

Salesperson's efficiency influences gestures

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Key words

Attitudes, gender difference, performance management, stress

Abstract

This work answers to practical questions: "does efficiency influences salespersons' behaviour", and "what the most affected gestures by such efficiency are?" This research is based on 1,205 gestures observed during 382 sales calls averaging 11 minutes for 382 salespersons. About the theory, we integrated gender, situation and achievement variables and applied a MANOVA analysis (number of gestures), a Newman-Keuls test (differences between averages), a Chi-squared test (statistical significance of gestures). Generally, efficiency creates real differences in gestural behaviour. Specifically, the best salespersons perform the largest number of gestures. For a good salesperson, conviction is the dominating quality. Conversely, for a weak salesperson, the quality of information is preferred. This finding shows that conviction drives the best salespersons, where desire to inform (too much, probably) drives the weakest ones. They forget to convince and to conclude because they want to explain more and more.

A good salesperson will know when to encourage clients to touch products, evaluate client behavior, use more targeted arguments, and wear pleasant clothes. Meanwhile, a weak salesperson will use a monotone tone, move his/her legs, make too many auto contacts and change body positions too many times.

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Introduction

One hundred per cent (100%) of (large) companies, in the world, require more and more results (Exxon, Apple, Gazprom, Industrial and commercial bank in China, China Construction bank, Volkswagen, Royal Dutch shell, Chevron, Agricultural Bank of China) and retirement funds, such as Kravitz, expects a cash balance growth of 32% this year (Kravitz 2015) or net profits around 20% in drug companies (Anderson 2014). It requires more efficiency, more performance (Ip 2015). These highest objectives are driven by high expectations on retirement plans by developmental reason in order to resist to the world crisis (Montaguti, Neslin and Valentini 2015). They are an answer to social or national reasons: the countries, USA for example, where business develops well, become stronger and expand their principles (through Apple for example), their cultures (through CNN for example), their methods to the world (our Anglo Saxon financial audit system imposed to the world, for example) or English finance leading world investments. Among all factors (finance, entrepreneurship, marketing), sales take a good part of the effort, because the means used to convince business impact directly on their results. Most books (Archee, Gurney and Mohan 2013; Gitomer 2013; Marshall 2015) and researches (Drollinger, Comer 2013, Fleck 2017), for example, show that salespersons personality have a strong influence on the results.

Researches on verbal communication for salespeople are numerous. Every year various articles work on salespersons, but less studies have focused on non-verbal communication. This work addresses this particular issue. The theoretical approach mainly emphasizes sales achievement levels and their effect on a number of different gestures. Our study presents hypotheses on key variables, such as achievement levels, gender, and situation attributes. These variables are crossed with gestures (i.e., of the hands, eyes and glances, legs, and feet).

Researches in sales and marketing achievements are usually conducted with classical models, such as in Churchill, Ford, and Walker's (1993) study. They were among the first researchers to introduce

their model. Later, they recognized that their measurements were not able to explain a large percentage of variation in sales achievements. Others researchers have also been interested in subjects such as a lack of listening in sales, a salesperson's communication apprehension (Boorum, Goolsby and Romsey 1998, Jung, Takeuchi 2016), sales adaptation (Meisenheimer 2014), and a salesperson's communication qualities (Johnston, Marshall 2013), influence of charisma (Antonakis & al. 2012), confidence associated to number of gestures (Smart 2013). However, this limited number of study on non-verbal communication provides a good opportunity to develop a new approach to understanding a salesperson's gesture behavior.

The theoretical frame

In their study, Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1993) examined a few key factors. Upon considering the "aptitude" factor (i.e. the items gender, empathy, sociability, aggressive and dominance), they realized that this factor did not provide a good explanation of variations in achievement. Upon studying the variable "personal, organizational and environmental", they concluded that their studies have presented little success in identifying characteristics associating sales attitudes and sales achievement. It seems that Churchill's del was too general for salespersons, who are often required by management to produce immediate sales results. Johnston and Marshall (2013) went further by converting perceptions into behaviors. Eurachem (2012) tried to quantify confidence when Pennington & al. (2016) included mediation

The most interesting studies on sales achievement are the empirical studies on salesperson adaption from Obermeier, Kelly and Gunter (2015). They have shown that sales achievement results mainly from the capacity of salespersons to create and modify messages during an interactive communication with their clients. These results confirmed by Greene (2014), determines two important factors as key to successful sales: "communication sense", in general, (Muller, Cienki and Fricke 2013, Yang, Chau, 2016) and "salesperson's communicator talents", in particular, (Grikscheit 1979; Levy & al. 2017). Boorum, Goolsby and Ramsey's (1998) study observed the absence of research on communication capacity in adaptive selling. They also noted that researchers have demonstrated the axiomatic importance of sales communication (Witkoswski 2010). However, research has demonstrated that salespersons are not perfect communicators: they may speak too much, they do not pay attention to their gestures, they do not listen to their clients or they do not speak at the right time (Jaramillo, Mulki and Salomon 2015). Boorum, Goolsby, and Ramsey (1998) have also explained this lack of communication or personal behaviour (gestures) by an apprehension (AC) and negative feelings felt by salespersons. Better achievement training, cognitive modifications, confidence (Westbury (2017) and improvements in the selling process can reduce apprehension.

A good salesperson (Mayer, Greenberg 2006, Baron & al. 2006) has a special ability to feel and a need to conquer, a good empathy and a strong ego, Long before he comes to know the product, mostly during his childhood and growing-up experience, the future successful salesman is developing the human qualities essential for selling.

A weak sales person can be defined (Doerr, Stritch 2012) as somebody afraid to ask the tough questions and to dig deeper to find out what they need to give a strong recommendation with a tendency to become emotionally involved making him or her 20% less effective. They are uncomfortable talking about money which makes salespeople 20% less effective and they self-limit their record collection. When records play in salespeople's heads they can either help or hinder sales success.

Variables

The following indicators represent the variables upon which our study was built. We focused on gender (women, men), situation attributes (stressful situations, calm situations), and achievement levels (good, average, weak) as explanatory variables. We considered different values observed for these variables among salespersons. While studying differences in achievement, we realized that salespersons with different levels of achievement engaged in different non-verbal behavior. We continued our research by examining three levels of achievement (good, average, weak) and the gestures associated with these achievement levels.

The Influence of Feminine Gender on gestures has been noted by authors such as Baumeister and Vohs (2004). Other authors have underlined women's gestures, including the influence of seduction

through gestures by Shoup-Knox, Pipitone (2015) and the natural attraction power of women by Karim, Beardsley (2015).

The influence of masculine gender on gestures has been noted by authors such as Cook, Lalljee (1972) particularly with respect to men's smiling to express positive attitudes and men's leg movements per Drosdowska in Descamps (1989).

The Influence of Stressful Situations on gestures has been detailed by given 2005 with respect to an increase in auto contacts in stress situations.

The Influence of Calm Situations on gestures has been studied by Ellsworth (1975), de Steno (2014) and Mehrabian (1972). According to these authors, calm situations relax bodies, and according to Watkins (2012), these situations also relax arms. Finally, Collins, Goldman and Rodriguez (2008) noted that positive feelings enhance head mobility. These gender and situation variables have been explored in the previous literature; we use them here to propose hypotheses.

Hypothesis associated with achievement

The existing literature suggests the following hypothesis.

Achievement and Gender

In numerous studies, gender is associated with hand movements. Several authors have already observed these relations. Their studies (Ingram, Laforge and Schwepker 2011) have shown more gestures for high-skilled women in stressful situations.

Hypothesis (H1) is as follows:

H#1: A good saleswoman, in persuasive situations, expresses more hand movements than a good salesman (H1).

Achievement and Situation (Stressful versus Calm)

For the following hypotheses, we consider hands, eye movement, and feet and legs.

Hands

The literature on hands (Rosenfeld 1966; Rimé 1982; Bradberry 2014) documents an increase in hand gestures for hi achievers (good salespersons) in stressful situations. In particular, low achievers (less skilled salespersons) exhibit a lower number of gestures in stressful situations (Knapp, Hall and Horgan 2013). Some other studies have shown that such a situation can influence hand mobility. Hypothesis (H2) is as follows:

H#2: A good salesperson, in stressful situations, increases hand mobility (H2).

Eyes

Researchers have underlined the relations between eyes and situation attributes (more eyes movements in stress situations, more eyes movements by women). These relations have been described by Leboeuf (2015) for hi achievers (good salespersons). Other studies have shown less clearly that stress implies a perceived need for salespersons to assume a certain status (Barrick et al. 2009). It seems that stress may encourage an unsuccessful salesperson (low and average achievers) to glance (Alibali, Hotstetter 2010) more often at a dominating client. This previous analysis drives us to the following Hypothesis (H3):

H#3: A good salesperson, in stressful situations, increases his/her glances toward a client when comparing calm situations (H3).

Feet and Legs

The literature on feet and leg mobility allows us to hypothesize relationships between leg movement and different explanatory variables. Among possible explanatory variables, situation attributes (particularly with respect to stress) are considered dominant. Existing studies have shown the strong impact of stressful situations on leg movement (Muller, Cienki and Fricke 2015) for hi achievers (good salespersons). For example, a discussion between two sales interlocutors may start with high levels of leg mobility, depending on the situation type. For Mulki, Jaramillo and Goad (2015) a stressful situation produces a greater level of leg mobility. However, for Bernardis (2008), stress blocks leg mobility. The literature leads to the following hypothesis (H4):

H#4: *A good salesperson, in stressful situations, provokes a greater number of leg movements than in calm situations (H4).*

With these hypotheses, we now turn to our experiment, and we first focus on our sample.

Materials

Variables Chosen

In order to clarify the criteria of negotiating aptitude, we consider the main authors on non-verbal negotiation. Donaldson (1996) defines how to discover negotiators' secrets looking at their non-verbal communication. He explains how to behave positively and avoid negative gestures during negotiations (working on smiles and hands moving). Fisher (2000), Idoyaga (2010) show how emotional aspects have been recognized in different groups. Stern and Mouton (2014) show the importance of "attitude" (the *ability* to have an open attitude towards the other), "method" (the importance given to preparation and defining objectives) and "the manner" (which encourages trust rather distrust). It is this last point on "manner" which introduces the following criteria of trust such as information, diplomacy, patience, humour, organization.

Specifically, these criteria are information, diplomacy, patience, humor, and organization. Information is defined in terms of "an exchange chance" by Sebenius (2014) and as "preparation" by Merk (2012). Diplomacy is deemed "common action" by Keilbrunn, Kissinger (2013). Patience is denoted as a "conflictual element perceived" by Mac Evily, Tortoriello (2010). Humor is defined in terms of "surprise" by Joshi 2010 the organization involves relations between actors and chances of success. Each criterion corresponds to a sales competence.

Sample

The sample was comprised of 382 professionals ranging from 28 to 32 years old; they were 30 years old on average, held a BA, and had an average sales experience of 6 to 8 years. In addition, they lived in a suburban area. These individuals were chosen from a group of salespersons issued from pharmaceutical companies. Gender, Situation attributes and Achievement levels are the explanatory variables. Gestures are the variables that we aim to explain, including hand, eye, and feet and leg movements.

Methodology and experiment

Medical information was supplied by each salesperson on one product chosen among two hundred products from different pharmaceutical companies. The clients were Doctors; the salespersons could stay a maximum of 30 minutes in a doctor's office to inform him or her about innovations or new products in their pharmaceutical company. In practice, the sales calls lasted an average of 11 minutes. This average is in line with the usual length of sales calls for pharmaceutical companies. **Doctors**

The Doctors were professionally involved. A script defined their roles. Through pharmaceutical laboratories contacts and relations, the Doctors were supposed to know the salespersons and their practices. Doctors and salespersons read about their roles in a folder before the sales call started. These 95 Doctors participated in 382 scenarios. We required a large number of Doctors to avoid personal idiosyncrasies. Each Doctor met with four different salespersons in different dyads (i.e., men-women, men-men, women-men, and women-women). Salespersons used a grid that outlined key actions, including the product explanation, the conventional sales approach and possible behaviors.

However, if the sales call did not meet their expectation, they did not prescribe the product (meaning a negative evaluation of the sales call). This evaluation was based on the three grades of Q, F, and C. Q indicates the quality of the information, and F indicates the individual reliability of the salesperson. C indicates the salesperson's capacity to convince the Doctor. Main component analysis showed that these variables play different roles for each level of achievement, namely, good, average, and weak levels of achievement. This analysis also showed that sales achievement (rated as good average and weak) was associated with sales actions, prescription decisions, and satisfaction. The effect of individual doctors was reduced because the sales scenario and the roles were set in advance.

Findings

Sales calls were designed to offer the best selling conditions to salespersons. Further, the definition of clear objectives for each role (i.e., salespersons, judges, and doctors) allowed us to further optimize operations. This research focused on the occurrence of gestures showing differences between individuals.

These differences were examined over time with respect to gender and situation attributes and was associated with sales achievements. At month M, a salesperson was invited to participate in a certain situation (stress calm) with a particular sales achievement, and one month later at M+1, a salesperson was exposed to another situation, this time also varying the sales achievement. To vary gender, we alternated saleswomen and salesmen. This two-step analysis over the course of a month is a methodological innovation developed by Descamps (1989).

Appropriateness of the method: this innovation is enhanced by the number of participants in the present study, which usually has not exceeded 60 in past studies (compared to 382 calls in our study), and by length of the calls, which previously did not exceed 2 minutes (Drosdowska in Descamps 1989) for past studies (compared to an average of 11 minutes in our study). This quantitative comparison highlights our efforts to present valuable findings through this study.

Achievers Choice

Why this method was chosen: our study included 382 sales calls in different situations, including 191 stressful situations and 191 calm situations for 191 men and 191 women. Calls were divided into three groups according to achievement, namely, a group of average salespersons (304 sales calls), a group of good salespersons (39 calls), and a group of weak salespersons (39 calls). The best salespersons comprise only a small percentage of a group's sales achievements (approximately 10%). This indicates that from the 382 sales calls, we have chosen 10% for the high-achievement group to be selective. The same approach was used for the low-achievement group, for which we took the lowest 10% of calls and thus placed 39 sales calls into the low-achievement group. The remaining 304 sales calls were considered average-achievement calls.

Methods

The groups of salespersons are organized according to high, average and low achievement, as evaluated by the doctors. Then, we used main component analysis to identify the significant variables in the high, low and average achievement groups. The achievement level was defined by the *quality of information* (Q) transmitted by the salesperson, the salesperson's *reliability* (F) and the salesperson's *capacity to persuade* (C) the doctor during the sales call.

This selling competence is required from all salespersons in the pharmaceuticals industry. It is specifically controlled in some countries by an exam that confirms the quality of the information transmitted. The variable F is justified by selling demands and was regularly discussed by doctors, who were able to recommend competitive products. The variable C is justified by the results from the medical panels IMS (Intercontinental Marketing Services) on sales and prescription outcomes.

We then integrated variables for gender, situation and achievement by applying a MANOVA analysis related to the number of gestures. Then, we examined differences between averages using a Newman-Keuls test. A Chi-squared test allowed us to evaluate the statistical significance of the number of gestures. Multiple correspondence analysis was used to reduce the number of variables and summarize information by measuring the contribution of explanatory variables.

Correlations

Individuals were distributed equally and by odds, and women's and men's profiles were defined during the pre-test. Gestures number expressed during a sales call were measured. The influence of a salesperson's achievement level on his/her gestures was evaluated. The salesperson's achievement was measured by doctors, who graded the salespersons directly. These results allowed us to rank the salespersons into high, average and low achievement groups.

Overall, salespersons participated in 382 sales calls for this study. To achieve this distribution, the doctors evaluated each salesperson according to the three variables Q, F and C, each of which measured different dimensions of sales achievement. Salespersons were then ranked into groups according to their grades. We now focus on the relationship between the variables Q, F and C using main component analysis.

Main Findings about Achievement Factors

We first analyze the main variables factors for all salespersons, and then we focused on good and

weak salespersons. The number of factors included in main component analysis was chosen according to the Kaiser criteria.

Factor 1 and Factor 2 are the virtual variables whose proper values (resp. 1.4526 and 1.0434) give variance number. Factor 1 and Factor 2 concentrate almost all the cloud dispersion (resp. 48.42 % and 34.78%) which permits to neglect the other factor (0.5040 %).

Our principal components analysis for the total population enabled us to observe the following results: the "first factor" reflects the "information quality" and "capacity to convince". The "second factor" relates to the "salespersons' reliability. The contrast between "Factor 1" and "Factor 2" suggests that the "desire to convince" by salespersons is independent of "reliability". In other words, a good salesperson will prefer to conclude with a client, rather taking too much time to explain a process or a mechanism because he or she knows that their technical staff may complete their demonstration. Conviction is the field of salespersons. Technical information is the field of technicians or engineers.

Our principal components analysis for the total population enabled us to observe the following results: the "first factor" reflects the "information quality" (correlation: 0.70) and "capacity to convince" (correlation: 0.74). The "second factor" relates to the "salespersons' reliability (correlation: 0.95). The contrast between "Factor 1" and "Factor 2" suggests that the "desire to convince" (corr.: 0.74 for factor 1 and corr.: 0.02 for factor 2) by salespersons is independent of "reliability" (corr.: 0.01 for factor 1 and corr.: 0.95 for factor 2). In other words, a good salesperson will prefer to conclude with a client, rather taking too much time to explain a process or a mechanism because he or she knows that their technical staff may complete their demonstration. Conviction is the field of salespersons. Technical information is the field of technicians or engineers.

For a good salesperson, conviction is the dominating quality. Conversely, for a weak salesperson, the quality of information is preferred. This finding shows that conviction drives the best salespersons, where desire to inform (too much, probably) drives the weakest ones. They forget to convince and to conclude because they want to explain more and more... But the market waits for their orders which come too barely.

Main Findings about Good Salespersons

The variables F (reliability) and C (conviction) were positively correlated with factor 1 (0.56 and 0.57 respectively). The contribution of factor 1 to these variables was relatively important (0.42 and 0.43 respectively). Variable Q (quality of information) was weakly correlated with factor 1 (0.19) and strongly correlated with factor 2 (0.86), finding that contributes to the formation of factors.

This analysis allowed us to distinguish two variables types, namely, variables associated with sales techniques (i.e., information reliability) and variables associated with product knowledge (i.e., information quality). The distinction between information reliability, the capacity to convince and information quality indicates, for example, that for good salespersons, the desire to sell a product may be independent from the capacity to convince clients. We now turn to weak salespersons.

Main Findings about Weak Salespersons

The variables Q and F were positively correlated with "factor 1" (0.58 and 0.59 respectively). The contribution of "factor 1" (quality of information) was relatively high (0.46 and 0.47, respectively). Variable C was weakly correlated with "factor 1" (0.07) and highly correlated with factor 2 (0.92). Variable C provides a significant contribution to "factor 2". Salesperson reliability and information quality were associated for weak salespersons, in contrast to strong salespersons. For the low-achievement group, the importance of the capacity to convince seemed to be heightened due to salespersons working hard to compensate for their difficulties. We observed that depending on achievement, the variables Q, F and C may have different relationships than those shown in the next step.

We prove an interpretation for each of the results about the values of Q, F and C in the three groups. It shows that achievement (whether high, average, or low) is associated with a salesperson's gestures. They can differ according to the three variables, which justifies their further study.

Measuring Gesture Frequencies as Associated with the Main Variables

This section focuses on the number of gestures according to gender and situation variables and draw attention on differences with former results.

Gesture frequency according to gender and achievement is presented in table 1

Table 1: Distribution of Salespersons by Gender and Achievement level

Achievement Level	Men	Women
Average	152	152
High	20	19
Low	19	20
Total	191	191

Table 1 shows that there are 191 women and 191 men divided into the average-achievement group (with 304 individuals) and the high- and low-achievement groups (each with 39 individuals). We can see that the distribution of women and men is equal in the average group (i.e., 152 women and 152 men), whereas it is almost identical in the high- and low-achievement groups (20 women and 19 men for the high-achievement group and 19 women and 20 men for the low-achievement group). In fact, we wanted to take group number into account - 39 - (representing around 10 % of the population available). We have tried to keep this numerical singularity in our statistical study. The number of gestures associated with different levels of achievement was observed according to gender and situation attributes.

Salespersons expressed themselves with gestures that depended on gender, situation attributes and achievement levels. The number of gestures associated with gender and achievement levels is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Gestures by Gender and Achievement Level

Achievement Level	Nb of Gestures Women	Nb of Gestures Men
Average	523	385
High	93	80
Low	69	55
Total	685	520

These results relate to the original question since we observed that women move more (with 685 gestures) than men (with 520 gestures), regardless of the level of achievement with a constant number of 191 women and 191 men. This is also true with respect to situation attributes (i.e., stressful versus calm situations).

Gesture Frequencies According to Gender Attributes and Achievement Level

The gestures number associated to the average group was 523 gestures for women vs. 385 gestures for men. The high achievers group did respectively 93 gestures for women and 80 for men. The low achievers group did respectively 69 and 55. These results show that the distribution of salespersons depends of their gender (women move more than men whatever the achievement level).

Gesture Frequencies According to Situation Attributes and Achievement Level

These results relate to the original question since we observed that stressful situations imply more gestures (692) than calm situations (513), regardless of the level of achievement. Under stressful situations, the average, high and low achievers group did respectively 483, 137, 72 gestures with a total of 692. Under calm situations the average, high and low achievers group did respectively 425, 36, 52 gestures with a total of 513.

Influence of Gender and Achievement Level on the Number of Gestures

We used MANOVA analysis to study the impact of gender and achievement on the number of gestures.

Table 3: MANOVA Analysis for Gender, Achievement and the Number of Gestures

Source of Fluctuation	FD	Square sum	Average square	F	Significant?
Gender	1	71,26	71,26	151,60	Significant
Achievement	2	54,11	27,05	56,00	Significant
Interaction	2	39,12	19,56	41,16	Significant
R	376	178,53	0,47		
Total	381	343,02	118,34	248,76	

FD: degree of freedom

Key Elements: Gender and achievement have an influence on the number of gestures, as indicated by the statistical significance of our tests.

An average number of gestures by achievement Level and Gender comparison show that the average number of gestures is higher for women (at 3.58) than for men (at 2.72).

Influence of Situation and Achievement Level on the Number of Gestures

Salespersons with low and average achievement levels do not have a statistically significant difference in terms of the average number of gestures (number of gestures for low achievers group under stressful situations and calm situations: 3.37 and 2.73; number of gestures for average achievers group under stressful situations and calm situations: 3.60 and 2.79)

Salespersons with high achievement skills show a statistically significant difference in the average number of gestures as compared to salespersons with low or average achievement (number of gestures for high achievers group under stressful situations and calm situations: 6.85 and 1.89). Specifically, it is interesting to consider that high achievers express more gestures under stressful situations and fewer gestures under calm situations. The Newman Keuls test validates the High Achievers group as a significant group. The Average and Low Achiever groups were not significant.

Association between the Number of Gestures and the Main Variables

The Chi-Squared test for situation attributes and number of gestures shows the association between gestures and situation as an explanatory variable. Feet, Glances, Eyes, Legs were considered significant by the Chi Two test. Hands were not significant. The Chi-Squared test for gender attributes and number of gestures shows the association between gestures and gender as an explanatory variable. The test indicates that women use more hand gestures because they react more often with their hands. Other gestures were not considered significant.

The results show that sales efficiency creates real differences in gestural behaviour. The sales efficiency leads to a gestural attraction expressed by eyes and mimicry. Conversely, a weak sales efficiency proceeds in relative immobility because they lead to few gestures. Good salespersons increase gestures, whereas weak salespersons place salespersons in relative stillness. These results demonstrate how efficiency affects salespersons and indicate which gestures to observe to determine their sensitivity to these variables.

Conclusion

This analysis of achievement level shows that salespersons with high levels of achievement desired to do well. However, this achievement level appears independent from their capacity to convince. Meanwhile, for weak achievers, this conviction took on heightened importance due to difficulties encountered in the sales call. It seems that high levels of achievement hide efforts at conviction, whereas low achievers put too much their effort in this regard. As such, they lose their power to convince altogether. MANOVA analysis verifies that the differences according to achievement levels were significant. The Chi-squared test shows that the relationship between gender hand movements was significant. In contrast, the relationship between stressful situations, on the one hand, and eye movements, glances and leg mobility, on the other, was significant. Finally factor analysis does not return significant results. Thus, our hypotheses are validated.

This study has given a new point of view on past research because it goes well beyond all works which were centred on one gesture or one attitude and a few role plays. The exceptional number of gestures observed and the number of role plays have permitted a good measurement system validated by a good number of gestures. This work is useful because it offers an answer to a quantitative interest in human ethologic processes. This work is valuable because the results obtained are statistically significant.

Originality / Value

The marketing implications of this study concern salespersons, purchasers, managers, and trainers.

Originality and value for Salespersons

An analysis of gestures can produce, for a salesperson, a better communication reading with their interlocutors. Thus, salespersons can guide communication with their behavior. If knowledgeable about gestures, a good salesperson will know when to encourage clients to touch products, evaluate client behavior, use more targeted arguments, and wear pleasant clothes. Meanwhile, a weak salesperson will

use a monotone tone, move his/her legs, make too many auto contacts and change body positions too many times.

Originality and value for Purchasers

Using gestures as a decoding tool, purchasers can feel out salesperson's weaknesses and can come back to subjects that the salesperson wishes to avoid. Knowledge on salesperson gestures will give purchasers a strategic and decisive advantage in negotiations. A high number of gestures, for example, can indicate a good salesperson. In contrast, a purchaser may observe hand movement during stressful situations to determine a salesperson's perception of the sales call. A purchaser may even try to create a stressful situation to evaluate a salesperson's reaction.

Originality and value for Sales Managers

A better, more systematic and more quantified approach to knowledge on the role of gestures in sales will help to improve empathy, among managers, and would provide leadership to their team and develop their team sales. Attention to the psychological dimension of gestures also allows managers to enhance the professionalism of sales activities.

Originality and value for Trainers

Sales trainers have a traditional approach to sales that is built around welcoming clients, calling clients, developing arguments, following up on orders, and role playing. In this type of training, salespersons work to improve their verbal presentation. In contrast, our approach draws attention to non-verbal language and the use of non-verbal language in different types of situations. It also highlights patterns of gestures as associated with the explanatory variables concerned in this study. As such, sales trainers can develop better training techniques by drawing on non-verbal factors to complement their traditional approach.

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