國 立 交 通 大 學

管理學院碩士在職專班國際經貿組

碩士論文

企業對企業商業領域中業務人員的幫助行為類型：以業務人員以及客戶的觀點分析

A typology of Salespeople Helping Behavior in the B2B Context: perspectives from both salespeople and customers

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中華民國九十六年六月

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Context: Perspectives from both salespeople and customers

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摘要

　　台灣的 IT 產業環境當中與客戶的關係，不再像是過去一樣的銀貨兩訖，而是，形成了與客戶之間發展成的生命共同體，也就是上下游供應廠彼此商緊密的整合在一起，共同生存。台灣產業的特色是先從商業對商業（B2B）開始，而 B2B 的企業對於企業的領域當中，企業的活動除了為了營利所需的業務目標之外，業務人員必須突破賣方利益的侷限，做更進一步提升買賣雙方關係的努力，以建立雙方長久的交易關係。本研究主要探討銷售人員除了一般的薪資水準以及獎金之外，在沒有報酬、沒有其它的補償之下，銷售人員無條件的對他們的客戶付出額外的心力，進而提供客戶幫助的行為。本研究提出在 B2B 之下複雜的交易活動當中，建立一套有系統的類型，幫助釐清業務人員所有的幫助行為的構面有哪些。

　　本研究使用質性研究為主要的研究方法，並採取深度訪談的手法，為這領域的缺乏的文獻，注入第一手的資料。研究分析的結果能提供未來經營業務管理者對於業務行為有更近一步的理解，運用它來注入公司的組織文化當中，為公司帶來無可取代的核心價值。並且期許業務人員幫助行為受到公司的矚目，適切的運用來招募、教育訓練業務人員。並進一步的運用到顧客關係建立的內部訓練課程，以建立超級的業務團隊。

關鍵字: B2B 業務人員，業務人員幫助行為，B2B 幫助行為類型，質性研究

A typology of Salespeople Helping Behavior in the B2B Context: perspectives from both salespeople and customers

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Degree program of International Business Admistration and Trade

ABSTRACT

The relationship between sellers and buyers no longer involves just a financial exchange. Taiwan's business transactions are evolving from a cooperative one to one which is a closely integrated community in order to cater to market demands. Thus, complex business activities concerning interpersonal factors are involved. We know that almost all the industries in Taiwan were originally formed as business-to-business settings. Salespeople in this area play a critical role not only to reach the sales target but also to break through shortsighted objectives in order to establish long-term relationships with their customers.

This study primarily discusses how salespeople in business-to-business sales settings go the "extra-mile" to assist their customers to establish a good relationship. Moreover, this study also proposes a typology of salesperson helping behavior in order to establish a systematic research of SHB.

The Qualitative research is used as the methodology in this study. Additionally, in-depth interviews are used to acquire first-hand information concerning SHB. The results show that there are four different categories of SHB and each one has its own importance in the connection with customers. Finally, this study also suggests that sales managers pay attention to SHB for their recruiting and/or training of salespeople for the purpose of being top salespeople.

Key words: B2B salesperson, salesperson helping behavior, a typology of helping behavior, qualitative research

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這是 2007 的盛夏，一篇論文誕生的故事。要感謝讓我順利完成論文的一路上，那些對我教誨、萬分支持、看好我以及不看好我的人。

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這一篇論文幸虧有你的協助，提供更多的不同領域的訪談對象給我，為了讓我的論文更完整，讓你欠了不少人情。謝謝你那跟我大相逕庭的十分樂觀個性，讓我從你的角度看到世界美好的一面！論文的過程當中，每當壓力太大，你都會淪落為我的出氣筒，被我欺負，真是辛苦你了!謝謝你的體諒！

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郭瑞卿
National Chiao Tung University
Hsincuh, Taiwan
July 2007

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1-1 Research Background & Motivation

Studies about helping behavior have mostly concentrated on the areas of education, family, philosophy, and society and have involved mainly juvenile subjects (Stanhope et al. 1987), non-profit institutions (Bendapudi et al. 1996), and organ donors (Schwartz 1970). Recently much research has made us more aware of the importance of both prosocial organization as well as OCB in the evaluation of employees and facilitation of organization operations. However, there is little empirical work which has investigated helping behavior in business settings, especially, within the business to business sales setting. Moreover, as commercial friendship can be linked to significant implication of business conduct further bonding between salespeople and customers may be developed by mutual help between each other. For example, salespeople assist customers in making decisions, answering questions, finding solutions of defect design of product, thus, satisfying customers' needs and may result in higher sales performance. Therefore, I would like to further explore different kinds of helping behavior in the business setting.

In addition, the relationship between seller and buyer no longer involves just a financial exchange. Taiwan's business relationships are evolving from a cooperative one to one that is based on closely integrated community in order to cater to market demands. As the relationship between buyer and seller is a symbiotic one, there is no doubt that interpersonal factors play an important role in Taiwanese business transactions. Customer satisfaction and the development of a long-term business relationship reportedly are significantly influenced

by the attitudes and behaviors of those who represent service companies (Chebat and Kollias 2000). Thus, salespeople play a critical role as they represent their companies and stand at the front-line in most interactions with their customers. Therefore, this study will investigate the concept of Salespeople Helping Behavior (SHB), which denotes how salespeople in a business-to-business sales setting go the "extra-mile" to assist their customers to establish a good relationship. In an effort to better understand SHB among salespeople in B2B settings, in-depth interviews with salespeople and customers were used to establish a classification scheme for behavior types.

1-2 Research Objectives

Although there is much research concerned about helping behavior, there is hardly any which focuses on the connection between helping behavior and salespeople. More specifically, there is a lack of empirical research which relates to salespeople assisting customers in the B2B setting. The purpose of this study is to investigate salespeople who in business to business selling contexts provide extra discretionary customer assistance. This study suggests the existence of SHB and, more importantly, it will present the research which is lacking so far. In addition, a typology of SHB will be established to shed light on SHB according to complicated business activities. Consequently, the results will be of interest to sales managers as well as to the developers of future areas research.

1-3 Research Structure

This study will then be followed by literature review, methodology, results, and finally a discussion and conclusion section.

Figur1.3 Research Structure of the Thesis

Identify research
motivation and objective

Literature Review

Research Methodology

Salesperson
in-depth interview

Customer in-depth
interview

Data collection and
analysis

Research Results and
Data Analysis

Discussion and
Conclusions
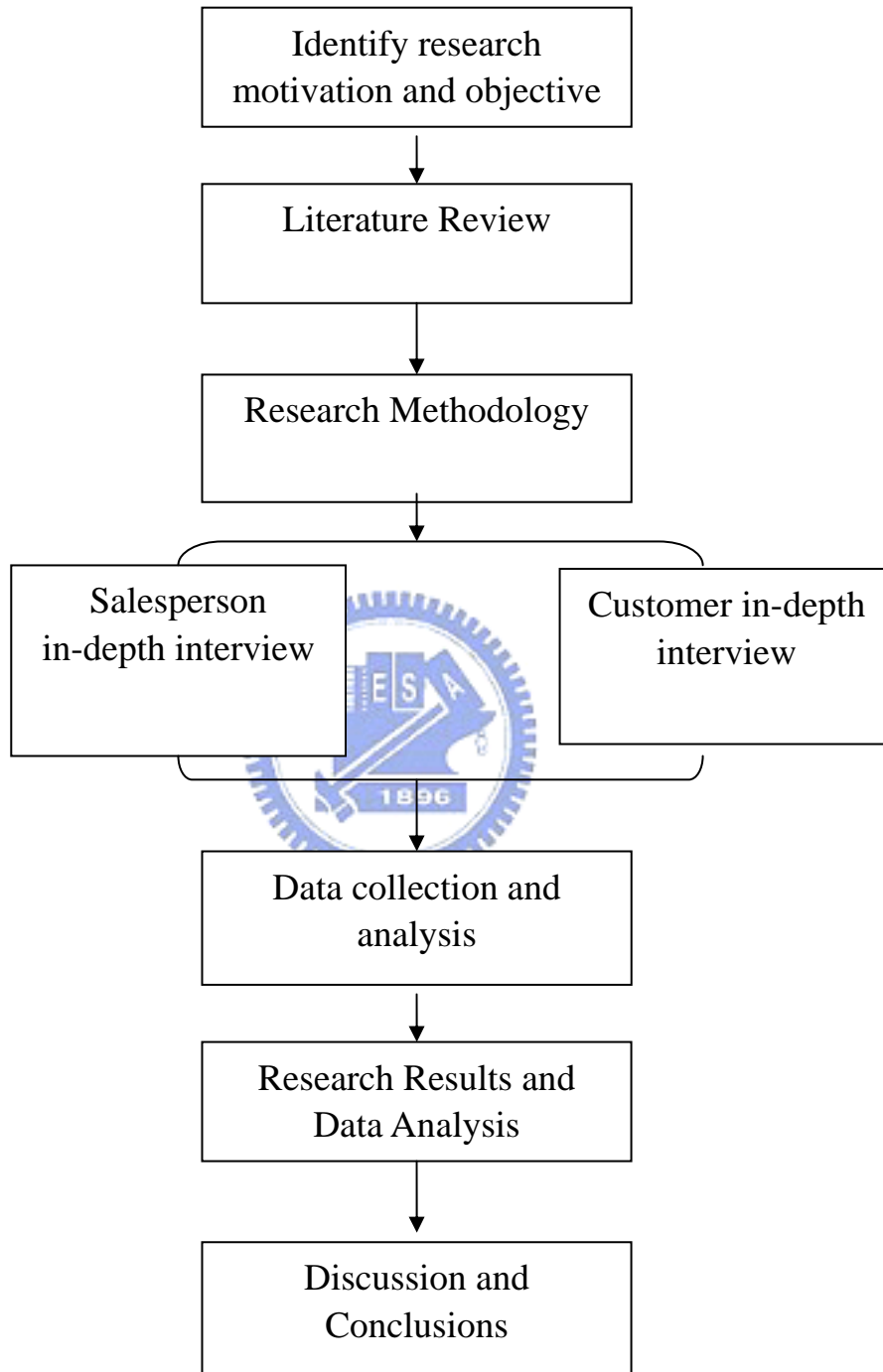
Chapter 2   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Relationship between Salespeople and Customers

The content of a salesperson's job includes sales presentations and order process, as well as activities related to the development of customer relationship (Boles et al. 2000). Research has demonstrated that developing relationship between customer and salesperson is directly related to customer satisfaction (Crosby et al. 1990) and is a universally effective strategy for achieving selling success (Macintosh et al. 1992); it also can lead to higher level of profitability (Sharma et al. 1999) and lower selling costs for strengthening the relationships (Berry 1983).

Wilson (2000) divided different types of relationship between salespeople and customers according to their level of cooperation. He demonstrated that the quality of relationship, usually influenced by the value-added service received by customer, develops from the initial transactional relationship to a facilitative relationship and finally to an integrated one. In a facilitative relationship, salespeople who are located in the customer's place of employment become an "insider" and to help the customers solve problems. As such, salespeople and customer together commit to a common shared goal and work "on the same side" (Sharma et al. 1999). In such a situation, salespeople who located in customer's factory formed with customers less of a salesperson-customer relationship but more of a coworker relationship.

Price and Arnould (1999a) aver that commercial relationships will in some cases

develop into friendships which involve affection, intimacy, social support, loyalty, mutual disclosure and gift giving. Moreover, they interviewed 18 industrial clients and marketing sales representatives found that they have the same characteristics (e.g., self-discourse, gift-giving) to form friendship as hairstylist-client relationships. They find that commercial friendships are connected to important outcome such as : bidding opportunities and preferential treatment (Price and Arnould 1999c). Consequently, business relationship is necessary for conducting business important outcomes.

In the traditional business transactions, a foot in the door was one of the most common and useful ways to promote a product. Today, with B2B environment, selling have been transformed into cooperative activities, in order to facilitate a relationship in which salespeople (Sharma et al. 1999) are less pushy and more supportive of customers' needs. In conclusion, salespeople who perform SHB may play roles such as: one in which the salespeople focus on the customers' product needs and price goal rather than on themselves, and one in which they influence customers by providing information that increases customer satisfaction. In short, by engaging in SHB, salespeople and customers may become more intimate and form friendships.

2.2 Helping Behavior Overview

Pearce & Amato (1980) exhibited 62 social helping behaviors and classified them into three bipolar dimensional structures: (a) "serious vs. non-serious help", (b) "planned, formal vs. spontaneous ,informal help" , (c) "giving ,indirect vs. doing, direct help". First, according to Pearce and Amato (1980), behaviors classified as serious help involved helping heart attack victims and donating bone marrow. In contrast, non-serious help is helping lost children and finding a lost document. Next, the planned, formal behaviors which are more

likely to happen in the social setting include chaperoning juvenile delinquents to a baseball game. Conversely, spontaneous informal help can include giving the direction to a traveler. Finally giving, indirect help can involve acts of sharing or giving or donating personal resources to others such as, donating food and money to victim of an earthquake. On the other hand, doing direct help could involve, for example, helping to pick up a dropped pencil for a person.

Besides helping behaviors in social settings, other helping behaviors (e.g., one customer helping another) have been identified in the marketing settings. Price and her colleagues (1995) defined that market helping behaviors as acts performed in the arketplace that benefit others in their purchases and consumption (p.259). For example, market helpers can assist with evaluating product alternatives, providing other people with necessary product information, structuring the decision problem for the stranger in the market. The term "Market Maven" proposed by Feick and Price (1987) describes individuals who "have information about many kinds of products, places to shop, and other facets of the market, and who initiate discussions with consumers and respond to requests from customers for market information" (p.85).

People in an organization, cannot avoid interpersonal interactions. Thus, abundant studies discussed organizational citizenship or prosocial behaviors. OCB (organizational citizenship behavior) is defined as behavior intended to provide assistance for a person that is beyond a worker's job requirements, or is not formally rewarded and which is conducive to effective organizational functioning. Prosocial behaviors are part of helping behaviors and are intended to promote directly the welfare of the individual or organization. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) propose thirteen "prosocial organizational behaviors", which can be roughly divided into four divisions:

(a)   Coworkers toward coworkers: assisting coworkers with either job-related or personal matters. For example, helping others who have been absent or taking care of

coworkers experiencing emotional upset.

(b)   Supervisors toward other staff: showing kindness for personnel appraisal and compensation. For example, supervisors who seek to be helpful to their co-workers by being lenient with their job appraisals.

(c)   Salespeople toward customers: salespeople or service providers are concerned with what exactly the customers need. They can also assist customers with personal matters such as simply listening sympathetically and providing informal counsel on personal matters.

(d)   Employees toward organization: employees display good manners and contribute to improvement of the company either tangibly or intangibly. For example, working conscientiously, complying with organizational policies, suggesting good ways or objecting to improper ones in order to improve work efficiency. In addition, employees should strive to improve the company's reputation and also accept changed working conditions which might be personally inconvenient, but of potential benefit to the company.

Another strategy-related helping behavior in the company relates to volunteer programs for employees to participate in community activities helping others. It has been found that some companies have volunteer programs which include the following activities: creating community web sites, reading stories for severely sick children, and sweeping the roadsides (Meyer 1999). From the company's perspectives, it is very clear why it should promote volunteer programs despite being a profit-making organization. (1) Benefit to the company: employees who attend voluntary activities can raise the company's reputation and improve ties with its customers and vendors. Also, by implementing volunteer programs it can attract high-quality applicants and to reduce turnover in its staff (Meyer 1999).(2) Benefit to the employees: volunteer works provide opportunities for salespeople to enhance their working skills and interpersonal network (Dashiell 1993). French (2006) reported that doing volunteer

jobs can help expand professional skills and the opportunities to develop other areas which are impossible to learn form one company in the same time.

The foregoing discussion help identify some of the helping behavior salespeople engaging in. For example, OCB literature suggests that salespeople improve customer service beyond supervisor required; Prosocial Organizational Behavior literature spotted that salesperson assist customers with personal matters. However none of previous studies provide a complete picture of the content of SHB. Therefore, a more complete list should be investigated, this study will offer observations concerning this area of SHB and offer a discussion about salespeople's helping behaviors toward customers. Although, helping behaviors may originate from human nature, they are determined by individual disposition and situation. These variables will be introduced in the next paragraph.

2.2.1 Personal Characteristics and Helping

Why do people help? Sociobiologists and psychologists support the view that altruism is a part of human nature (Hoffman 1981; Piliavin and Charng 1990). Specifically, personality traits are a important determinant of spontaneous, sustained helping behaviors, such as social responsibility, moral reasoning, empathy, high self-esteem and competence (Aronoff 1984; Eisenberg et al. 2002; Rushton 1981; Staub 1979). Stanhope and his colleagues (1987) found that children who were more sociable helped unfamiliar adults in the laboratory more than those who were not. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) pointed out that individual characterizes such as extraversion, high level education, less neuroticism, can be used to predict the degree of prosocial organizational behavior. King and George (2005) proposed that extra-role helping behaviors may be significantly associated with individual personality. People who are more conscientious will conceivably engage in more

interpersonal helping at work.

2.2.2 Situation Factors and Helping

People who help others may be motivated by rewards for helping or avoiding punishment for not helping (Cialdini 1987). The perspective of *cost–reward* helping (Penner et al. 2005; Piliavin and Charng 1990) note that people are motivated to help when the rewards exceed the cost. That is, in an emergency, people assist others depends on whether or not there are potential favorable outcome that can be derived from the situation. Number of people present in an incident is also an important situational effect. For example, *bystander effect* indicates that a person will diffuse his own responsibility to provide assistance in an emergency by relying on someone else to do so (Penner et al. 2005; Piliavin and Charng 1990).

Research also shows that people are less likely to help when they are forced to do so. Finkelstein and Penner (2004) found that to compel people to help will result in the opposite effects. Therefore in order to avoid the negative effects they suggested firms should make external control and incentive less obvious in the organization. Doing so may help employees to form citizen role identities that result in sustained extra role behavior. While the situation put fewer constraints on people, they are more likely to demonstrate spontaneous assistance behaviors due to their own personality and instinct.

Perceptions of fairness in the company will also influence people to engage in helping (Organ and Konovsky 1989). In addition, based on the norm of reciprocity (1) " people should help those who have helped them, and (2) people should not injure those who have helped them" (Gouldner 1960 ,p171). Therefore in the job context, employees who feel they have been fairly treated or adequately rewarded by the organization or their superior will be encouraged to continue to devote themselves helping the organization.

Mood is reported to influence people in deciding whether or not to engage in helping behaviors. People in a positive mood, it has been demonstrated, are fostered to engage in helping behavior (Baumann et al. 1981; George 1991b; Rosenhan 1981). George and Brief (1992) stated why positive moods may facilitate salesperson helping behavior: Positive moods may result in perceiving customers, service and sales opportunities in a positive way. Additionally, positive moods may lead help giver finds the help receiver to be more pleasant or attractive and therefore more likely to provide help. Therefore, salespeople in a positive mood may be more likely to attract customers (George 1998 p.25). George (1991a) proposed that mood is a state of mind instead of a trait, hence highly influenced by external environment and the interaction between the individual and the situation. Therefore helping behaviors of salespeople are likely fostered by the good mood caused by positive work environment experience.

What if people are in a negative mood? Do they not engage in helping when in negative mood? Baumann and his colleagues (1981) and Piliavin (1981) and her colleagures have argued that people will use helping behavior towards others to relieve their own negative moods or distresses. In contrast to being in positive moods, people in temporally negative moods might engage in helping to achieve self-gratification or to reduce distress instead of any altruistic purposes. To conclude, both negative and positive moods enhance helping behaviors, but for different reasons.

2.3. The Definition of SHB

SHB describes the extra-role assistance provided by salespeople directed at customers. Bettencourt and Brown (1997) proposed that contact employees who behave prosocial service behaviors by creating a good image for the firm ,and by going beyond the call of duty

for customers shares the same characteristics of SHB. Contact employee is distinguished from good will benefit directed at either co-workers or consumers (e.g., helping behaviors toward customers and colleagues), while SHB is specific direct at customers. Dubinsky and Skinner (2002) have proposed that discretionary effort is when a "salesperson goes beyond the call of duty, goes the extra mile, or exceeds normal demands or requirements or expectations of the job for certain behaviors or activities" (Dubinsky and Skinner 2002 p.589) For example, a salesperson may urgently deliver a product to the customer's factory during midnight (The 24-hours-running factory), an ast that can be considered as a discretionary effort. The motivation of salesperson discretionary effort can be classified into four dimensions, including:

(a) Organizational antecedents: sales manager performance and effort, expectations of salespeople, leadership style, relationship quality between sales managers and salespeople, salespeople's workload, the motivational power of the job perceived by salespeople, and organizational culture.

(b) Salesperson antecedents: salesperson's intrinsic motivation, need for achievement, task-specific self-esteem and career stage, perceived equity, stress, commitment , job satisfaction , expectations , mood and expectancy estimate.

(c) Customer antecedents: salesperson perceived importance of customer and sales, customer demands and expectations.

(d) Environmental antecedents: competitive intensity and economic conditions.

Based on past research, prosocial behavior can be divided into two different parts in the organization; "intra-role" and "extra-role"(Brief and Motowidlo 1986; Katz 1964;.Puffer 1987; O'Reilly III and Chatman 1986). According to O'Reilly III and Chatman (1986), (a) in-role or prescribed behaviors expected of all job holders (e.g., punctuality), and (b) extra-role or prosocial acts that are not directly specified by a job description but which are of benefit to the organization and not of direct benefit to the individual(e.g. suggest

organization improvement) (p. 493). The extra-role prosocial behaviors and salesperson discretionary effort (Dubinsky and Skinner 2002) which are actively helpful and go beyond the call of duty is the nature of SHB.

Some of SHBs have been identified in various kinds of extra-role behaviors such as OCB or extra-role prosocial behaviors. For example, Brief and Motowidlo (1986) defined 13 specific kinds of prosocial organizational behavior. In their work, two of them can be considered one type of SHB: (a) "helping consumers with personal matters unrelated to organizational services or products, and (b) providing services or products to consumers in organizationally consistent or inconsistent ways." Another related field is research of OCB. Following Organ's (1988) line of thinking, OCB has been categorized a variety forms: courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and altruism (MacKenzie et al. 1993; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1994). Conscientiousness is discretionary behavior that goes (Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1997) beyond the roel requirements of the organization (e.g., working extra-long time) never bending the rules. Altruism is discretionary behavior that is directly and intentionally aimed at helping a specific person in company task situations, such as voluntarily help to orient a new employee. Following the movement toward project-focused team work in the organization, Netemeyer Boles et al (1997) stressed that sales force control systems can be measured from "outcome base" (i.e. to evaluate salespeople's performance based on sales volume) to "behavior base" (i.e. to evaluate salespeople's cooperation in teamwork). In teamwork organization, OCB could be the most important factor for the organization because everyone goes the extra-mile to facilitate the sales process without expecting any compensation. In other words, in the sales team, salespeople who provide help to enhance customer satisfaction may benefit everyone in the sales team. Thus, when such behavior prevails in an organization, evidence shows that it will not only be vital to its survival(Bateman and Organ 1983), but it will also lead to greater efficiency (Organ 1988; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1997).

In general, conscientious toward customers can be considered as a form of SHB. Salespeople who behave conscientiously by going beyond the role requirement of the organization (e.g., follow up in a timely manner to customer requests and problems) can be considered as part of SHB. Though SHB had similar characteristics to OCB, SHB is behavior which involves salespeople and their customers while OCB is generally identified as behavior between individuals within the organization involved in a company task.

Brief and Motowidlo (1986) argued that prosocial organizational behavior can be both functional and dysfunctional for organizations. However, even when such behavior is initially dysfunctional to the organization (e.g., a salesperson who discretionarily assist their customer may be negligent of company policy and cause dysfunction of organization), in the long-run it may benefit organization because of the increased customer satisfaction. The underpinning psychological mechanism is that the obligated sense of reciprocity may lead to purchase of services and products in the long-run (Gouldner 1960). Hence, while SHB may not result in immediate benefits, it may lead to potencial benefits (e.g., good image in the company) in the future.

2.4. The Relationship between Sales Performance, Job Satisfaction and SHB

Most sales managers may be interested in the way that salespeople helping behaviors can be demonstrably linked to job performance as this would be beneficial for organization to include in their selection, recruitment, and training programs of their employees. Puffer (1987) found that "…a modest relation between prosocial behavior and work performance" and suggested that "prosocial behavior may provide intangible rather than financial benefits

to an organization.(P.620)." However according to Baruch, O'creevy et al. (2004) the relation between prosocial behavior and job performance is not significant. Job performance may not directly be related to salespeople helping behaviors (SHB), but it seems that through relation building with customer, SHB may eventually result in future sales due to increased reputation or repeat orders. Macintosh, Anglin et al. (1992) found that higher performing salespeople put more emphasis on customer relationship building during initial contacts in a consistent way, while poorer performers are more interested in selling products.
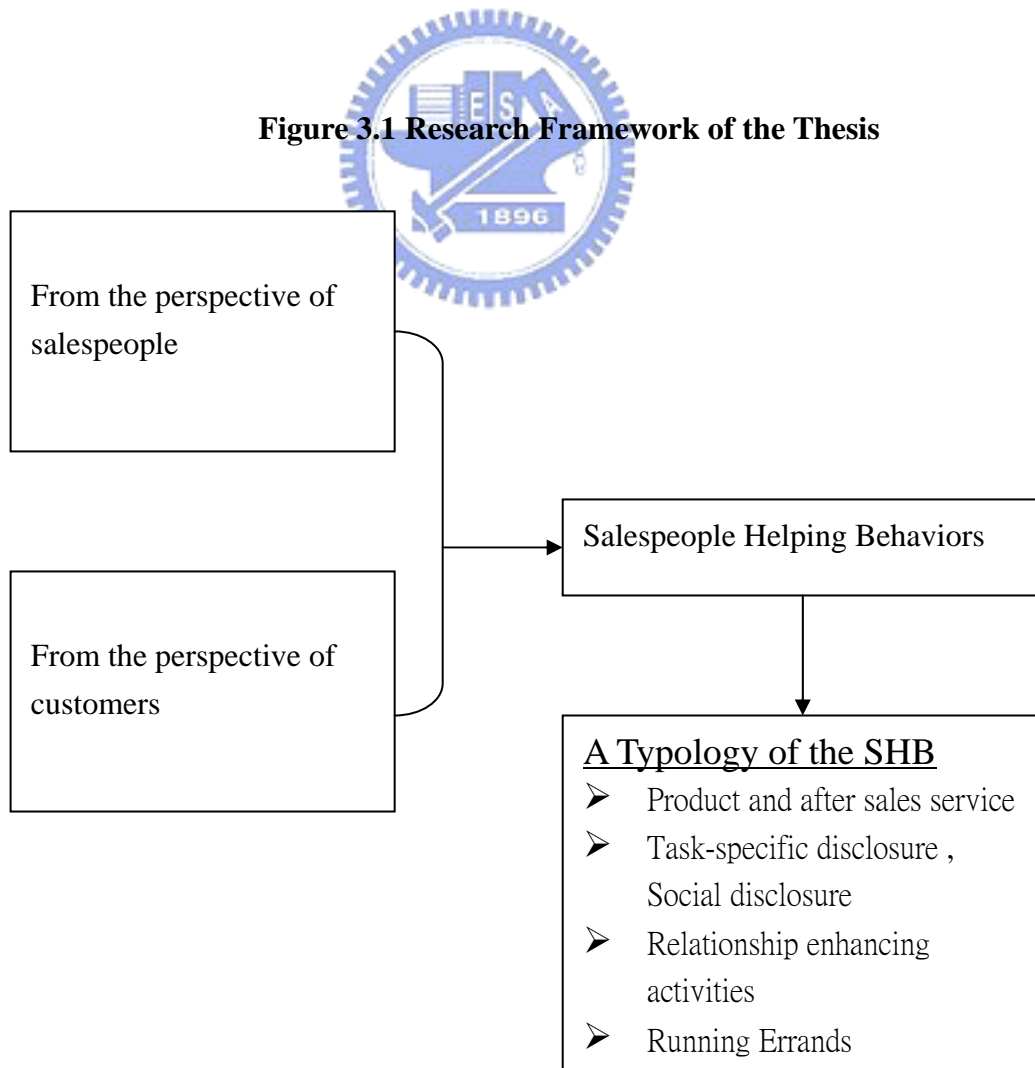
Notwithstanding the equivocal relationship between job performance and prosocial behavior, evidence shows that the existence of job satisfaction increases the practice of prosocial behavior toward customers and this result in greater customer satisfaction. It has been found that a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and extra-role prosocial behavior in work contexts (Bateman and Organ 1983; Brief and Motowidlo 1986; C. Ann Smith et al. 1983; Chebat and Kollias 2000; Mcneely and Meglino 1994; Puffer 1987). Homburg and Stock (2004) present evidence that in the B2B context, salespeople's job satisfaction is related to customer satisfaction, and this relationship is effected by the quality of customer interaction and the process of emotional infection. Bettencourt and Brown (1997) and Homburg and Stock (2004) also explored how salespeople please their customers by providing a little extra and spontaneous exceptional service. Seemingly, salespeople who have higher job satisfaction are more likely to satisfy their customers through performing helping behaviors.

Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will demonstrate the research method including research framework, overview of research method, sample and questionnaire design, data collect and analysis.

3.1 Research Framework

Figure 3.1 Research Framework of the Thesis

From the perspective of salespeople

From the perspective of customers

Salespeople Helping Behaviors

A Typology of the SHB
- Product and after sales service
- Task-specific disclosure , Social disclosure
- Relationship enhancing activities
- Running Errands

3.1.1 Overview of the Research Method

This study is conducting a qualitative analysis. "Qualitative research" is research that produces findings which are not calculated using statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Stern (1995) has suggested "... the strongest case for the use of grounded theory is in investigations of relatively uncharted water, or to gain a fresh perspective in a familiar situation (p.30)." Since littlie literature explored the concept of SHB, this study will employ grounded theory[1]

Based on the grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998), three major steps in the study were followed. First, initial semi-structured interviews were conducted. Second, transcribe and code the manuscripts of interviews. Then analyze of a word, phrase, or sentence in order to understand the reality of the observer. Third, further analyze through comparisons to identify categories and for further insight. After the interviews, the participants were asked to complete the personal information questionnaire.
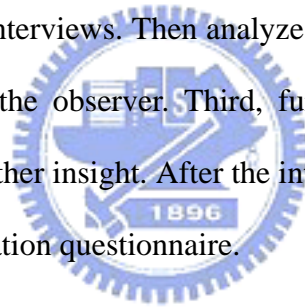
3.2 Study Design

3.2.1 Participants

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[1] **Grounded Theory** *is a general research method (often conducted in qualitative research) for social sciences developed by the sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Grounded theory was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. A researcher does not begin a project with preconceived theory in mind. Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data* (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.12).

We interviewed salespeople and their contact windows (customers) who worked in the IT industry in order to obtain viewpoints from both sides. The reason why we focused on B2B context in the IT industry is that little attention has been given to this area. However, most of Taiwan's industries have been transformed from labor-intensive ones to focus on industry of IT (information technology)[2]. However, numerous studies concerned helping behavior have been devoted to the area of service industry rather than to the IT industry. Therefore, a total of fifteen pairs of salespeople and their customers in this area participated in the study. Most salespeople selected for the interviews had one to five year's work experience. As I know, salespeople in the IT industry not only promote new products to buyers but they also help solve product problems for customers/engineers (users); therefore, interviews were conducted using three different perspectives (salespeople, buyers and users) in order to further explore the phenomenon of SHB. The respondents in this study were divided into two groups: customers (i.e., buyers and users) and salespeople. The interview data has been coded: the 14 customer interviews are represented by C (C1-C14) and the 15 salesperson interviews

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are represented by S (S1-S15).

3.2.2 Interview and Question Design

Interviews can be exploratory in nature and generate a great deal of detailed data, such as individual personal experience, feelings and viewpoint (Chi and Lin 2005) Therefore, an interview is an efficient way to provide researchers with opportunities to get specific information for the study of a new area. To facilitate the interview process, the questionnaires were sent to the interviewees before the interview. In this way, the interviewees could have sufficient time to recall their experiences and to organize their thoughts. During the interviews, a number of predetermined questions or related topics to probe the nature of SHB and to examine the answers' reality were implemented. The semi-structured interviews were initially conducted according to the original order of the questions but subsequently this order was modified in the light of different scenarios. In this study, there are twelve interview questions in the questionnaire and they are as follows:

Questions for salespeople:

1. What kind of extra service have you provided for your customers?

2. What have you done to exceed your customers' expectations?

3. What kind of work have you done to help your customers which is beyond your duties?

4. Describe what kind of task you will complete for your customers which is different to what other salespeople would do.

5. Have you had any experience with solving a customer's personal problems?

6. How should good salespeople serve their customers?

7. Describe the current relationship between you and your customers?

Questions for customers:

1. What kind of extra service have salespeople provided for you?

2. What have salespeople done for you that have exceeded your expectations?

3. What is the most impressive and unforgettable service you have received from a salesperson?

4. Which kind of extra support offered by salespeople was the most satisfying?

5. How should good salespeople serve their customers?

6. What is the current relationship between you and your salespeople?

3.2.3 Data Collection

The interviews were mostly held in the interviewees' workplaces, but it was necessary to conduct a few over the telephone. The workplace was the preferred venue because it allowed face-to-face contact. In order to understand the underpinnings of SHB, salespeople were asked to describe their helping behavior towards customers. Customers were also asked to describe SHB offered by their salespeople and to refer good salespeople who would then be contacted. Interviewing with both sides assists us to understand what customers consider the most helpful characteristics in salespeople.

In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted to acquire more details from both interviewed groups. As a result, individual interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes and were audio–taped. The interview process was conducted in Chinese in order to have efficient and clear communication. The personal information data was collected once the interview had been finished. Finally, after all the interviews completed, the data was transcribed, translated, and analyzed.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

3.3.1 Coding and Identifying the Categories

This step, started with reading the transcripts and separating the initial interviews of customers and salespeople into two groups. Next, in the light of the transcripts, every word, phrase or sentence was coded and words or phrases that were striking to the analyst were examined in detail. Finally, comparisons of the data were made and similarities of meaning were noted in order to identify categorie

3.3.2 Validity

This study required experts to examine the data in order to achieve validity. Two experts scrutinized each category. One of the experts is proficient at SHB in the academic area; another is an experienced salesperson who has seven year sales experience. In addition, the process of interviewing was also controlled to ensure validity. First, participants were assured of confidentiality and that their personal data would be remain anonymous. Second, all the interviewees were contacted by the interviewer in advance in order to establish the nature of the interview and a level of trust.

3.3.3 Reliability

In order to obtain scientifically valid, the consistency of content classification criteria should be carried out (LeivaI et al. 2006). Therefore, agreement between the coders is critical.

Therefore, two coders who are familiar with the area of SHB coded the transcript based

on the same definition of SHB. As a result, the degree of agreement between two coded data is used to show the reliability between the coders. Results show that the degree of agreement between the two coders (the interviewer and a colleage) is 89 %. However, despite this very high degree of similarity, the coded data were subsequently re-analyzed in order to reach a greater degree of agreement concerning the reported behaviors.

Chapter 4   DATA   ANALYSIS   AND   RESULTS

In this chapter, first of all, the personal information from the questionnaires is presented. Second, the open-ended questions are analyzed. Finally, the typology of the SHB is established and discussed.

4.1 Personal Information of Interviewees Respondents

In this study, there were equal numbers of both male and female interviewees. Their average age is between 31 and 35 years and their average education is at technical college level. The most common amount of work experience ranges from one to five years (59%). The second largest group is from six to ten years (34%). These statistics are based on 29 respondents which comprised 15 salespeople and 14 customers. One customer was later deemed unsuitable for this study because the interview revealed that this customer lacked contact with salespeople and therefore did not qualify as a respondent.

Table 4.2 illustrates the background of the salespeople: seven are at management level and eight are employees. Their salary packages (including bonuses) are mostly in two ranges: from NT$40,000 to NT$70,000 and NT$70,001 to NT$1,000,000. Most of the salespeople visit between one to two customers each day. Table 4.3 prenests that background of the customers: eleven are at management level, the rest are employees. Their salary packages are mostly in the range of NT$40,000 to NT$70,000. Table 4.4 presents that industry and job

titile of participants. This study presents detailed background information of each participant.

Table 4.1 Personal information of respondents (n=29)

		Respondents	(%)
Gender	Male	14	48
	Female	15	52
	Total	29	100
Age	below 25	0	0
	26~30	11	38
	31~35	14	48
	36~40	0	0
	41~45	3	10
	above 46	1	3
	Total	29	100
Education Degree	senior high school	1	4
	technical college	11	39
	Undergraduate school	9	32
	Graduate school	7	25
	Total	28	100
Seniority	below one year	0	0
	1~5 year	17	59
	6~10 year	10	34
	11~15 year	1	3
	16~20 year	1	3
	above 21 year	0	0
	Total	29	100

Table 4.2 Background of Salespeople (n=15)

		Respondents	(%)
	Management level	7	47
Title	General Employee	8	53
	Total	15	100
	below 400,000	0	0
	400,000~700,000	6	40
	700,001~1,000,000	5	33
Salary Package	1,000,001~1,500,000	1	7
(with bonus)	1,500,001~2,000,000	2	13
	2,000,001~2,500,000	1	7
	Above 2,500,001	0	0
	Total	15	100
	Under 5	5	33
	5-9	9	60
Frequency of	10-14	0	0
visits to customer	15-19	0	0
(times/ Mon-Fri)	Above 20	1	7
	Total	15	100

Table 4.3 Background of Customers (n=14)

		Respondents	(%)
Title	Management level	3	21
	General Employee	11	79
	Total	14	100
Salary Package (with bonus)	below 400,000	0	0
	400,000~700,000	10	71
	700,001~1,000,000	2	14
	1,000,001~1,500,000	2	14
	1,500,001~2,000,000	0	0
	2,000,001~2,500,000	0	0
	above 2,500,001	0	0
	Total	14	100

Table 4.4 Industry and Job Titile of Participants

Salesperson	Industry	Job Title
S01	electronics components and parts	sales manager
S02	semiconductor	sales specialist
S03	electronics components and parts	sales specialist
S04	computer hardware	sales manager
S05	computer hardware	sales specialist
S06	electronics components and parts	sales specialist
S07	computer hardware	Supervisor
S08	computer hardware	sales manager
S09	electronics components and parts	sales supervisor
S10	electronics components and parts	sales specialist
S11	networking	sales manager
S12	networking	regional manager
S13	photoelectricity industry	sales representative
S14	photoelectricity industry	sales representative

S15	photoelectricity industry	sales representative
Customers	Industry	Job Title
C01	electronics components and parts	Buyer
C02	semiconductor	princial engineer
C03	electronics components and parts	Buyer
C04	computer hardware	manager
C05	computer hardware	deputy manager
C06	electronics components and parts	sr.specialist
C07	computer hardware	Chief administrator
C08	computer hardware	Administrator
C09	electronics components and parts	deputy manager
C10	electronics components and parts	Buyer
C11	networking	Buyer
C12	photoelectricity industry	product engineer
C13	photoelectricity industry	product engineer
C14	photoelectricity industry	Administrator
C15	photoelectricity industry	product engineer
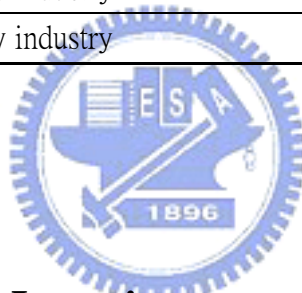
4.2 The Coding of the Interview

The interview data has been coded: the 14 customer interviews are represented by C and the 15 salesperson interviews are represented by S; each interview also has an individual distinguishing number. This chapter presents have translated extracts of the interviews.

4.3 Typology of the SHB

This section presents the classification scheme developed for this study which constitutes the following areas: (1) product and after sales service; (2) disclosure (social disclosure and task-specific disclosure); (3) relationship enhancing activities (e.g.,

socializing, gift-giving); (4) running errands. As Table 4.5 below illustrates, the characteristics of different categories of SHBs have been described separately.

Self-disclosure is divided into two areas in order to distinguish business and non-business disclosures: the former is task-specific disclosure and the latter is social disclosure.

Table 4.5 Typology of the SHB

	Categories	The characterizes of the SHB
1.	Product and after sales service	Product: • providing sufficient product test runs before mass production • satisfying customer needs when there is a general shortage • predicting and meeting customer material demands Problem solving: • delivering specialized product knowledge to educate customers recommending alternative sources of supply when in shortage • preparing documents and FAQ's in advance to meet customer needs when in the meeting Cost reducing: • reducing price gradually to meet customer expectation • assisting customers through the simplification of product design and the consequent reduction in manpower Timely delivery: • delivering urgent materials during non-business hours After sales service: • providing quick responses to customers' requests • providing efficient and friendly after-sales service • dealing with customer complaints efficiently
2.	Social disclosure	• listening to customer complaint • chatting with customers on the Internet • sharing personal experiences and advising about relationships • sharing a joke, funny e-mail, shopping, traveling, stock market information • sharing interests (e.g., collecting stone, racing cars, exercising) • introducing girlfriends or jobs to customers • providing customers with any information they want to know

		(e.g., buying cars via salesperson's introduction, new mobiles and prices)
	Task-specific disclosure	• providing thoroughly updated market status reports, latest product information and technical skills to customer • providing customers with information about competitors • inclusive internal communication lines between supplier and customer team • Assisting his customer when he/she is reporting about difficult business issues, e.g., to his/her supervisor.
3.	Relationship enhancing activities	Socializing: • dining together • participating sporting activities together (e.g., golf, billiards, marathon…etc) • socializing together (e.g., mahjong, KTV, hot spring, smoking, shopping mall, pub, computer exhibition, abroad, night club, traveling) • attending a customers party (e.g., end of year party to donate money or products to a prize draw, wedding party) • providing additional social activities for customers who audit their factory Gift-giving: • sending personal gift (e.g., a cup of coffee, snacks, fruits, birthday cake, souvenir, pen ,vitamin, kickback, gift certificate, soap opera DVD, New Year's card, coupon...anything that customers may need and be surprised by) • sending company gift (e.g., notebook, calendar, moon cake, pad note ,pens) Care expressing: • comforting a customer who is in a bad mood • sending regards to the sick customers • expressing concern for customers in a special day (e.g., sending birthday card, emails or telephoning them)

4.	Running Errands	• buying something requested by and paid for by a customer while on a business trip • performing an errand for a customer which is said to be 'on my way' but which is really a detour; for example, buying fishing line and a Valentine's Day present. • giving lifts/rides home. • seeing customers off at the airport • assisting customer to move (e.g., lending cart, providing) • helping a customer to reserve hotel and flight for their business trip

The following sections explain each dimension from the perspective of SHB.

4.3.1 Product and After-sales Service

After-sales service is a major category of SHB and is usually viewed by customers as a determinant of the buyer-seller relationship. As mentioned earlier, salespeople do not only sell and promote products to their customers; they also have to provide assistance to them concerning product-related issues (e.g., assist customer to debug product problems). Therefore, there are plenty of opportunities for salespeople to go out of their ways to help customers. Many participants (customers) in the interviews mentioned that whether salespeople can help solve product-related problems is their main concern. Two buyers speak of how their salespeople perform SHB as follows:

When there was cost review, the salesperson helped me to reduce the cost of the materials. Additionally, when the product can't function, or when there were problems, the

salesperson helped me to solve it right away on site. Salespeople who gave me presents during my birthday are very sweet; however, if there is a product or price problem the salesperson can't solve, no amount of presents can compensate for this. I don't want any presents, I just want salespeople who can help me to complete my job smoothly....that's a good salesperson, in my opinion.(C02:1)

As a buyer you always consider the product price, prompt delivery, and a quick response time for urgent request. For example, if my needs become greater than the original order, the salesperson will find a way to satisfy my need, no matter how difficult it is. That kind of help which is beyond my expectation would satisfy me much more. (C04:2)

From the perspective of customers, the most important area of SHB in the B2B sector involves dealing with product-related issues, such as product cost, delivery, free samples and malfunction. There is no doubt that salespeople's help can make customers' job easier. In such case, the work efficiency of customers can be enhanced significantly. Therefore, continued and developed interaction based on mutual dependence and trust is very likely to be present in a successful relationship of this kind.

In an economy where profit margins are small, customers are primarily concerned with reducing product cost. Conversely, in a competitive commercial climate, salespeople need to provide more product value for their customers. Since product cost can also be affected by product design and development. SHB may involve salespeople providing customers with valuable suggestions to improve products if other means for reducing the unit cost of a product can not be found. One example of this kind of help is in the following summary:

We (the sales team) seek ways to accommodate cost reduction needs for our customers.

For example, we assist our customers to simplify product design and manufacture in order to reduce manpower and, thereby, to save them money.(S08:3)

4.3.2 Disclosure

Self disclosure in the area of SHB can be divided into two groups: task-specific disclosure and social disclosure. According to Jacobs, Evans et al. (2001), task-specific disclosure indicates specific business information exchanged during a sales encounter, while social disclosure is used to denotes personal information swapped during sales encounters. This study supports the proposition presented by Jacobs, Evans et al (2001): when a salesperson discloses task-specific details to his or her customers, it is viewed by the customers as relationship building and the quality of their interactions is ,thus, enhanced. Many Salespeople interviewed in this study mentioned that their buyers may rely on them to provide new information about the market. In other words, salespeople who provide useful information to their customers, increase the latter's appreciation of them and this enhances their relationship. For example, customers might not always be aware of all market trends and demands, which can significantly affect their business. However, because of the nature of their job, salespeople are in a better position to learn about all the information and provide such information to their customers. In order to earn the customer's trust, salespeople should know product related information which customers may have questions about when promoting products.

Customers are usually very interested in market information provided by us, …, new technical skills, or their competitors' new products. (S06:4)

The reduction of product price, the improvement of product design and the provision of urgent materials are the minimum expectations of customers from salespeople. However, salespeople who are able to sense and voluntarily satisfy my information needs are much more appreciated. (C12:5)

In addition, salespeople are responsible to bring their customers' messages back to salespeople's company, so that they can consult with their team members as to how to fulfill customer's request. Moreover, sometimes when the customer's company is large, they may also need to integrate all the messages acquired from different sources in the customer's company as there might not be systematic or coordinated method of internal communication in the organization of clients. For example, they can promptly convey messages about the production line from the engineers in the customer's company to the buyers. Thus, salespeople who volunteer to act as messengers are considered by their customers to be more successful. Two examples are provided in the following:
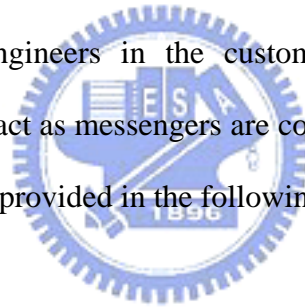
Salespeople should know all the key people in my company and their requirements, and to collect and pass messages between them in order to make them more aware of the whole situation. This is because sometimes buyers don't know about the free sample their engineer asked the salesperson to provide and for which module of their new product it is intendeds. The message can facilitate buyer's work by searching for information about the sample and checking the price in advance. …Therefore, I think a helpful salesperson is one who helps collect and pass message for me.(C06:6)

No matter good or bad news, I make sure to tell my customers promptly, for example, if the production line is stopped because of defective materials… I would tell my buyer, so that they can know how to respond to the situation. In this way, when their colleagues ask them

about the problem, the buyer can perform very well by implementing his already prepared

strategy to solve the shut down in production line. (S09:7)

It should be noted that customers are not merely information takers. It was found that customers in this study reciprocated by providing information about their company to their salespeople. In other words, salespeople may get hint or warning from their buyers in return for performing SHB.

Salespeople provided me with product information, and then I shared work experience and knowledge with them …for example, I told them how to deal with their problem with my company. (C05:8)

When salespeople support me even if it is a trivial help, I show my appreciation by passing information to them. For example, if I have an urgent request, they may provide me with the products another customer ordered. I would reciprocate by letting them know they should adjust their quotation if they want to win the bid.(C14:9)

Although a task-specific disclosure is critical to business relationship building, salespeople may need some pep talk topics to warm up the atmosphere during the meeting. It is interesting to note that during most meetings with their customers, salespeople admit that much of the time is not spent talking about business; rather, it is used to develop their relationship. Most importantly, through social disclosure salespeople know more about their customers' likes and dislikes. Their customers will then be impressed when these encounters are followed by personalized assistance or presents.

… I have many interests such as: playing guitar, fishing…,but I'm not very good at

them…When customers and I have the same interests, they are more inclined to spend time chatting with me.. in such cases, they let down any self-defense and see you as a friend. (S09:11)

It is impossible for us to persuade customers to buy our product every time we meet. For almost 80% of the time we talked about other stuff and the rest on the specifications of our product. (S07:10)

On the other hand, social-disclosure can be said to be a way for customers to vent their emotions. Customers are more comfortable with disclosing personal details after mutual trust has been established.

One of my customers is a buyer. She had a big fight with her husband and then decided to divorce him. She needed someone to discuss this with…because we have known each other for a long time and met frequently, she talked about her personal worries to me…however, she felt that it was not appropriate for her to talk about her situation with her closer colleagues…I believe that my support is worth more than anything.(S01:12)

Moreover, in this study, salespeople were found to have acted as informed sources who have gone the extra mile to collect all kind of information in order to please their customers. One salesperson describes his role as being that of a radar station:

For example, a customer who wanted to buy a new car, came and asked me if I was acquainted with any person who sells cars…he thought that it could be cheaper to buy a car through me…I tried my best to collect as much information as he needed or any free samples (e.g., battery) for him. The point is salesperson is a radar station for customer.

(S15:13)

4.3.3 Relationship Enhancing Activities

Many activities are engaged to enhance the level of intimacy in the buyer and seller relationship. As salespeople and customers have frequent contacts, some of them may form friendships and some may not. According to Swan, Goodwin et al. (2001), a customer's relationship with his salesperson is on one of the following three levels: friend, co-worker or acquaintance. Swan and his colleagues (2001) have further elaborated that friends in business also engage at a high level of intimacy, share casual conversations and share leisure activities. Geiger & Turley (2005) have also reported that successful salespeople from the B2B industry who spend extra time with their customers by providing them with more personalized social events (e.g., golfing, eating outside) can detect previously undetected sales directions or develop long-term sales strategies to meet future customer needs based of informal disclosures during such times. The findings of this study support this observation: salespeople in this study formed friendships by engaging in social events, gift-giving, and concerns- expressing. Salespeople deem that their customers as their friends and engage in all kind of social activities together with their customers:

…In my opinion, the starting point to making friends with customers is not to push them to buy my product…even though I don't have any business with customers, still I need to keep in touch …I think that we may have a chance to support each other one day, if I am still in this area . (S10:14)

My supervisor plays golf with my customers…and I send presents on special days... I buy customers cups of coffee during meetings, go out to eat with them to wherever they want

to eat... climb mountains and go to ,hot springs together... in this way , the relationship can

be enhanced...(S07:15)

From this study, it can be seen that many salespeople spend extra time with their customers engaging in non-business activities. As Geiger & Turley (2005) have elaborated outside activities are an ideal way for salespeople to discover what their customers really like (by increasing intimate self-disclosure); to get messages that may be lost in customer's busy office environment (by increasing the opportunities to meet with the customers outside the work place). Two salespeople describe below the extra time they have spent with their customers:

I try to have dinner with my customers. While customers and I have dinner, I have a better chance to get alone with them and that allows me to enhance our relationship more easily. If the relationships between salespeople and customers are good enough that customers are willing to eat out with salespeople. That means those customers treat salespeople as their friends. (S07:16)

Why do we (salespeople) have to go to night pubs with customers? Generally speaking, only when we are in public places can we chat about everything, especially while we are drinking or eating....when customers complain to me, at that time, I can ask anything I would like to know. (S06:17)

By performing these extra-roles behaviors in the business relationship, salespeople underpin their relationships with their customers and make them stronger. In this study, sending gifts has been found to be the most common relationship enhancing activity. While engaging social disclosure, they take the opportunity to detect customer's need. They are

often able to determine the unstated needs of their customers and to send the proper gifts as a way to express their care for customers or to impress them. In short, salespeople may spend much time and give much thought to find the most appropriate gifts for their customers. Some of the salespeople in this study mentioned that they provide customers with extra care or presents:

Salesperson who is more determined to improve his sales performance in my company would suggest taking specific vitamins to his pregnant customer. Moreover, he would go through the trouble of purchasing the suggested vitamins and deliver them to his customer's office... this is a kind of gift-giving as well as a way of showing car. (S11:18)

...my salespeople gave me different presents such as a baby's bottle and books while I was pregnant...in addition, while I was ill, they expressed their concerns. (C05:19)

When I was on an overseas business trip with all of my suppliers, one of them gave me a present on my birthday. I was so pleasantly surprised. She was the only salesperson who gave me a present. (C03:20)

4.3.4 Running Errands

In this part, many kinds of errands and assistance were engaged by the salespeople who performing SHB. When mentioning relationship with customers salespeople reported that that's attitude of making friends with customers. Therefore, in this category, what friends do with each other is also what salespeople do to interact with customers. Compared to relationship enhancing activities, the behaviors in this category are more like the behaviors

between old friends. When salespeople know their customers well enough, they would run errands for the convenience or favor of their customers.

I used to help customers move….I remember that I helped one customer because we had been good friends. At that time, we treated each other as friends rather than as a seller and a buyer. (S02: 21)

…when a salesperson who is also one of my friends, returned from abroad, I asked him to help me to buy something I needed. (C04:22)

## 4.4 Cognitive Gap between Salespeople and Customers

In today's IT industry, some customers' companies prohibit them from accepting supplier favors such as: dining outside, golf outings. Therefore, due to constraint from company policy, organizational buyers had to limit their personal relationships with their salespeople. However, despite these restrictions, salespeople reported that they can still provide professional information without disobeying company rules. Salespeople can still manage to meet customers' needs by engaging in different types of SHB (e.g., providing professional information)

…for example, some buyers don't like social activities, so I have to give them professional information to receive information from them. (S09:24)

…Most customer companies don't have a rule against making friends with suppliers. In the business community, some customers are serious and conservative, and some are open minded…making friends with them is not so difficult. (S08:23)

Moreover, from customer's perspectives, some types of SHB were deemed essential parts of SHB. As Figure 4.1 illustrates, product and after sales service: 29% is the main element of SHB typology. When it comes to the characteristics of top salespeople, it is not the sophisticated selling skills and eloquence of salespeople; rather it is salespeople provide assistance they need. Therefore, so called good salespeople sell product to their customers should provide quick respondence and timely service. As to the second largest part: gift-giving which is 26%. People in Taiwan think that one can never be too courteous. Bringing gifts for customers in a suitable time and place, makes salespeople closer to their customers. Therefore, the value of gift-giving can not be neglected.

Figure 4.1 SHB Typology percentage from Customers' Perspectives
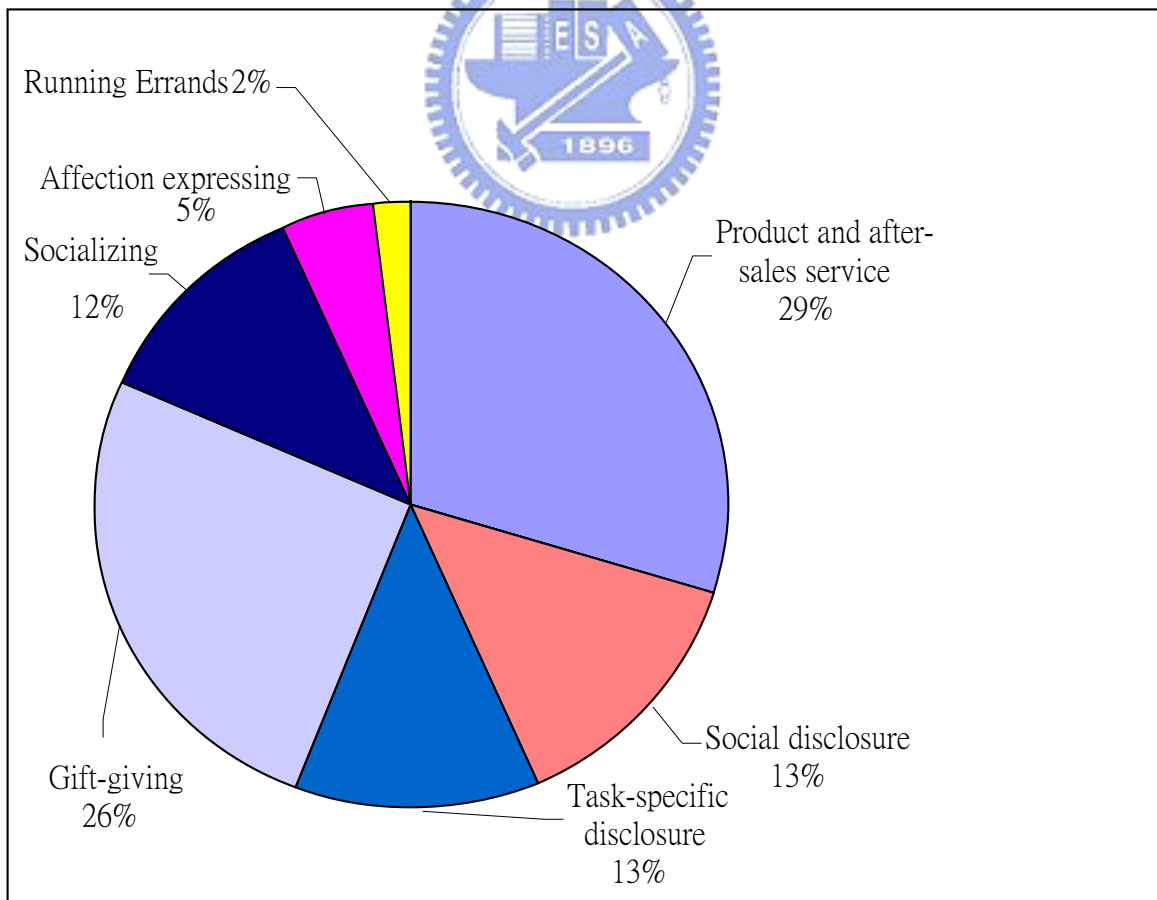
From salespeople's perspective, to enhance their relationship with customers is a key element in SHB. Figure 4.2 illustrates the biggest part of SHB is socializing which is 24%, and the second one is gift-giving, 22%. In the section of Relationship Enhancing Activities, I have explained the importance of socializing activities for salespeople. The different viewpoint of the main characteristics of SHB between salespeople and customers is that salespeople tend to make friend with customers for future benefits. However, customers initially focus whether salespeople can facilitate their work. Therefore, salespeople succeed by means of socializing in order to establish friendship. It is also very interesting to know that not only salespeople but also customers that their minor largest part of SHB is the same: gift-giving. That is, good salespeople buy gifts to their customers is also thought by their customers that this is good salespeople will behave.

Figure 4.2 SHB Typology percentage from Salespeople's' Perspectives
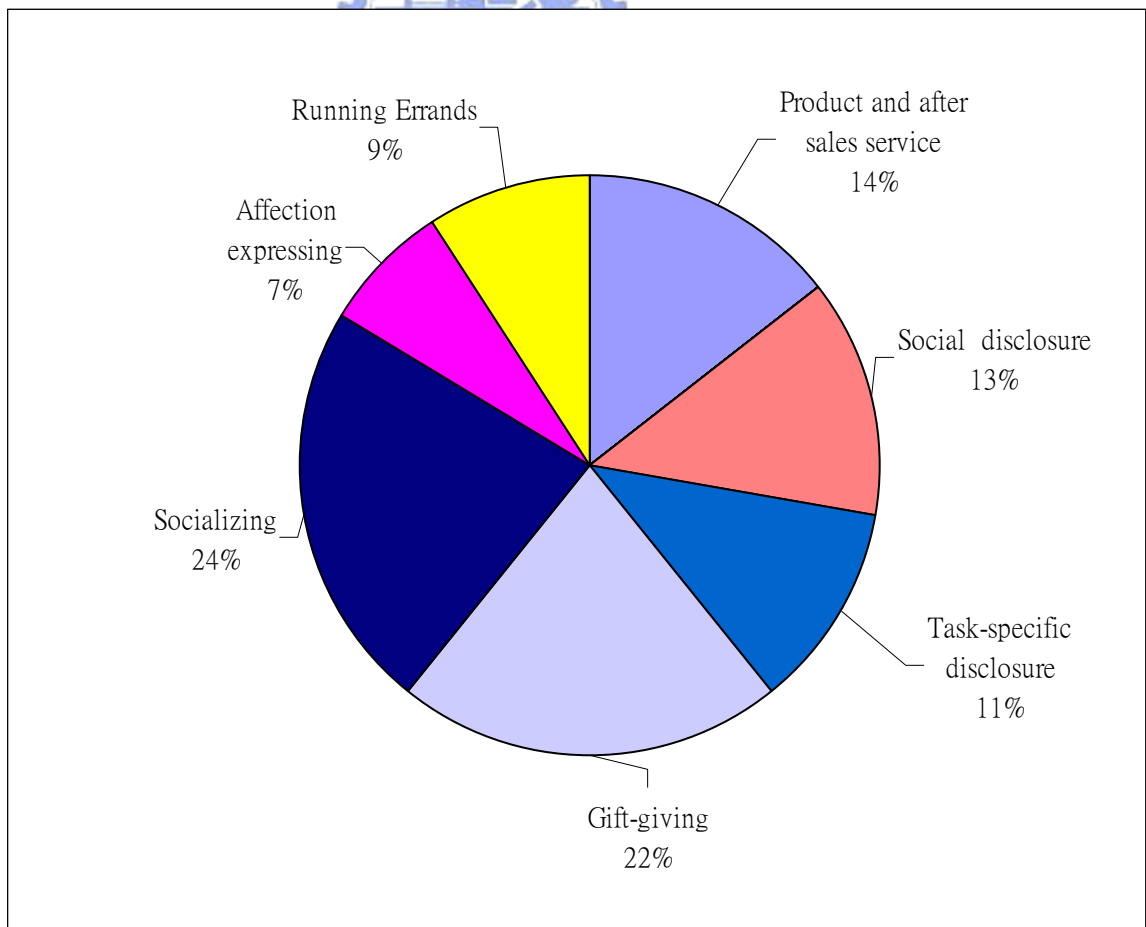
Chapter 5   DISCUSSIONS and CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Discussions

Our analysis has produced several important findings concerning salespeople performing helping behavior toward their customers. First, the results suggest that different SHB exist in the B2B context. Dealing with product-related problems conscientiously is seen by customers as very helpful in reducing their workloads. Therefore, it can be seen as the initial base upon which customers trust and relationships are built. Additionally, it facilitates the performance of future SHB. Furthermore, this study is consistent with the proposition presented by Price and Arnould(1999) which states that commercial friendships are similar to other friendships involving disclosure, reciprocal gift giving, affection and social support. This study also elaborates upon what helpful salespeople do for their customers so that commercial relationship becomes friendships (by gift-giving, care expressing etc.). Salespeople in the study collect market information and provide product knowledge for their customers in order to establish trust and to acquire important information from their customers. They act as a *market maven* (Feick and Price 1987) to provide not only product information (e.g., delivery schedule, specification) but also lifestyle information such as: restaurants and travel suggestions. In addition, although friendship forming may be against a customers' company policy, according to the participants, courtesy or gift-giving are sometimes very critical for salespeople to consolidate their relationships with customers. Additionally, paying attention to customers when talking to them, and arranging social

activities for them are considered the characteristics of the most helpful salespeople. Consistent with proposition of George (1998), customer-service behavior was positively associated with sales performance. Salespeople who are very helpful toward customers are found to receive different kinds of positive feedback from customers (e.g., winning bidding higher than other vendors). Finally, this study has revealed that, from a customer's perspective, salespeople performing SHB will increase their satisfaction and mutual relationship. In the long run, customers and salespeople may become friends through these kinds of interactions and this may facilitate future business.

5.2 Implications

SHB typology can be useful for sales managers who seek to review the performance of their salespeople because it has been found to lead to the same results as customer-oriented selling does, in that salespeople sacrifice their short-term sales (e.g., providing free sample, solving new product problems) to maintain customer satisfaction and to increase the probability of future sales (Saxe and Weitz 1982). Thus, sales managers may consider the characteristics of the SHB typology as an indicator of salespeople's performance rather than selling performance. Most importantly, sales managers can provide specialized training for their salespeople who need to improve particular SHB characteristics. In addition to the managerial implications, this study provides a systematic typology which provides a foundation for the future study of SHB.

Although as Brief & Motowidlo (1986) have proposed, salespeople who provide assistance to customers may lead to a dysfunctional effect on their organization. In contrast, this study has found that salespeople who devote their time and money to customers may lead to benefit from the reciprocation in the long run. For example, customers who are

appreciative of salespeople who have provided help to them may disclose company production information to salespeople or place repeat orders. Another positive outcome is that salespeople who perform SHB are always welcome to their customers.

As far as Taiwan-based foreign companies which hope to sell their products to Taiwan IT industry are concerned, the ways of doing business may differ from country to country. This study also provides a good opportunity for those foreign companies to become more aware of how to delight their customers.

5.3 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, it needs to be noted that some of the respondents at the time of our interviews were restricted by company regulation and therefore could not disclose SHB which involved personal relationship enhancing activities (e.g., playing golf). Another possible constraint is that the participants in this study have been selected from the B2B context in the IT industry. Hence, its findings might not be generally applicable to other contexts. Nevertheless, this study provides organized research relating salespeople in IT industry which prior literature has rarely tapped. Third, another important limitation is that the sample used in this study is small and may not be representative.

5.4 Directions for Future Research

First, further research in this area should involve the development of a quantitative measure for SHB (e.g., to explore the relative contribution of each category on SHB). Second, most importantly, further research can focus on the establishment of an SHB scale which is necessary for sales managers to use in their evaluation of the performance of SHB by their

salespeople. Finally, the classification scheme used might not have detected every single kind of behavior. Further research can focus on other contexts and industries in order to extend our knowledge of SHB.

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APPENDIX

Questions for salespeople:

1. What kind of extra service have you provided for your customers?

2. What have you done to exceed your customers' expectations?

3. What kind of work have you done to help your customers which is beyond your duties?

4. Describe what kind of task you will complete for your customers which is different to what other salespeople would do.

5. Have you had any experience with solving a customer's personal problems?

6. How should good salespeople serve their customers?

7. Describe the current relationship between you and your customers?

Questions for customers:

1. What kind of extra service have salespeople provided for you?

2. What have salespeople done for you that have exceeded your expectations?

3. What is the most impressive and unforgettable service you have received from a salesperson?

4. Which kind of extra support offered by salespeople was the most satisfying?

5. How should good salespeople serve their customers?

6. What is the current relationship between you and your salespeople?