, KS = knowledge of sales person, BP = behavior performance, OP = outcome performance. $N = 276$ for all models. √ = hypothesis supported; n.s. = non-significant result.

* $p < 0.10$.

** $p < 0.05$.

*** $p < 0.01$.

measures – the reliability estimates, inter-correlations between items and model constructs, and estimates of construct validity. Reliability of the model construct was calculated through corrected items total correlation (CITC) and Cronbach alpha. CITC is a correlation of an item with the sum of others in its category (Churchill, 1979). Acceptable values for CITC are above 0.4. Items that did not reach this cut off value were deleted from the list because they did not contribute to the reliability of the construct (Tracey, Vonderembse, & Lim, 1999). Table 2 shows the CITC range for all constructs as well as means, standard deviation, and correlation among constructs in the model. All values for Cronbach alpha were between 0.81 and 0.94. According to Nunnally (1978), values greater than 0.7 are acceptable. Convergent validity of each construct was assessed by examining average variance extracted (AVE) values. All construct AVE values were above 0.4, which are considered acceptable (Chin, 1995, 1998; Chin & Newsted, 1999; Chin, Barbara, & Newsted, 2003).

SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) was used to test the model's hypothesized path relationships using a (partial least squares) structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1982; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1984). Partial least squares was chosen because it has no distribution constraints and it is appropriate for analyzing relatively small samples (Chin, 1998). The model fit is assessed by examining the magnitude and statistical significance of the path coefficients and construct *R*-squared values (Teo, Wei, & Benbasat, 2003).

3. Results

3.1. Tests of hypotheses

Table 3 reports the results of our model and hypothesized relationships. The overall explanatory power of our model was assessed via the *R*-squared values of the trust and sales control constructs. The *R*-squared values (0.170 for BBSC and 0.181 for OBSC) are consistent with prior studies of sales control (Krafft, 1999; Oliver & Anderson, 1994). The explanatory power of trust in the model (*R*-squared = 0.748) suggests the independent variables do a good job in predicting managerial trust in his/her salespeople.

Eleven hypotheses were significant as illustrated in the full model path results (see Table 3). This model supports the prediction that trust and both BBSC (H_{1a}: $\beta = -0.24$, $p < 0.05$) and OBSC (H_{2a}: $\beta = -0.23$, $p < 0.05$) have an inverse relationship. The model suggests partial support of H_{1b} (trust mediates the relationship between uncertainty and behavior-based sales control) and lacks support for H_{2b} (trust mediates the relationship between uncertainty and outcome-based sales control). Both of these tests will be described and addressed further in Section 4. Contrary to H_3, the relationship between IM and trust was not significant ($\beta = -0.04$). H_4 was supported as the EM to trust path was significant ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). For GC, support was found for the proposed relationship to trust (H_5: $\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) and to OBSC (H_7: $\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$) but not to BBSC (H_6: $\beta = 0.13$). As expected, the hypothesized relationships between KS and trust (H_8: $\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$) and BBSC (H_9: $\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) were supported. Past behavior performance (BP) was found to be significant in the relationship to managerial trust (H_{10}: $\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$) as well as to BBSC (H_{11}: $\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$). Salesperson past outcome performance (OP) was related to managerial trust in the salesperson but in an unexpected negative direction (H_{12}: $\beta = -0.10$, $p < 0.10$) while as expected, the OP to OBSC relationship was supported (H_{13}: $\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). Lastly, the test for our control variable's relationship (manager's overall performance ranking of the salesperson) to trust was not significant ($\beta = -0.002$). This confirms that there was no bias in our results based on how managers selected salespeople to report in our sample.

4. Discussion

Sales control, as depicted by Anderson and Oliver (1987) and Challagalla and Shervani (1996) are tools that managers use to ensure organizational efficiencies by preventing salesperson opportunistic behavior, whereby trust is used to reinforce interpersonal relationships (Rotter, 1971). Although different, there is evidence that they co-exist in salesforce management and that managers consider trust when making sales control decisions. Our results confirm eleven of the hypothesized relationships suggesting that managers can reduce uncertainty stemming from the salesperson and the manager–salesperson relationship by using a combined trust–sales control strategy in managing their salesforce. Our findings in H_{1a} and H_{2a} are supportive of an inverse relationship between managerial trust and sales control. As expected when a manager trusts a salesperson, he/she find less need to use sales control to protect him/her from the uncertainties of the relationship. Likewise, if trust in the salesperson is low, there seems to be a more compelling need to utilize the monitoring, supervision, and reporting of a sales control system to reduce the uncertainty stemming from the individual salesperson and/or the previous transactions between manager and salesperson.

Relative to the specific source of uncertainty stemming from the individual salesperson, the unexpected non-significant relationship between IM and Trust caused us to reject H_3. Assessing that a salesperson's motivation to sell is for intrinsic reasons (e.g., desire to achieve or to provide a useful service) is evidently not a trust-building character trait. Perhaps our Malaysian sales managers feel that such a motivation orientation is no guarantee that the salesperson will *always* act in accordance with managerial expectations. It is quite possible that a salesperson judged to "sell for the mere enjoyment of selling" will not have the drive to consistently meet output sales goals. Via this assessment, the sales manager may not feel confident enough that this type of salesperson will contribute to bottom-line results. This argument also justifies the notion (via support of H_4) that salespeople assessed to be extrinsically motivated will be trusted by their managers (i.e., there is confidence that this type of salesperson will be motivated to produce sales).

Closer inspection of our results provides some further insight into the important mediating role of trust in the relationship between uncertainty and managerial use of sales control. According to (Baron & Kenny, 1986), a variable is said to mediate a relationship if the independent variable (IV) to mediating variable (MV) effect is significant and the MV to dependent variable (DV) relationship is significant. If the above two conditions are met, then full mediation occurs if the IV has no effect on the DV when the MV is controlled for and partial mediation occurs if the significant effect of the IV on the DV is less than the significant MV to DV effect.

One particular relationship where managerial trust seems to have a mediating effect is in the salesperson goal congruence (GC) – sales control paths of our model. Here, GC explains a substantial portion of the variability in the antecedent relationships to trust (H_5: $\beta = 0.33$). Similar to studies involving U.S. samples, the alignment of goals (whether behavior or output) is an important determinant of trusting relationships (McAllister, 1995) in Malaysian salesforce. Relative to the relationship between GC and sales control, we did not find a significant relationship in both (H_6: BBSC and H_7: OBSC) cases. Rather, we find that trust partially mediates the relationship between GC and OBSC (all paths were significant) and fully mediates the relationship between GC and BBSC (GC to BBSC was not significant when controlling for trust). One possible explanation here is that since (sales) goals are more likely to be stated in term of measurable sales output (revenue, units, profit margins), congruent behavioral goals may be harder for sales managers to observe and assess. The resulting effect is for managers to focus less on monitoring and supervising salespeople to assess their selling behaviors (e.g., making sales calls, following up after the sale, etc.) when the salesperson can be trusted to fulfill their selling behavior goals (e.g., making 10 call a day).

The past behavior performance (BP) of the salesperson has the largest effect on managerial trust than any other antecedent/uncertainty variable (H_{10}: $\beta = 0.47$). In addition to the conclusion that it is a powerful trust-building factor, its relationship strength suggests that a salesperson can win a manager's trust by demonstrating that he/she is willing to invest the time and effort to develop skills and perform the activities necessary to build long-term relationships with customers. Given that the relationship between BP and BBSC was also significant, we find that trust partially mediates this relationship.

Alternatively, salesperson output performance (OP) was not a significant predictor of managerial trust in the salesperson (H_{12}). Instead, our Malaysian sales manager sample seems to rely primarily on sales control (OBSC) to manage the uncertainty from a salesperson's previous output sales performance (H_{13}). This latter result may be due to the possibility that some of the salespeople selected by our manager sample were sales agents (e.g., a salesperson may sell multiple company product lines) versus company-hired salespeople. The implication here is that prior output performance may have been driven by short-term incentives, spiffs, or promotions and our manager sample felt that future performance could not be confidently predicted. All of this suggests that arguably, the single most impacting antecedent/uncertainty variable in our model of managerial trust and sales control is the salesperson's prior performance relative to demonstrating selling behaviors (i.e., BP).

Our overall impressions of managerial trust as a mediator between uncertainty and sales control are mixed. In the case of the three opportunities for trust to mediate the relationship between uncertainty (i.e., goal congruence, knowledge of salesperson, past behavior performance) and behavior-based sales control, all three confirmed at least a partially mediating effect (thereby partially supportive of H_{1b}). Of the two opportunities for trust to mediate the relationship between uncertainty (i.e., goal congruence, past outcome performance) and outcome-based sales control, only one was at least partially mediating. Therefore, H_{2b} could not be supported.

4.1. Implications for theory and practice

Our study has implications for sales researchers. First off, by sampling from Malaysia, we extend the current sales control and trust literature expanding upon the use of respondents from various international populations (see: Krafft, Albers, & Lal, 2003 – German salesforce; Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002 – Chinese salesforce). To our knowledge, this is the first of its kind drawing on a sample of Malaysian sales managers. Thus, we were able to show that the TCA framework used and the hypothesized relationships developed between our constructs could be applied to an international sample. For international sales researchers, this creates the opportunity to compare Hofstede's (1983) cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance as well as to test TCA assumptions (e.g., bounded rationality, opportunistic tendencies) cross-culturally. Our model and results also confirm that uncertainty reduction in a Malaysia salesforce is an important determinant in trust development. Second, this is the first known study to view sales control and trust as an integrated approach for sales managers to respond to uncertainty conditions. This could pave the way to extend sales control theory to include more of the interpersonal dimensions associated with trust.

The managerial implication of uncertainty reduction becomes critical in the Malaysian society where the ‘‘fear of making a mistake’’ is an ingrained cultural trait. This is further compounded by the Malaysian sensitivity to ‘‘loss of face’’ or ‘‘malu’’. Thus, choosing the right sales management strategy has important social stakes. For sales managers, our study provides the opportunity to recommend some specific guidelines to help implement joint trust-control management strategies. For example, prior research suggests that sales control (when used appropriately) can maximize the attainment of sales objectives (Piercy et al., 1998) and trust (when warranted) can produce productive interpersonal and business relationships (Brashear, Boles, et al., 2003; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Sales managers can reap the benefits of both by decreasing the frequency of sales reporting for salespeople who have a track record of behavior performance (e.g., can be trusted to do the right things to support their customers). The trust that a manager has placed in these salespeople will likely result in more satisfied, motivated, and organizationally committed employees.

Another approach to implementing integrated sales control and trust strategies is to focus on the capabilities development aspect of behavior-based sales control rather than on the activity monitoring component (Challagalla and Shervani, 1989). Here, the emphasis is on managerial coaching and mentoring designed to develop salesperson skills. Over time, and after the salesperson has demonstrated mastery of these skills, the manager develops confidence that the salesperson will execute good salesmanship, even when ‘‘the boss is not watching’’. At this point a win–win occurs because the salesperson is empowered to do his/her job, freeing up the manager to work with other salespeople.

5. Conclusion

Although seemingly complex, salesforce management simply boils down to reducing uncertainty to best ensure that organizational goals are met. By understanding the factors that cause sales performance variability and unpredictability, managers are able to take the important first steps toward doing this. As the marketplace becomes increasingly competitive, sales managers must aggressively explore salesforce performance-enhancing strategies. Knowing when/how to use appropriate forms of sales control and knowing when to trust salespeople are important determinants in effective salesforce management. Although challenging for managers, the impact of making the right managerial choices will be evident as salespeople are more motivated, committed to their jobs and perform at higher levels. However, some limitations need to be addressed that affect the generalizability of this study.

First, the data on 276 salespeople comes from 94 sales manager respondents. We justified allowing each manager to report on three salespeople based on a similar method used by Levin and Cross (2004). Admittedly, this method could potentially present some threats to our internal validity, however this method was deemed appropriate to compare performance between salespeople of the same organization. Another research design issue is the method used to conduct the salesforce level analysis. Here, the salesperson specific variables (trust, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, goal congruence, knowledge of the salesperson, output and behavior past performance) were averaged across all three salespeople that each sales manager reported on. This method produced a surrogate salesforce score for these variables and could be argued that it poses a threat to our internal validity. To correct both of these problems a larger sample size of managerial observations could be collected and used for future studies.

This research provides a ‘‘stepping stone’’ for further studies of managerial sales control and trust. For example, other cultural dimensions (e.g., power distance, individualism, and masculinity) can be the basis for developing a model relating antecedent variables to trust/sales control strategy in a Malaysian salesforce. A similar dataset can be collected from managers in the U.S. (as well as other countries) and compared (to our Malaysian sample) in a cross-cultural study of sales management practices. A logical extension to this study is to develop and test a comprehensive model including the antecedents (Krafft, 1999); sales control and trust strategies, and consequences (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Cravens et al., 1993; Oliver & Anderson, 1994, 1995). This would connect and extend several streams of sales management literature and provide a practical leadership tool for salesforce managers.

Appendix A. Sample items

Outcome-based Sales Control (OBSC): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

I regularly review sales revenue, profit margin, and market share performance reports from salespeople.

I regularly review sales output (units of product) reports from salespeople.

I regularly evaluate the sales results (units, revenue, profit margins, market share) of each salesperson.

I regularly provide performance feedback to salespeople based on selling outputs such as units sold, revenue, and profit margins.

Behavior-based Sales Control (BBSC): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

I regularly review sales call reports from salespeople.

I regularly review sales activity reports (proposals, demonstrations, presentations) from salespeople.

I regularly spend time coaching salespeople.

I regularly evaluate the professional development of salespeople.

Trust (TR): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

I trust this salesperson.

This salesperson is trustworthy.

I know how this salesperson is going to act.

This salesperson can always be counted on to act as I expect.

Salesperson Intrinsic Motivation (IM): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

When this salesperson performs well, I know it's because of his/her own desire to achieve.

This salesperson doesn't need a reason to sell; he/she sells because he/she wants to.

This salesperson sells because of the feeling of performing a useful service.

Salesperson Extrinsic Motivation (EM): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

This salesperson sells primarily because of the monetary and financial rewards.

This salesperson sells because of the potential to maximize his/her income.

Goal Congruence (GC): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

This salesperson and I have different goals (reversed).

This salesperson and I have compatible goals.

This salesperson and I support each other's objectives.

Sales Manager's Knowledge of the Salesperson (KS): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

Based on my past experiences with this salesperson, I know how he/she will act.

Based on my past experiences with this salesperson, I feel that I know this salesperson.

Salesperson Past Behavior Performance (BP): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

This salesperson develops a call plan and sales strategy for each customer.

This salesperson adapts his/her selling approach from one customer to another.

This salesperson communicates his/her sales presentations clearly and concisely.

Salesperson Past Outcome Performance (OP): (7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree")

This salesperson generates considerable sales volume.

This salesperson is among the best at producing sales output (units, revenue, profit margin).

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