UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

The effect of customer innovativeness on the relationship between the sales employees' selling behavior and selling performance for new and existing products.

By
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Preface

During 21 weeks in semester B, starting from 1st of February 2010 and ending at 26th of June, I performed a master thesis project as a completion of my degree in Industrial and Technology Management. During the master program, I have completed several courses dealing with different approaches to innovation (e.g. marketing approach on innovation, NPD approach on innovation, management approach on innovation), which this project is built on. This project involves both sales sciences and innovation sciences, where the latter is a central field within the education program.

According to the free mover agreement, the master thesis project was executed at Eindhoven University of Technology, but judged and graded at the University of Agder. Supervisors attended from both institutions. All had a supporting role in this project, but Michel van der Borgh functioned as the daily supervisor.

My graduation project has been an instructive time in which I have learned a great deal about all aspects belonging to scientific research, and it has been an important opportunity to develop myself educationally. The experiences of being an exchange student in The Netherlands are invaluable, and have contributed great deal to my personal growth. I have learned much about foreign cultures, traditions, language, life styles and mentalities, but maybe most of all, I have learned a lot about myself.

Due my limited knowledge of sales sciences, the knowledge acquisition process has been challenging. Additionally, the extensive character of the study and stricter requirements than previous assignments has also caused challenges. My supervisors have assisted me with guidance and indispensable help to overcome these, and hence, I would like to thank my supervisors for all the help. In particular, I would like to thank Michel; his insight, enthusiasm, support and patience have helped me to keep working on the right track. He was always willing to invest effort and time on pointing me the right direction and providing feedback which I appreciate greatly. I would also like to thank Euronics Norge AS for letting us execute the data collection in their company. At last, I thank all my closest ones for the support and patience during this period.

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Abstract

This master thesis project provides an extension to an already existing conceptual framework, which addresses the ambidextrous orientation's role of proactive selling behaviors and selling performance, where sales manager's control and product newness are implemented. The focus in this study was to uncover the effects of customer innovativeness on the relationship between the sales employees' selling behavior and selling performance for new and existing products, respectively. To fund an adequate knowledge base about key concepts (i.e. proactive selling behavior, customer innovativeness, selling performance and interpersonal relationships in sales context) a thorough literature review was conducted. Subsequently, different sets of scales were collected to form a survey consisting of 78 items, which in the end was translated from English to Norwegian. A quantitative online data collection was performed in a consumer electronics company in Norway (Euronics), resulting in 59 valid responses. SmartPLS was used to generate the necessary statistical models, and the significant results provide interesting key insights to the topic. Results show that customer innovativeness directly influences the selling performance for new products, and has a moderating effect on the relationship between proactive selling behavior and selling performance for existing products. Including to this, customer orientation was shown to have a positive and direct impact on the salespersons proactive selling behavior and on the selling performance for both new and existing products, and company tenure has a positive direct impact on customer innovativeness. Based on these findings, this study suggests that the salesperson can be very influential when selling existing products to less innovative customers. Furthermore, it is suggested that innovative customers will buy the new product, irrespective of the efforts of the salesperson. This has some managerial implications, such as the direction of the salespersons' effort in selling situations. A number of limitations (e.g. temporal restrictions, scarce resources, subjective measurements, cross- sectional study design, etc.) was identified for this study, and suggestions for future research is provided.

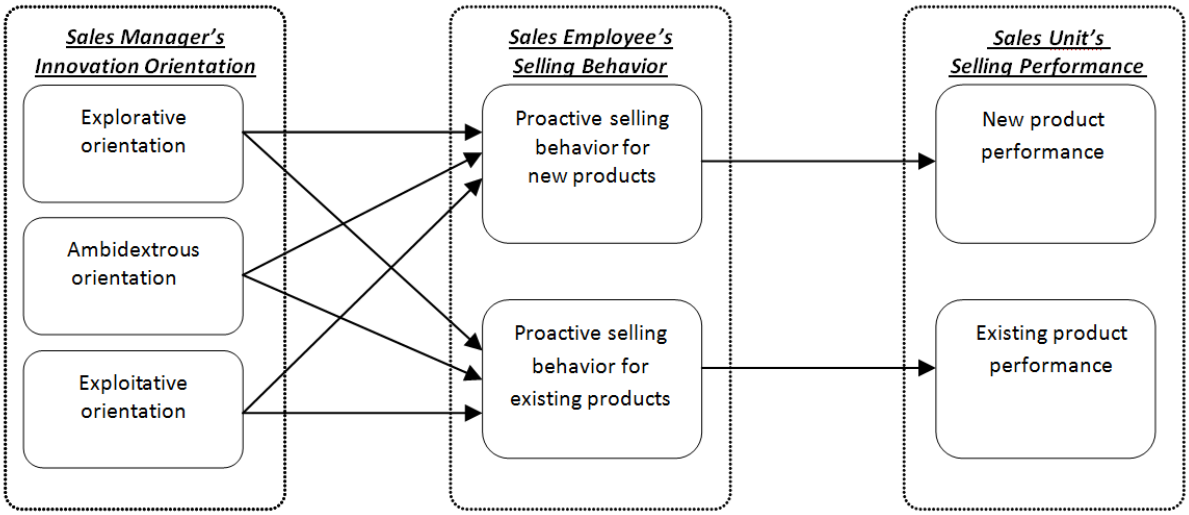
Introduction

The small body of literature regarding sales department's role in new product introduction has recently started to increase. Studies addressing this topic stress the importance of sales units in new product performance, and essentially put forward four arguments. First, according to Wieseke et al. (2008) the sales unit is considered as an internal customer whose adoption of new products or brands serves as a good indicator of the subsequent adoption by end customers. Second, the sales staff prefers in general to sell existing products over new products (Wieseke et al., 2008; Atuahene-Gima, 1997). If the sales employees adopt the new product, there is no guarantee of success (Hultink and Atuahene-Gima, 2000). Third, the sales department has often a short- term approach and perspectives on goals (Biemans et al., in press) that tend to conflict with long-term objectives for new products (Homburg et al., 2008). Finally, the role of the sales manager is crucial in aligning strategic objectives with operational objectives, thereby influencing salesperson's selling behavior and (unit) performance (Atuahene-Gima and Li 2002; Wieseke et al. 2008).

The existing literature is not sensitive to most sales forces selling new and existing products simultaneously. Companies in general do not have a large stream of new products, thus, making it needless to install ambidextrous sales units, dedicated for selling new and existing products, respectively. Salespersons serve often as the primary contact person for both new and existing products, due to the dedicated relationship they maintain with their customers. Because the selling of existing versus new products involve very different tasks related to routine versus non-routine buying situations for the customer, serving as an advocate for both type of products is considered challenging. The innovation literature argues that those organizations which offer entirely new value to customers via innovations, and simultaneously are able to combine activities related to improving current product-market experiences, are the most successful (e.g., Atuahene- Gima, 2005). These organizations are called ambidextrous organizations. Mom et al. (2009) suggest that ambidextrous managers are better able to deal with contradictions, multitask, and refine and renew their knowledge, skills, and expertise. Hence, within ambidextrous companies, sales managers should also be better at selling new and existing products simultaneously with their team.

This master project builds forward on recent research by Michel van der Borgh, which addresses the aforementioned topic regarding the role of the sales force in new product

performance. More specifically, his research involves sales managers' product orientation, and how it effects the sales unit's selling behaviors and performance. A manager's orientation towards products can be characterized as explorative (new product preference), exploitative (existing product preference) or ambidextrous (emphasize both new and existing products) orientated. The extent of managers' adoption ability and attitude towards new products influences the sales employees in possessing either proactive selling behavior for new products or proactive selling behavior for existing products, which accordingly affects the selling unit's performance. Based on these findings, Michel van der Borgh has developed a conceptual framework (Model 1) of ambidextrous orientation's role of proactive selling behaviors and selling performance, where sales manager's control and product newness are implemented.

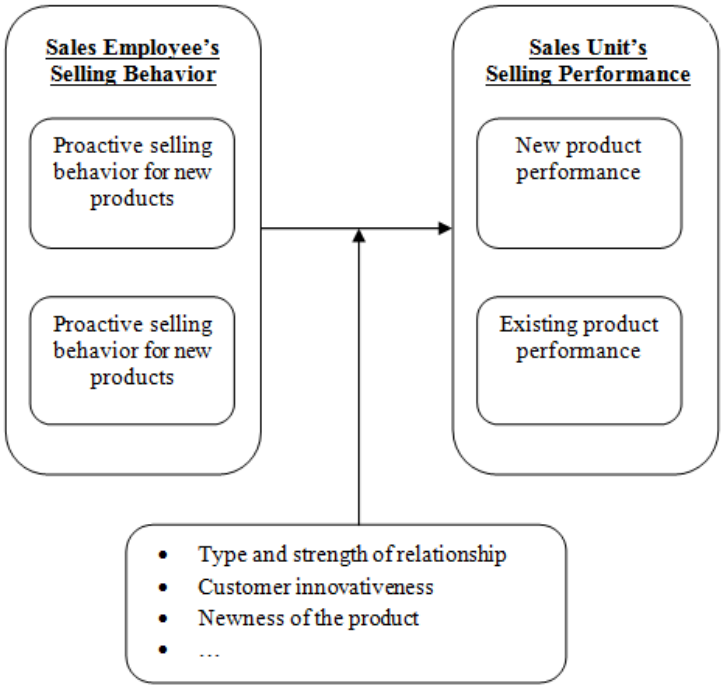


Model 1: The ambidextrous orientation's role of proactive selling behaviors and selling performance.

The aim of this project is developing and extending the conceptual framework proposed by Van der Borgh further by addressing the efficiency of proactive behavior aimed at either new or existing products. See Model 2. A number of extending elements was suggested during a student- supervisor meeting, such as:

- Type and strength of relationship: How the strength and type of the tie between the two actors (sales person and customer and/or sales person and innovation personnel) influence the selling performance.
- Newness of the product: How radical versus incremental the product is and the influence this has on selling performance.

- Customer innovativeness: How the adoption ability and new product receptivity of the customer (customer innovativeness characterized after Roger's model) influence the selling performance.



Model 2: Examples of extensions to Model 1

In order to scope the assignment, one of the elements, customer innovativeness, was selected as the topic for the master thesis project. The main reason to focus on the customer and innovativeness is because it is closest related to prior courses in the education program. Based on the above mentioned, the following research question is derived:

"*What is the effect of customer innovativeness on the relationship between the sales employees' selling behavior and selling performance for new and existing products, respectively?*"

Objectives

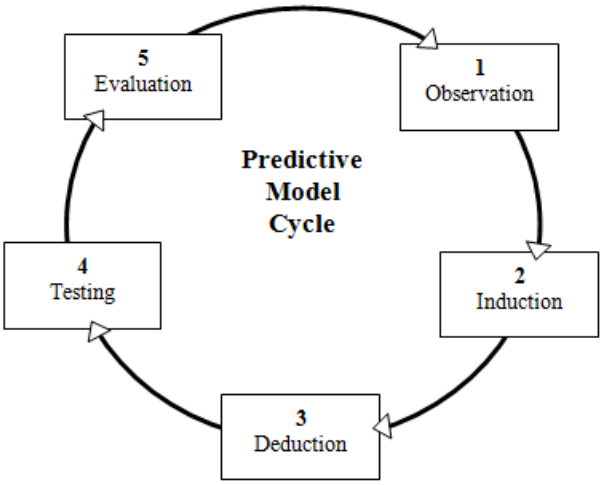
The outcome of the master thesis project is to provide an extension to the conceptual framework by van der Borgh, in order to increase the understanding of the influence of customers, regarding the sales employees' selling behavior and selling performance. Hopefully, the extension will make a small contribution to the sales managerial field within science.

According to Bekkers and Bodas (2008), both the university and industry researchers consider published scientific literature as the most important channel for accessing knowledge and technology. If the outcome of this master thesis project shows significant and interesting findings, and could extend the conceptual framework of Michel van der Borgh, the university researchers might find it useful. If such, the master thesis could have managerial implications in praxis.

Most of all, the main objective of the master thesis is to increase the knowledge and skills of the student who is executing the project. Valuable and high-level knowledge within the topic should be gained during the process, as well as skills in planning, execution and completing a scientific project. This indicates that learning is essential during this period. Thus, it is important to design the study accordingly to this.

Study design

In order to design the work processes in the project, it is important to identify the nature of the assignment. First of all, the initial starting point for the project was an identified gap in the scientific literature on new product selling. This implies that the outcome of the project is not a solution to a specific problem in a company or industry, but rather new knowledge and a contribution to science. Creation of new scientific knowledge has to obey certain criteria. New knowledge is often based on existing knowledge, which implies that the study design should include acquisition of existing information relevant to the topic. Furthermore, there is a need for validation of the new knowledge. Therefore, it is reasonable to include a testing phase in the design, and subsequently an evaluation phase. Due to this logic, the study design of the master project is based upon the predictive model cycle after De Groot (1961), illustrated in Model 3. This model cycle follows a hypothetical deductive method, where knowledge is a goal itself.

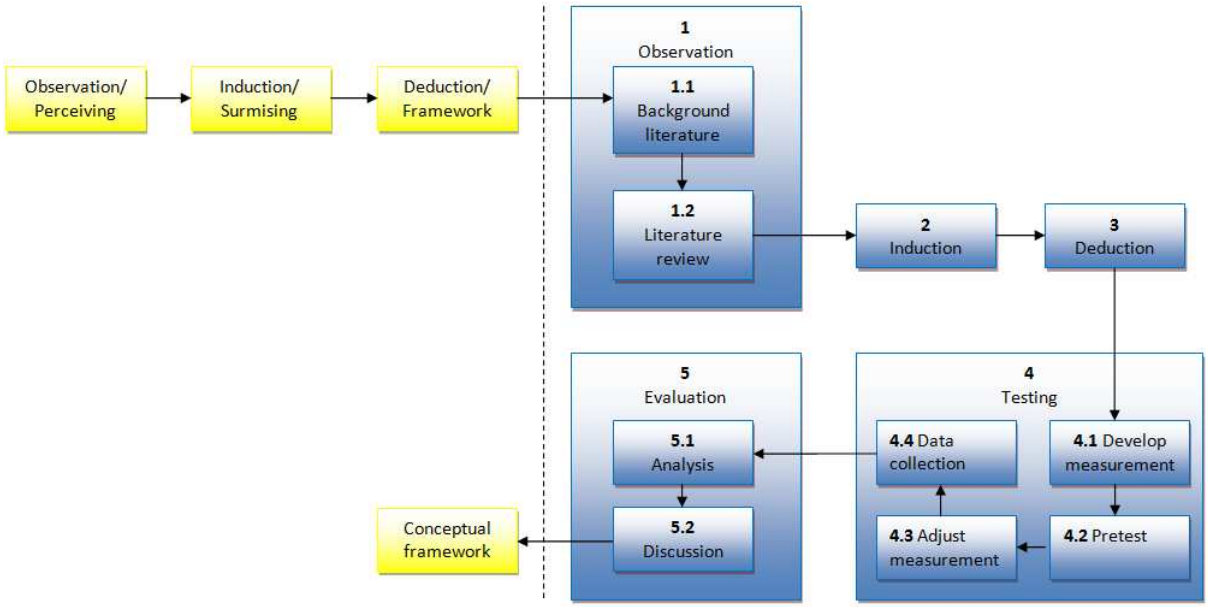


Model 3: Predictive Model Cycle by De Groot (1961)

The cycle begins with observation and perceiving. This is the phase where empirical knowledge is systematically collected and results in deriving extensive hypotheses or research questions. Phase two, Induction or surmise, contains reasoning from the particular to the general. In the deduction phase some specific predictions are derived on basis of the outcome of the more general induction phase. The fourth phase involves testing, where the hypotheses are tested or new data collection is performed in order to answer the research questions. Finally, in the fifth stage evaluation is made. The last phase also contains an analysis of the test- results, in order to draw a conclusion and construct an evaluation. When new knowledge is acquired, the cycle can start over again, for once again creating more knowledge on basis of the existing facts.

As aforementioned, the master thesis project is a part of the proceeding research by Michel Van der Borgh. At the time this project started, the conceptual framework had been tested, and reliability and validity has been proven. This implies that the three first phases have to some extent already been executed by Van der Borgh. The literature used and the knowledge gained during this research is made accessible and available to this project and as such function as the starting point. However, the student – who is new to this subject – has to go through the full cycle to get acquainted with previous findings and to be able to extend the existing conceptual framework. The fact that the entire cycle needs to be executed chronologically is a characteristic of the usage of the predictive model cycle. Another characteristic aspect is that the researcher plays the role as spectator, and is not a part of what is being studied. This implies that it is a clear distinction between the research object and the researcher him/herself.

The first phase in this study involves acquiring the knowledge behind the conceptual framework, followed by a literature review, which fund an adequate knowledge base for the induction phase. During the induction phase, a logical arrangement of the ideas needs to be made explicit. The deduction phase includes a derivation and concretization of hypotheses. Hypotheses are defined in such way that they are measureable by scales. The testing phase is divided into four sub-sections. First, a survey is developed and adapted to the context in this project, and subsequently pretested in industry. Before the final survey is made accessible for participants, adjustments need to be made as a consequence of the pretest. Evaluation, the fifth and final phase of the model cycle, involves analysis of the collected data and at last a discussion of the findings. The discussion- section presents interpretation of the results, new generated ideas for further research and limitations for the study. A graphical illustration of the study design is presented in Model 4. The yellow elements (left side) are performed by Michel van der Borgh, and the blue elements (right side) are performed in this master thesis project.



Model 4: Predictive model cycle adjusted to this study

Literature review

The execution of this literature review is based on The Systematic Review Protocol (based on material from Cranfield University School of Management). The protocol offers a thorough procedure to review literature. Since it is primarily developed for use in doctoral research projects, a downsized version from the course 1ZM50- Design Science Methodology at Eindhoven University of Technology is employed in this project. The scope of the literature review is the topics "customer innovativeness" and "interpersonal relationship in sales context" because the assignment is to extend the existing conceptual model by Michel van der Borgh, not to evaluate, parse and/or reconsider its background theories. The knowledge which the conceptual framework is based on is already provided by the supervisor, so there is no need for further development of existing elements.

This section defines boundaries for the quantitative literature review, including providing a quality assurance to it. Several potential sources (e.g. conference papers, books, working papers, unpublished papers, online documents, personal requests to knowledgeable researchers and/or practitioners, reports from relevant institutions: such as companies, public bodies etc.) were considered implemented in this systematic literature review. However, apart from the book Diffusion of Innovations by Everett Rogers (2003) and cited books in technical papers, published scientific articles were exclusively included in the search process. Most articles were searched for with the assistance of search engines, but some were provided by lecturers in previous university courses.

To begin with in this section, Diffusion of Innovation is represented and quality assured. Subsequently, the literature search process is described, and finally, a segment of selection criteria (for both article hits and full text articles) will be defined and a quality appraisal will be provided.

Diffusion of Innovation by Everett M. Rogers

In this master project, the 5th edition of Diffusion of Innovations by Rogers (2003) is used as a main source of information. Quality assurance is more difficult for books than scientific published articles, so in general, one should be more cautious using books as a

source of scientific knowledge. In the middle of this decade, Diffusion of Innovations became the second most cited book in the social sciences (Arvind Singha), which indicates its' influence and importance in research, since the number of citations is a typical sign of quality. Previous editions of Diffusion of Innovations have been accepted as the benchmark in innovation diffusion (Deshpande, 1983). Rogers' research on diffusion of innovations presented in his books, is the basis of a very high number of innovation prediction models (e.g. Mansfield (1961) model, the Gompertz curve (Martino 1975), the Floyd (1962) model, etc.) where the Bass model might be the most acknowledged one. Including to this, a number of book reviews (e.g. Mack, 1985) confirms the high quality of its content.

Literature search process

After a brain storming session and a perusal of material from previous lectures, a list of relevant search strings came into being. This list does not have any filtering process, except eliminating redundant strings and merging of similar words, since a second filtering process with full text selection criteria will be performed at a later stage. The search strings used for articles regarding customer innovativeness were such as "innovation", "innovativeness", "diffusion", "adoption", "customer", "consumer", etc. For articles regarding the second issue, interpersonal relationship in sales context, search strings such as "relationship", "introduction", "product", "behavior", "customer", "consumer", "interpersonal", "salesperson", etc. were used. Search strings were combined with each other during the search process. Additionally, the search terms "measurement" and "scales" were included when measurements of customer innovativeness were searched for.

Primarily, the literature review was carried out in form of a search for articles through online search engines in scientific databases. This method is commonly used within universities, and has sufficient procedures for quality assurance. Four search engines were used in the search process; JSTOR, Science Direct, Scopus and Google Scholar. In some occasions, only the abstracts were available through the aforementioned search engines, so in order to get access to the full text, other databases were used (e.g. Emerald). Some of the relevant hits appeared in several search results, and the number of relevant hits in each search varied between one and six.

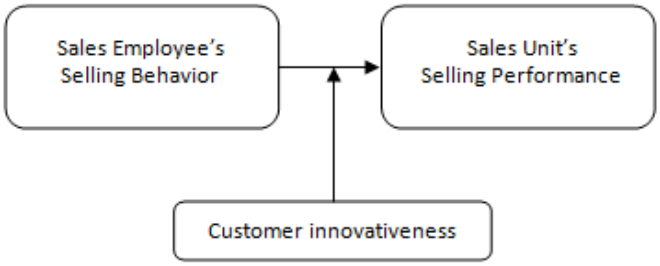
Selection criteria and quality appraisal

For titles and abstracts of papers retrieved from the searches, initial broad selection criteria are used. This is according to the Systematic Literature Review Protocol, as previously referred to. In the search process, the sector is not specified because salespersons operate in all industries. There is no specification on geographically location or university ranking either due to the same reason as previously mentioned. However, only English articles were included. The year of publication is limited to the year 1995 or later for articles including customer innovativeness, and to 1990 or later for articles involving interpersonal relationships in sales context. This novelty requirement of articles is a criterion which eliminates outdated knowledge. As the master project is based on knowledge obtained by an earlier stage in the education, articles from previous courses are included into the knowledge base as well. There are no requirements or quality appraisals for these articles, since it is assumed that the lecturers have already assured the quality of these. To eliminate irrelevant articles, the search strings were required to appear in the abstract, title and/or keywords. In searches where the number of total hits was large, the search strings were required to appear in the title, in order to filter the most relevant articles. Articles published in top ranked journals were preferred. The ranking of journals is available at http://www.journal-ranking.com by Red Jasper.

The three key concepts

The background theory involves sales managers' product orientation, sales staffs' selling behavior, and selling performance. Core literature regarding these matters is provided by Michel van der Borgh, in order to gain a sufficient knowledge base, and from there start the research required in this master thesis project. The desired literature in this study is divided into three main areas, as illustrated in Model 5.

Before proceeding, a precise and common understanding of key concepts and definitions is built. Below, the three aforementioned concepts will be defined and elaborated.



Model 5: Basic model, the starting point for this project

Sales employee's selling behavior

Regarding sales persons' selling behavior, a distinction is made between proactive selling behavior for existing products and proactive behavior for new products. Due to the scope of the conceptual framework of Van der Borgh, the focus is on proactivity, and thus, the opposite terms will not be in defined. However, they are mentioned.

The term "proactive" is used widely and within several fields. From a generally point of view, proactive is defined as an adjective, describing a subject that tends to initiate change rather than reacting to events (Collins, 2010; Cambridge Dictionary, 2010). Proaction is acting in advance of an expected situation in order to handle or deal with it (American Heritage Dictionary, 2010). Bateman and Crant (1993) define proactive behavior as the relatively stable tendency to effect environmental change. Proaction involves, to a large extent, creating change. Several sources emphasize anticipatory as a trait when the term "proactive" is defined (e.g. American Heritage, 2010; LTK, 2010), but Bateman and Crant (1999) argues that anticipation is not merely enough. They describe proactivity with a scientific approach, and argue that proaction does not just involve the important attributes of flexibility and adaptability toward an uncertain future, but it is to take the initiative in improving business (Bateman and Crant, 1999). Furthermore, people who intentionally and directly change things through the creation of new circumstances, or the active alteration of

current ones, are proactive. This indicates that changes cannot be unintentionally or happen by coincident, and have to change reality (not only change perceptions) in order to be proaction. Bateman and Crant (1999) give a thorough description of how a proactive person acts: "Being proactive involves defining new problems, finding new solutions, and providing active leadership through an uncertain future. In its ultimate form, proaction involves grand ambitions, breakthrough thinking, and the wherewithal to make even the impossible happen. It overhauls the past and makes the future. It creates new industries, changes the rules of competition, or changes the world" (pp. 72). Until now, proactivity has been described and defined, but to round off this section the opposite of proactivity is briefly called attention to. It is important to note that the opposite term can vary, depending on the matter and who is asked. It can for instance be adaptivity (de Jong and de Ruyter, 2004), reactivity (Bateman and Crant, 1999) or retroactivity (Thesaurus, 2010).

Customer innovativeness

Initially in this section the terms "innovation", "innovative" and "innovativeness" will be defined and elaborated, and subsequently connected to customer behavior. First, the word innovation originates from the Latin word "innovare" which means to renew or create something new (UiO, 2010). There are several definitions of innovation in the innovation literature. In this study, the description in the Oslo Manual (OECD, 2005, pp. 46) is considered as the most adequate definition of innovation:

"An innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations"

Here it is punctuated four different types of innovation. First, product innovation, which involves both commodities and services that are new or significantly improved. This includes improvements regarding technology, user friendliness or other functional characteristics. The second type is process innovation, which involves a new or significantly improved delivery method or production process. Third, marketing innovation, involves new marketing methods, including significant changes in product placement, product design or packaging, product promotion or pricing. At last is organizational innovation, which involves

introducing new organizational methods in the company's business practices, external relations or workplace organization.

It is important to note that the term "new" is relative, and in innovation literature it is common to classify new products in two different dimensions: new to the firm and new to the market, as illustrated in Figure 1. It's shown in this figure that products which are new to both the firm and the market are named as "New to the world products", and from this a third concept for the novelty of innovations is defined: new to the world. This three-dimensional conceptualization is also used in the Oslo Manual (OECD, 2005). Products that have low scores on both dimensions in the figure have a low degree of novelty and can be characterized as less revolutionary products than the products which are new to the world. In innovation literature these products are called incremental and radical innovations, respectively. Products can be categorized anywhere in this bipolar continuum of innovations where incremental and radical are located in opposite ends. The nomenclatures of incremental and radical innovation were first presented in the late 1960's (Robertson, 1967), and have received much attention by scholars since then.

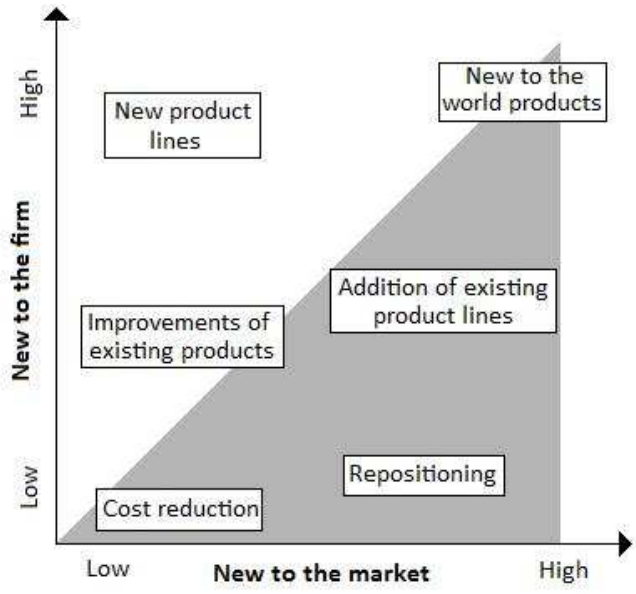


Figure 1: Innovation taxonomy

The term "innovative" can refer to a subject or object (e.g. individuals, organizations, teams, industries, etc.) which tend to innovate or are characterized by innovation (Thesaurus, 2010). Innovative is an adjective describing a noun (or a pronoun) in a sentence, and by traveling across lexical categories, we find that innovativeness is a substantive form of innovative. In other words, innovativeness is the characteristic of being innovative. Innovativeness can refer to industries, companies, organizations, etc. In this study, the focus is on human innovativeness, or more specifically, customer innovativeness.

Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) conceptualized innovativeness as the extent to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting innovations with respect to others in the social

system. Later on, Midgley (1977) made a clear distinction between actualized innovativeness (actual innovative behavior) and innate innovativeness (a personal trait every human being possesses). He defined innate innovativeness as "the degree to which an individual makes innovation decisions independently from the communicated experience of others" (Midgley, 1977, p. 49). To explain innate innovativeness, Roerich (2004) presents four forces which lies behind; the need for uniqueness, the search for novelty, the need for stimulation, and the independence toward others' communicated experience. Hirunyawipada and Paswan (2006) provide an extension of innovativeness, including a trait approach with a hierarchical model, containing three levels:

1. *Global innovativeness* is a personal trait that exists independent of any context, such as financial situation. It represents the very nature of a person's innovativeness.
2. *Domain-specific innovativeness* is more narrowly defined activity within a specific product category or domain.
3. *Innovative behavior* is the actual innovative behavior (resulting in action) a person has towards innovations, then considering the context.

Due to limitations in measurement capabilities in this study, innovativeness is defined on a macro- level. Measuring innovativeness as a personal trait or innate innovativeness for every customer the salespersons handle is not possible to execute in this study, but it is possible to measure innovative behavior, to some degree, through the salespersons. Thus, innovativeness is defined as innovative behavior (the third level from Hirunyawipada and Paswan (2006)), or more specifically observable innovative behavior. Midgley and Dowling (1978) call this actualized innovativeness.

Usually, researchers distinguish between customer (the buyer of the product) and consumer (the user of the product). Due to the scope and the macro- level approach in this study, a distinction of these two concepts is not made. The term customer is used as a collective name for both concepts.

Degree of innovativeness

The innovation diffusion model developed by Rogers (1962) is classifying adopters of innovation into 5 categories, based on an individual's willingness to adopt a product and when it happens in time, in other words innovativeness. Rogers argues that customers'

innovativeness is normally distributed, as shown in Figure 2 (Rogers, 2003). 2.5 % of the adopters are innovators who are willing to take the risk to adopt a product before everyone else. The subsequent adopters are the early adopters (13.5 %), then the early majority (34 %) and late majority (34 %) adopt the product, which are the largest groups, and at last the laggards (16 %).

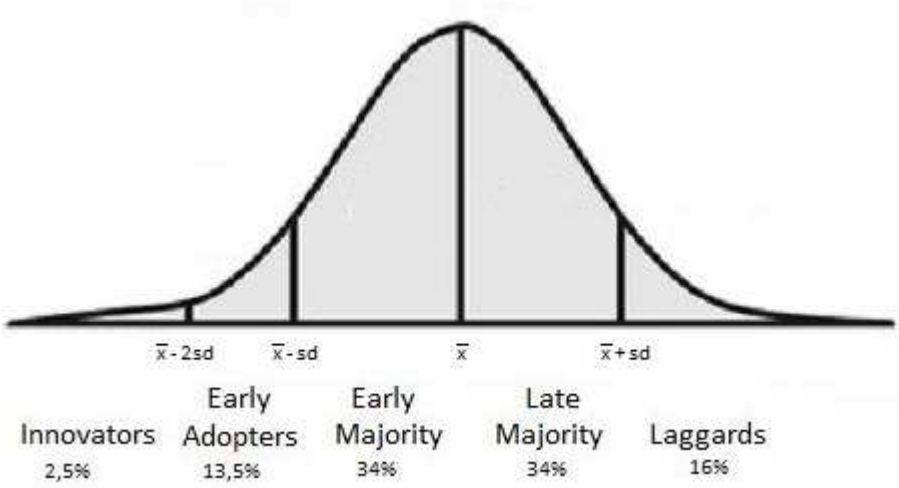


Figure 2: Degrees of innovativeness. Normally distributed (Rogers, 2003)

The characteristics of the 5 ideal types can be divided into 3 areas, respectively socioeconomic characteristics, personality variables and communication behavior. Below is a description of each ideal type.

Innovators

These individuals show great interests in new ideas which characterize them as venturesome and able to cope with a high degree of uncertainties. This can often lead them out of a local circle of peer networks, and into more social cosmopolite relationships. Even though the innovators may be quite geographically distanced, their communication patterns and friendships among a clique are common. Being an innovator requires several prerequisites. First, access to substantial financial resources is helpful in case an innovation would be unprofitable (Summers, 1977). The capability to understand and utilize complex technical knowledge is also a premise. They usually have relatively more years in formal education. Innovators tend to show greater empathy, rationality, intelligence and ability to deal with abstractions. A salient value of these individuals is venturesomeness, due to their desire for the rash, the daring and the hazardous. Including to this, innovators must be willing

to accept an occasional backlash when a new idea is unsuccessful, which is unavoidable. Due to their early adoption, the innovators play an important gate keeping role in the diffusion process, inducing new products into a system (Grewal et al. 2000).

Early adopters

Compared to the cosmopolitan innovators, the early adopters are more integrated in the local system. This adopter group has the highest degree of opinion leadership in most systems, and other potential adopters look to these individuals for information and advice regarding innovations. For speeding up the diffusion process, the early adopters are often sought by change agents as a local representative for the product. This adopter group is considered as a substantial link between launch and mass adoption, because their innovativeness is not far from the average innovativeness and because they reduce uncertainties. Individuals in this group are respected by their peers, and the embodiment of successful and discrete implementation of new products. Early adopters know that they must take judicious decisions regarding innovations in order to maintain their central position in the network. (Rogers, 2003)

Early majority

Individuals in this group adopt an innovation just before an average member of a social system. They are seldom opinion leaders in the system, and they keep in close contact with their peers. The early majority has a unique position between very early and late adopters, and represents the start of mass adoption which makes them important actors in the diffusion process. The innovation decision process is significantly longer than the two previous groups, meaning that they deliberate for some time before completely adopting an innovation. (Rogers, 2003)

Late majority

In contrast to the early majority, the late majority adopts a new idea just after an average adopter in a system, but in conformity with the early majority they represent one third of the members of a system. Adoption by this group may be a result of increasing peer pressures (which is necessary to motivate adoption) and/or an economic necessity. A typical member of this group meets innovations with a skeptical and cautious attitude, and he or she

is not willing to adopt until most others in the system have already done so. Before they are convinced, the weight of system norms must favor the new product. This group often is in control of scarce resources, so in order to adopt, most uncertainties must be eliminated. (Rogers, 2003)

Laggards

The last adopters in a system are the laggards, and this group posses almost no opinion leaders. Compared to the other groups, these individuals have a very traditional way of thinking, and are the most localite of them all. Many are near isolates in the social network system. The reference point for a laggard is the past, so most decisions have been made on basis of what has been done previously. In a social network, the laggards seem to be connected with each other. Laggards possess traditional values, and approach innovations and change agents with a suspicious attitude. The innovation decision process is relatively lengthy and the awareness of knowledge is lagging far behind members of other groups. Due to their scarce resources and precarious economic position they often reduce the uncertainties to a minimum before adopting. A typical characteristic of a laggard is that they have fewer years of formal education, have a lower social status and a less influential position than the innovating groups. They tend to work in smaller sized units, display lower rationality, empathy, intelligence and ability to deal with abstractions. (Rogers, 2003)

Sales unit's selling performance

In conformity with sales persons' selling behavior, the sales unit's performance is in this study divided into sales performance for existing products and new products. According to several researchers (e.g. Price et al., 1995; Czepiel, 1990; Winsted, 1997), employee performance can be grouped into two types, core tasks and socio-emotional aspects. Core tasks involve knowledge regarding the product, helping customers to achieve their goals and fulfilling customer service needs. The second type, socio-emotional aspects, comprises those employee behaviors that satisfy customers' emotional needs and foster interpersonal relationships (van Dolen et al., 2002). Due to the generality in this definition, it is inadequate to describe a salesperson's overall performance, thus, a more specified definition is needed. In this study, overall sales performance is described as the degree of success in different dimensions, respectively volume (number of sold units), time (speed of generating sales), sales targets (meet or surpass expectations given by company management), and assisting

activities (assisting the sales manager in achieving the objectives). This is in alignment to the research of Michel van der Borgh, which is of great importance since the expected outcome is an extension of his already existing framework.

So far, key concepts are defined and elaborated and theory regarding the first topic in the literature review, customer innovativeness, is presented. Subsequently, theory about interpersonal relationships relevant in the sales- customer- context is provided. This funds a knowledge base on where hypotheses are derived.

Interpersonal relationships

Literature shows that proactive employees exhibit greater work performance (e.g. Morrison, 1993; Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2009) and effective selling for sales employees (Pitt et al., 2002). Most literature emphasize the significant positive impact of proactivity on performance, but some literature provide examples where no or little impact has been discovered (e.g. Bateman and Crant, 1999; Kotter, 1996). Hence, arguing that proactivity leads to positive outcomes is not always in accordance to reality, which implies that there are factors which influence the link between proactive selling behavior and selling performance. Previously, Van der Borgh has investigated the relationship between proactive selling behavior for new and existing products and selling performance, and included control variables (i.e. age, type of salesperson, sales experience and manager- employee dyadic tenure) as moderators in the testing of this relationship. Including to these, there are most likely more moderators influencing the relationship, such as the customers' personal characteristics. In this study, the interpersonal relationship between customer and salesperson is investigated, in order to support the claim that customer innovativeness has an impact on the salesperson's behavior.

It is common in the social science literature that the stronger the ties between two individuals are (i.e. the better they know each other), the more similar they are (e.g., Granovetter, 1973). As Rogers (2003) argues, the innovators are usually members of an innovative social network, and due to the small number of innovators in a system (only 2,5 % of the populations in a social system) their connections are relatively spread geographically. On the opposite end on the innovativeness scale, laggards seek connections to other laggards in the local system, because they share the same traditional values and suspicious attitude (Rogers, 2003). In other words, individuals tend to feel belonging with other individuals who belong to the same innovativeness category. On the customer to customer level, the opinion of other is a pervasive type of social influence, it is critically to the importance of the diffusion of new products and it represents the driving force behind the spread of new things (Clark and Goldsmith, 2006).This raises the question if customers seek connection to salespeople who possess the same degree of innovativeness as themselves, as they do among other customers? An even more interesting question is what happens when customers interact with salespeople who do, or do not, possess the same degree of innovativeness as themselves? How does this

affect the selling behavior of the salesperson? In this section, there is first established a foundation of theories regarding interpersonal relationships relevant in a sales context, and subsequently hypotheses are derived.

The customer – salesperson relationship

Previously in this study, it is claimed that customer characteristics influence the relationship between the customer and the salesperson in the selling situation, which again affects the selling performance. Fine and Schumann (1992) provide an example where the degree of self- monitoring for the customer is affecting the interrelationship and outcome of a selling experience. They define self- monitoring as "the degree to which individuals can and do monitor their self-presentation, expressive behavior, and nonverbal affective display" (p. 287). This is a clear example that the customer characteristics influence the performance of a salesperson. Furthermore, Fine and Schumann (1992) describe selling as a social situation in which two people come together for a specific purpose and, while doing so, influence one another.

The salesperson's perceptions of the customers are important because they help to determine how to sell, as well as the person(s) to whom this selling effort will be directed. This has an impact on the outcome of the selling situation. Several researchers (Cross et al., 2007; Saxe and Weitz, 1982) stress the importance of customer orientation. When salespersons possess a customer oriented selling behavior, the performance is usually high, compared to when salespersons do not possess this orientation. Each of the participants in a social interaction perceives and interprets each other. For a salesperson it is not sufficient to only be orientated towards customers, but it is just as important to be capable to interpret the customers with accuracy in order to reach high performance, which is far from an easy task (Sharma and Lambert, 2002). The salesperson's perceptions are influencing his or her selling behavior. Wieseke et al. (2008) illustrate this by showing that expected customer demand has a critical and direct effect on a salesperson's adoption of a new product, which again affects the selling performance. In brief, when expected customer demand is higher, the salesperson adopts more easily, but the effect is less significant when the salesperson is influenced by the sales manager.

A successful salesperson is making an attempt to tackle customer problems as if they were his/her own, display a personal involvement and establish a bond with customers (Beatty et al., 1996), which indicates that a customer needs to be perceived and to be interpreted in

order to optimize the sales performance. In a selling situation, Weitz (1978) suggests a list of strategic actions, such as develop impressions of the customer and evaluate customer reactions to their sales presentation, in order to optimize their performance. This implies that customer orientation, perception, interpretation and action accordingly to this are premises for gaining success as a salesperson. The absence of one or several of these elements will most likely lead to failure. Ingram et al. (1992) illustrate this by defining 6 factors which explain why salespeople fail. Two of these factors deal with direct customer relations, more exact poor listening skills and inability to identify customer needs. If the salesperson fails to receive or interpret the signals the customer emit, the sales will most likely fail and performance will decrease. Not fulfilling the customer needs in a selling situation is most likely a sign of selling failure, while meet or exceed customer needs indicate a successful selling experience (Henard and Szymanski, 2001), which again has a positive impact on the ratio of sales and employees.

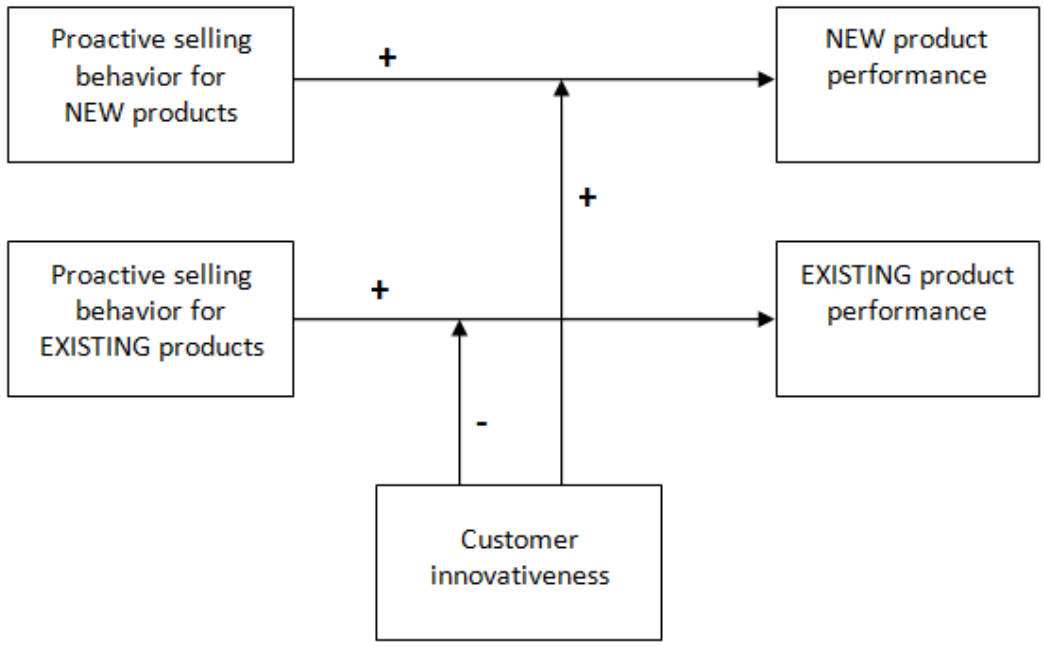
Hypotheses

The abovementioned indicates that salespersons are, to some extent, affected by their customers' personal characteristics, that every interaction is unique due to the variance of customer types, and that their performance is depending on this. Based on this, it is reasonable to assume that another customer characteristic, more precisely innovativeness, influences the relationship between salesperson proactive behavior and selling performance. Hence, based on the arguments in this chapter and the theory of customer innovativeness, the following hypotheses are derived:

H1: Customer innovativeness has a positive influence on the relationship between a salesperson's proactive selling behaviors for new products and new product selling performance.

H2: Customer innovativeness has a negative influence on the relationship between a salesperson's proactive selling behaviors for existing products and existing product selling performance.

The hypotheses are illustrated graphically in Model 6. In the next chapter, there will be a description of the methodology used to measure the predicted relationships.



Model 6: Illustration of hypotheses

Methodology

Measurement and development of questionnaire

Qualitative and quantitative data collections were both considered as options in this project, but due to the nature of the study and time restrictions, one of the alternatives was preferred. In this study, a high number of individuals (i.e. salespersons) is under investigation. It is desirable to make general statement about, and create an overview over, the effects of customer innovativeness on the relationship between salesperson's selling behavior and selling performance. Additionally, a large body previous research establishes a solid platform of foreknowledge regarding this topic. Based on this, the most suitable data collection method is considered being the quantitative method. The data collection is executed in form of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire is a set of scales, customized for this context. Some of the scales were adopted from the research of Van der Borgh, some were found through the literature review and some were constructed for the purpose of this project. All scales adapted from previous research needed an Cronbach Alpha higher or equal to 0.7.

The relationship between customer and salesperson is investigated in this research, which causes severe challenges regarding the measurement. Optimally, both the salesperson and a number of his/her customers should participate in the research, since information about both parts is needed (e.g. the salesperson's proactivity and the customer's innovativeness). This is possible, but very time consuming and requires plenty of resources, which make it insuperable for this master thesis project. However, a way to overcome this obstacle is to define innovativeness as actualized innovativeness (observable innovative behavior), and measure the salesperson's perception of his/her customers' innovativeness. A salesperson's perception of a customer is not known to be accurate (Sharma and Lambert, 2002), but it is the perceived innovativeness which is claimed to have an effect on the salesperson's behavior. Therefore, customer innovativeness is not directly measured in this survey, but a perception of their innovativeness is measured by a 4-item ranking scale, based on Homburg, Wieseke and Bornemann (2009) and modified to suit this research. Some scales are implemented as measurements of control variables. Introductorily, a set of scales is measuring the salesperson's individual traits. The first scale in this set is measuring job satisfaction by three items (adapted from Wieseke et al., 2009), the second is a three- item scale measuring competitiveness (adapted from Brown et al., 1998), the third is a three- item scale measuring empathy (adapted from De Jong et al., 2004), and at last a four- item scale measuring autonomy (adapted from Wieseke et al., 2009). Customer orientation (adapted from Thomas,

Soutar and Ryan, 2001) is also included, and measured by a four- item construct. Three items are used to measure the salesperson's innovativeness and four items for proneness to recommend high tech (based on Raju, 1980). The manager's selling orientation is measured by two constructs (adapted from Van der Borgh). First, the manager's exploratory selling orientation is measured by a four- item scale, followed by another four- item scale measuring the manager's exploitative selling orientation. All response options for the scales mentioned above were a five- point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Product category involvement is measured by three items, knowledge level on customers is measured by two items, and the manager's role in aligning sales- reps to customers is measured by four items. All three scales are new for this survey and the appurtenant response options are seven- point Likert scales. Scales measuring the salesperson's proactive selling behavior and selling performance for new and existing products are adapted from Van der Borgh (in press). Five questions are asked to uncover the proactive selling behavior for both new and existing products, and four questions to uncover the self- evaluated selling performance. All response options for these four scales mentioned above were a five- point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Finally, at the end of the questionnaire, questions are asked to reveal the salesperson's demographics, such as gender, age, level of education and company tenure.

The survey is constructed to measure characteristics from three types of customers each salesperson serve, respectively the average customers, customers who buy new products and customers who buy existing products. Customers buying an existing product are expected to score lower on innovativeness than the customers buying a new product. All these elements are necessary to measure in order to investigate the impact customer innovativeness has on the relationship between salesperson's selling behavior for new and existing products and selling performance for new and existing products. To increase the validity of the study, an analysis is made across 4 product categories. The four product categories are selected from the top 5 % sold product types in the investigated company. It is important to select a suitable company in which to execute the data collection. The company selection criteria, a presentation of the company, a description of data collection and the pretest of the survey are presented below.

Criteria for company

During the planning process a set of criteria was developed in order to select the most suitable company. The first criterion emerged due to the need for uncovering the range of customer innovativeness. To be able to reveal the range of customer innovativeness, the conduction of the quantitative data collection need to be in an industry involving frequently new product launches while simultaneously offering existing products.

According to Rogers (2003) the decidedly smallest customer group is the innovators, which only represent 2.5% of the adopters in a system. Due to the small group size, it would statistically be more difficult to discover the innovators. Research suggests that new product launches are in general more successful and the new product adoption rate is higher in developed countries than in developing countries (Talukdar et al., 2002). Stremersch et al. (2003) suggest that the time-to-takeoff for a new product in the Scandinavian countries is shorter compared to the rest of Europe, which indicates that Scandinavian countries have more innovators. Hence, in order to increase the probability to involve innovators in the measurement, the second criterion is that the geographically area of investigation would be within Scandinavia. To avoid controlling across countries within Scandinavia, the data collection is executed in only one Scandinavian country. In this study, Norway is selected due to lingual reasons.

In this research, it is made a clear distinction between new and existing products. In accordance to the research by Van der Borgh, a new product is defined as a product introduced into the company's product portfolio during the past 6 months. An existing product is defined as a product introduced into the company's product portfolio for more than 12 months ago. This implies the importance of investigating a company that is selling new and existing products simultaneously, which is the third criterion for selection of company.

This study also focuses on the interpersonal relationship between salesperson and customer, and the influence is assumed to be more evident when individuals are in direct contact with each other. Based on this, the fourth criterion is that the two participants in a selling situation must be in direct exposure to each other. To narrow the scope of the study, to increase the chance for the occurrence of the fourth criterion and to make the results more commensurable, the focus in this study will be to investigate the impact of customer innovativeness in one type of context. The context chosen in this study is the B2C (business to customer) contexts, since the customers in B2B (business to business) contexts often represents their organization's innovativeness in a selling situation.

Company search

The search for companies was done through online company databases. Mainly four databases were used[1]. The search terms included key words for businesses and industries which suit the general description formed by the criteria (e.g. "forbrukerelektronikk"), and there was a number of different but relevant hits. Contact information to each company was found online on the companies' webpage, and invitations to participate in the master project were sent out to each one by e-mail. From the responses there was selected one company, Euronics Norge AS, which appears to be the most suitable company and the most willing to participate.

Euronics Norge AS[2]

The Euronics group achieved sales of € 14.4 billion in 2008, and is with that the second largest retailer of consumer electronics in Europe. In total, the company operates more than 11.300 outlet stores in 29 countries all over the continent. In Norway, there are 85 outlet stores evenly dispersed across the country, offering the customers a variety of consumer electronics, such as picture and sound products, information technology, computer systems, white goods, etc. In the consumer electronic industry, there are frequent launches of new products and simultaneously obtaining existing products in the market place. Euronics has experienced significant sales growth and has consistently been a high performer in the market in this respect for the last five years. Additionally, the company has over 280 salespersons in their outlet stores in Norway, who face to face deal with customers on a daily basis. These facts indicate that Euronics Norge AS comply with the company criteria mentioned above, and appears as a well qualified company for executing the quantitative data collection. From the Euronics database, four product categories among the top 5 % sold in 2009 are identified, (and controlled for 2007 and 2008 to identify if the sales of these categories have been stabile over time). One of these four product categories (i.e. mobile phones, washing machines, headphones and laptops) are presented to each participant in the survey in order to determine customer innovativeness. This is done because a customer's innovativeness can vary between product categories (Rogers. 2003).

[1] www.bedriftsdatabasen.no, www.nettkatalogen.no, www.gulesider.no and www.google.com.
[2] All information about Euronics is collected from the company website: www.euronics.com and www.euronics.no.

Translation and pretest

To decrease the probability for lingual shortcomings and the effort needed to participate, the questionnaire is translated into Norwegian. The method of translation is adopted from Steenkamp et al. (1999), following a three-step procedure. First, all the necessary items are collected and explaining text is inserted where it is suitable, which forms the questionnaire. English articles were exclusively included in the literature review, and therefore, the questionnaire was first established in English. The second step involves translation into Norwegian by the author. Subsequently, an external part is provided with the translations for control, and from this, two final versions (one in English and one in Norwegian) are constructed. In this study, the external part was the supervisor for this project at University of Agder.

Before publishing the final online survey, a pretest was executed in order to identify errors and defects in the questionnaire. Four salespeople from two different outlet stores participated in the pretest. The salespeople were provided with the questionnaire for perusal, followed by a short interview. During the interviews, a small number of ambiguities, spelling errors, obscurities and confusions was discovered. Despite the low number, the discoveries were important. The published version was adjusted as a consequence of the pretest, and then published online with the MWM2 Research Application. MWM2 is a Dutch research agency located in Amsterdam, specialized in online research and data collection.

Data collection

Employees with a selling function at Euronics Norge AS were invited to participate through a weekly intrafirm newsfeed and by e-mail. Reminders were given two times, the first two weeks before ending the data collection, and the second a few days before ending the data collection period. In agreement with the Euronics Norge AS management, two incentives were offered to motivate the employees to participate in the survey. The first incentive is that every participant is automatically included in a lottery, where the first price is a Canon LEGRIA HF200 HD video camera recorder. The second incentive is that every participant receives a personal confidential feedback where their questionnaire scores and performance data are revealed. At the time when the questionnaire was published and the first invitation was sent out, the highest share of participation was recorded. After that, the number of participants decreases throughout the period, until the remainders are sent out, then it is recorded a leap in the number of participants, as illustrated in Figure 3. In total, the survey

was available online for four weeks. A number of 288 sales representatives from Euronics Norge AS was surveyed, and 59 survey responses were usable, which gives the response rate of 20.5%. The sample consists of approximately 82% male and 18% females. Participants had an average tenure with the company of 9.25 years. The average runtime of the survey was 12 minutes, which represents the difference in seconds between the moment the question is shown and the moment the answer is processed (after pressing the 'Next' button). Not all the questions were shown to all of the respondents, so the runtime is calculated for responses where all the questions are included.

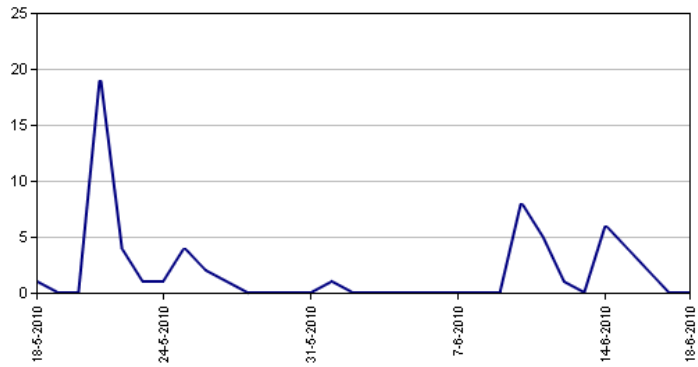


Figure 3: Response rate for online survey.

Analysis

After receiving responses over the period of four weeks, the information was extracted from the MWM2 Research Application and imported into SPSS. First, invalid responses were eliminated (e.g. tests of questionnaire by author and supervisor). Secondly, some items were reversed, adjusted or transformed, and at last some elements were cleared as a preparation for exporting data to SmartPLS.

The customer innovativeness scales in the survey included a ranking of four factors, low price (A1), low product complexity (A2), product novelty (A3) and innovative brand (A4), as response alternatives. The salespersons were asked to consider a typical customer (first one who bought a new product, and later one who bought an existing product), and then rank the factors by allocating rank "1" for the most important factor for the customer, rank "2" for the second most important factor, and so forth. High ranking on low price and product complexity indicates low score on customer innovativeness, and high ranking of product novelty and innovative brand indicates high score on customer innovativeness. The innovativeness of the customer is determined by the ranking of innovative brand relative to the other factors. The higher innovative brand is ranked compared to the other factors, the higher score on customer innovativeness.

Including to this, the scales measuring proactive selling behavior for new and existing products were also adjusted. Cronbachs Alpha for these scales were below the threshold of 0,7. By removing one of the items in each scale (i.e. 51: "…anticipates potential problems with selling these existing products" and 56: "…anticipates potential problems with selling these new products") the Cronbachs Alpha exceeded the limit value.

A model consisting of the four basic elements (Proactive selling behavior for new and existing products, and selling performance for new and existing products) was created in SmartPLS. Next, different sets of control variables were included in the model, and then tested for direct, mediating and moderating effects. From a systematic exploration of the data, most control variables were found to have insignificant impact on the basic elements. However, company tenure, customer orientation and customer innovativeness showed significant results. Subsequently, the reliability and the validity of the model will be presented.

Reliability and validity

Cronbachs Alpha

The reliabilities of the included scales were tested in SmartPLS. First, the Cronbach alpha is calculated to test the internal consistency in each scale. The threshold of Cronbach alpha is 0.7 (Nunally, 1978), and as shown in Table 1 only selling performance for existing products is shown to be slightly below this value. Due to the novelty of the scale, the value of 0,632932 is considered adequate for this project.

Item nr.	***Scale***	***Cronbachs Alpha***
16- 20	Customer orientation	0.875541
64,65	Customer innovativeness	0.819672
67- 70	Selling performance for existing products	0.632932
71- 74	Selling performance for new products	0.765039
49, 50, 52, 53	Proactive selling behavior for existing products	0.733354
54, 55, 57, 58	Proactive selling behavior for new products	0.797280

Table 1: Cronbachs Alpha for scales in Model 7 and Model 8

Average variance extracted

Including to Cronbachs Alpha, average variance extracted (AVE) is also included as a reliability measure for the included elements. The AVE indicates whether the variance captured by the indicators is superior or inferior to the measurement error, and in order to justify the using of a construct, the value should be higher than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Barclay, Thompson and Higgins, 1995). In Table 2, all the scales are shown to be significant, except selling performance for existing products. Using the same argument as above, the slightly under qualified value is considered adequate in this project. This indicates that more than 50% of the variance of the indicators is accounted for, and hence, the reliability of this model is satisfying the minimum standards.

Item nr.	*Scale*	AVE
16- 20	Customer orientation	0.670224
64,65	Customer innovativeness	0.806219
67- 70	Selling performance for existing products	0.469986
71- 74	Selling performance for new products	0.594529
49, 50, 52, 53	Proactive selling behavior for existing products	0.553682
54, 55, 57, 58	Proactive selling behavior for new products	0.621875

Table 2: Average variance extracted (AVE) for scales in Model 7 and Model 8

R- Squared

Most of the elements in the model have an impact on other elements. However, the two outcomes of the model (i.e. selling performance for new and existing products) are the dependent variables and the only elements which are merely influenced by other elements. R-Squared is used to express to what extent the influencing elements can describe the outcome of the performance elements. The threshold of R- Squared is set to 0.3, and as shown in Table 3, the R- Square values for selling performance for new products and selling performance for existing products both exceed the threshold, indicating a satisfactory convergent validity.

Outcome element	*R- Squared*
Selling performance for new products	0.455
Selling performance for existing products	0.427

Table 3: R- Squared for performance elements

Global goodness of fit

A fit model is presented in the next chapter, and as a reliability test, the goodness of this model is calculated. The goodness of fit is found by first multiplying the mean of R-Square and the mean of Communality, and then calculate the square root of this product. This can be expressed as in the following formula:

$$GOF = \sqrt{} \text{ MEAN(Communality y)} \cdot \text{MEAN}(R^2)$$

Table 4 provides an overview of the values in the model, including the mean of R- Squared and Communality. The goodness of fit for the model in this project is 0.35, which is the limit value for acceptance (Tenenhaus et al., 2005).

Scale	*R- Squared*	*Communality*
Tenure	0.00	1.00
Customer orientation	0.00	0.67
Customer innovativeness	0.05	0.81
Selling performance for existing products	0.43	0.47
Selling performance for new products	0.46	0.56
Proactive selling behavior for existing products	0.12	0.56
Proactive selling behavior for new products	0.17	0.62
MEAN	**0.18**	**0.67**

Table 4: R- Squared and Communality for calculation of global goodness of fit.

Immeasurable aspects

Including to the reliability calculated performed in SmartPLS, other immeasurable aspects have an impact on the reliability and validity of this project as well. As mentioned above, ambiguities, spelling errors, obscurities and confusions were discovered during the pretest interviews, and improvements of the survey were done as a consequence of these discoveries. The explaining text, the items and the alternatives were made as clear as possible. Including to this, short and clear definitions of key concepts were provided in the explaining text, in order to minimize the room for the participants' interpretations. Scales adopted from other researchers have formerly shown reliability by statistical tests, and the usage of previously used constructs strengthens the study. Additionally, an acknowledged procedure was utilized for the translation of the questionnaire. During the translation procedure, the scales were translated into a clear and comprehensible jargon, while simultaneously keeping the meaning of the items. So far, elements that strengthen the reliabilities and validities of the survey have been made explicit, but the survey incorporates some weaknesses as well. Most importantly, the response rate was considerably lower than desired. The desired replies in this study were at least 150, but the achieved number of respondents in the end of the four weeks of data collection was only 59. This implies that the generalizability of the results is lower than desired, and the drawn conclusions have less power.

SmartPLS

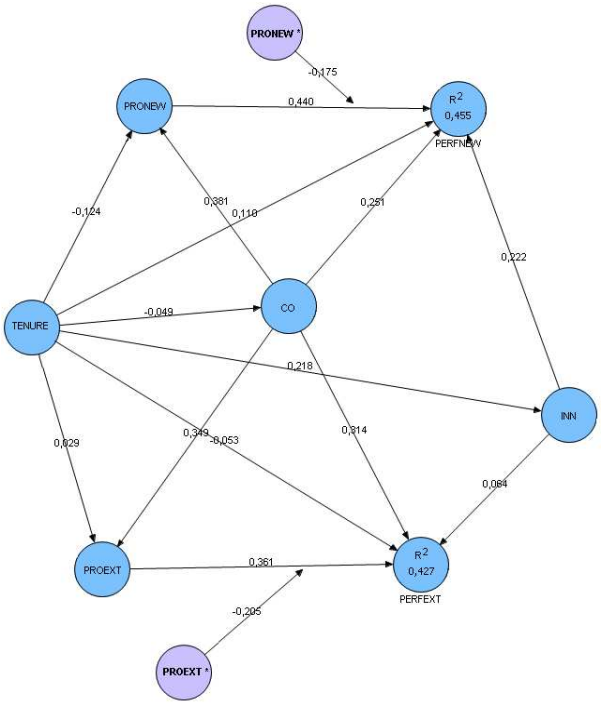
In order to calculate the values presented in this and the subsequent chapter, SmartPLS was utilized as a statistical analysis tool. This specific software was selected mainly because of two reasons. First, it is non- parametric, which means that the data is not expected to have a certain distribution (e.g. normal distribution). Secondly, SmartPLS is well suited for small sample sizes ($n > 30$) due to the bootstrapping algorithm tool. By adjusting the settings to 53 cases and 500 samples, a robust set of results was generated.

Results

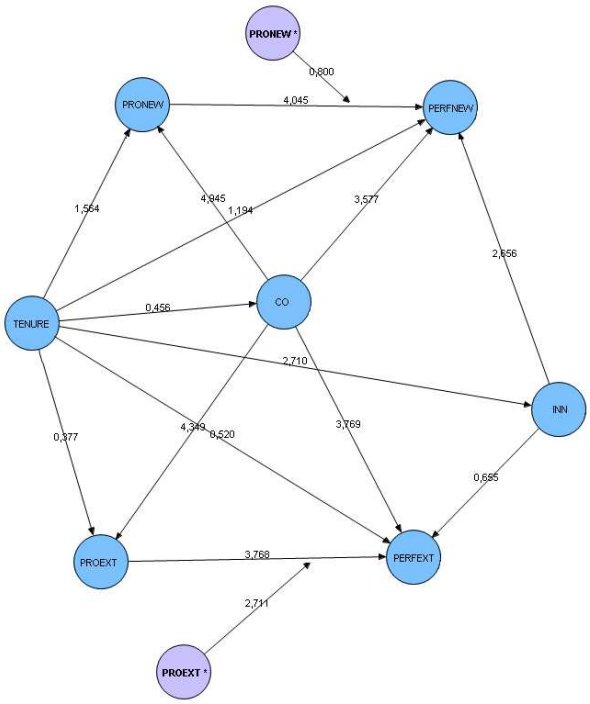
With assistance of statistical calculation tools in SmartPLS, correlations between the four basic elements (i.e. proactive selling behavior for new products (PRONEW), proactive selling behavior for existing products (PROEXT), selling performance for new products (PERFNEW) and selling performance for existing products (PERFEXT)), company tenure (TENURE), customer orientation (CO), and customer innovativeness (INN) were generated. The relationships are illustrated in Model 7. Values attached on the arrows in the model (path coefficients) indicate the correlations of the relationships. They can vary from -1 (perfect negative correlation) to 1 (perfect positive correlation), where 0 indicates no correlation at all. However, not all relations in Model 7 showed to be significant. For the same relationships, the significant values were generated in SmartPLS, showing that approximately half of the relationships were shown to exceed the limit t- value of 1.650. This is illustrated Model 8. The p- value is reported as well in this section, indicating the probability for the random sampling to occur by contingency. This value is considered significant when it is below the threshold of 0.05.

Proactive behavior and selling performance

Previous research claim that proactive selling behavior for new products has a positive influence on new products selling performance, and that proactive selling behavior for existing products positively influences the selling performance for existing products. In this study, both these relationships are confirmed, showing positive and significant results. The t-value of the relationship between proactive behavior for new products and selling performance for new products is 4.045 ($p<.05$), and 3.768 ($p<.05$) for the relationship between proactive behavior for existing products and selling performance for existing products. Including to these findings, other variables have significant impact on both the salespersons' proactive behavior and their selling performances. As mentioned above, these variables are company tenure, customer orientation and customer innovativeness. The role of these variables is elaborated below.



Model 7: Fit model for investigated relationships



Model 8: Significant model for investigated relationships

Company tenure

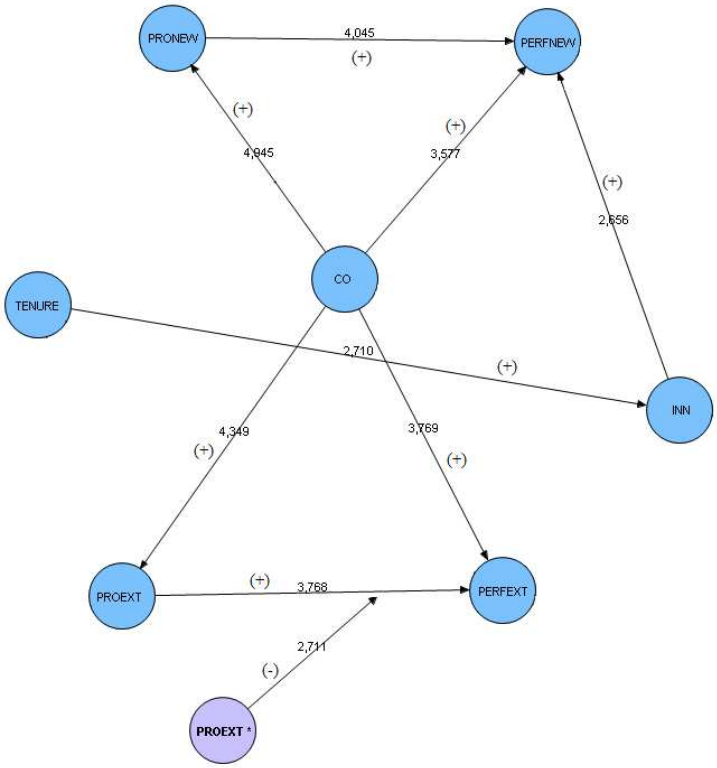
In the survey, one question was asked to uncover the number of years the respondent has been employed in Euronics. Results show that the company tenure has a positive direct effect on customer innovativeness (t= 2.710; p<.05), meaning that the longer the salesperson has been working in Euronics, the higher the salesperson rates his/her customers' innovativeness.

Customer orientation

Customer orientation was measured by a five- item scale, measuring to what extent the salesperson try to figure out the customer needs, takes a problem solving approach in selling situations, helps the customer as best as possible and recommends the most suitable product for the customer. The results indicate that a high score on the aforementioned variables has a positive and direct impact on the salespersons proactive selling behavior and on the selling performance for both new and existing products (t= 4.349, t= 3.769, 3.577, 4.945 ; p<.05).

Customer innovativeness

The results reveal that customer innovativeness has a significant, positive and direct effect on selling performance for new products (t= 2.656; p<.05). In Model 7, customer innovativeness appears to have a negative moderating effect on new product selling performance, but this mediating role is shown to be insignificant in Model 8 (t<1.650). There is also an insignificant direct effect of customer innovativeness on selling performance for existing products. However, it has a negative moderating effect on existing product selling performance (t= 2.711; p<.05). It is also interesting to note that customer innovativeness serves as a mediator between company tenure and selling performance for new products.



Model 9: Refined model of significant results

As a summary of the results, Model 9 is provided as a refined illustration that shows the direction of the correlations and the appurtenant t-values.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to uncover the effects of customer innovativeness on the relationship between proactive selling behavior and selling performance, for respectively new and existing products. With the paradigm shift from transactional marketing to relationship marketing, customers gain greater marketing attention now than previously. Successful companies devote considerable attention to build sustainable competitive advantages by building and maintaining close relationships to their customers. They invest substantial resources in understanding what influences their customers and their purchasing behaviors (Goff et al., 1997). Compared to this, little research attention is given to how customer attitudes and behaviors influence the salespersons' behavior and performance. The importance of considering the customer- salesperson interaction as a dyadic influential relationship has often been ignored. This study provides key insights into the influence customer innovativeness have on the relationship between salesperson selling behavior and selling performance. Including to this, it also reveals two characteristics of the salesperson (tenure and orientation) which have an impact on the model. Subsequently, the findings in this project will be elaborated and discussed more into detail.

The salesperson's characteristics

As the results reveal, the years of employment in the company have a positive influence on the rating of customer innovativeness, and that the most innovative customers are served by the most experienced salespersons in the outlet stores. This finding can indicate that the customers who are most innovative seek the experienced salespersons because they might have more relevant knowledge before purchasing a new product. Experienced sales employees are assumed to possess empirical knowledge about previous products from the same product line and brand. Due to this, they are in a better position to provide the customer with a reliable evaluation of the new product relevant to the previous ones or even comparable ones. For new products, the customers are dependent on the information from the sales employees since product tests and customer evaluations might be nonexistent (Rogers, 2003). Adequate and reliable knowledge decreases the perceived risks for the customer, which facilitates new product adoption. This logic indicates that the purchase of new products might rely on the experienced salespersons' knowledge. It can also indicate that the experienced

individuals in the sales force seek the innovating customers, since they assume that this kind of customer requires a certain type or level of knowledge from the salesperson.

The salesperson's customer orientation has a direct effect on all the four basic elements. First, customer orientation is positively affecting the performance for both new and existing products. It is in concurrence to previous research that customer oriented selling leads to higher selling. Figuring the customer needs, having the customer's best interest in mind, taking a problem solving approach, recommending the best suited and most helpful products to the customer are activities that enhance the selling performance. Customer orientation has a positive effect on the proactive selling behavior as well. Proactive salespersons initiate changes and actively create improvements in their work environments (Bateman and Crant, 1999). In this survey, the salespersons that are proactive scores high on customer orientation. Both proactiveness and customer orientation are attributes to a competent and successful salesperson.

Customer innovativeness, the customer's characteristic

In the first hypothesis (H1) a positive moderating effect of customer innovativeness on the relationship between proactive selling behavior for new products and selling performance for new products was suggested. In Model 8, this moderating effect is shown to be insignificant. However, a positive direct impact of customer innovativeness on selling performance for new products is detected. This indicates a respectively low partial support for H1 since customer innovativeness after all does influence the performance. Accordingly, salespeople who deal with innovative customers are high performers for selling new products. No influence on the behavior indicates that other factors have significant impact on the sales success. Advertisement, for example, might have an effect on the sales of new products. This can be done by measuring to what extent advertisements (e.g. informal word- of- mouth, TV commercials, flyers, internet ads, etc) influence the decision making process or the buying behavior of the customers. The results also suggest that innovative customers will buy the new product, irrespective of the efforts of the salesperson. The central observation is that the innovativeness is important, and that it is not affecting the efforts of the salesperson. For sales employees, the device is still to be proactive also for new products and for every type of customer.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) suggests that customer innovativeness has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between proactive selling behavior for existing products and selling

performance for existing products. Significant results for this prediction are presented above, providing full support to H2. In other words, customer innovativeness influences the strength and the direction of the relationship between the proactive selling behavior (independent variable) and selling performance (dependent variable), indicating that customer innovativeness has a negative impact on the proactive selling behavior for new products. This indicates that the efforts of the salesperson become less effective due to the innovativeness of the customer. Put differently, for existing products, a salesperson can be very influential when the customer has a low level of innovativeness.

Managerial implications

The most important managerial implication that arises from this study is that managers must be cognizant of the role the customer innovativeness plays in the customer- salesperson interaction. Managers will most likely gain higher selling performance for existing products by directing effort to less innovative customers, since the results indicate that this type of customer are influenced by the sales employees. Innovative customers seem to already have made up their minds. This implies that focusing on influencing this type of customer is a waste of time. Additionally, and in concurrence to previous research, managers should request and stimulate customer oriented selling, since it has a positive impact on the selling performance and the proactive selling behavior for both new and existing products.

Limitations and future research

This study provides significant and valid new knowledge to the indentified gap in the literature. However, as with all research, this study has some limitations that restrict its generalizability but opens up interesting future research.

Limitations

First, it is important to note that this is a cross- sectional study, and thus it is difficult to detect causal relationships. A longitudinal approach would provide more robust results and can illustrate a better representation of reality.

Secondly, subjective measurement was used in this study, which brings along both positive and negative sides. This type of measurement is well suited for assessing people's opinions about their work, including to symptoms and feelings, which is one of the main

arguments for utilizing subjective measurements in this survey. Including to this, very much information is acquired against low costs, which suits the master thesis project well. However, subjective measurements have some limitations. In the survey, it is asked to recall certain types of customers who bought new products and existing products within the last three months, which increase the possibility for retrospective answers (i.e. remembering wrong). The responses of the salespersons can be marked by the halo effect due to the nature of the study, which means that the salesperson might have made assumptions about products or individuals based merely on a few traits. This is reasonable to include as a potential weakness of the study since the salespersons might not possess, or remember, all the asked information about products or individuals. Before publishing the online survey, the student and supervisors were aware of the fact that the salespersons' tendency to complain could affect the results (e.g. on the scale measure job satisfaction). Overall, there were mostly positive responses, which make this potential influence unlikely. However, other personal traits might have had an impact on the responses. Even though it is attempted to eliminate as many ambiguities, obscurities and confusions in the questionnaire as possible during the pretest, there is always a certain room for interpretation in a subjective survey which contains scoring alternatives. Another potential influence which is impossible to uncover is social desirability or acquiescence, which is the effect of the salesperson's social environment on the responses he or she provides.

Third, the measurement of performance data might be the most limited aspect of the survey. In the questionnaire, the salespersons were asked eight questions regarding their performance. This type of data should, and was attempted, to be measured objectively. The management at Euronics Norge AS was approached regarding this matter. Despite several attempts of conducting the requested data, the Euronics management was not able to generate usable performance data for this project. The main problem was the definitions of existing products (products introduced more than one year ago in the product portfolio) and new products (products introduced during the last 6 months in the product portfolio). This distinction is not registered in the company databases, which made extraction of relevant data impossible. Thus, financial performance was not included in the definition of selling performance.

Future research

The findings in this project can pave the way for additional research that might uncover important moderating influences on the tested relationships that further inform both theory and practice. In the introduction of this report, three research variables (i.e. type and strength of salesperson- customer relationship, product newness and customer innovativeness) were considered as a topic for this research. Even though customer innovativeness was selected for this study, it would still be interesting to investigate the other two variables. Extensions can also be made to Model 9 presented in this research. Other variables can be included, such as more demographics. One question was asked in the survey which uncovered the durability of the salespersons' company tenure. This item indicates experience, but not necessarily as a salesperson. For future research, the selling experience (within company and/ or total experience) might be added as an item.

Several limitations and restrictions are presented in this report, but especially three of these should be dealt with in future research. First, a longitudinal study should be executed to discover causal relationships in the models presented in this study. Second, objective performance data should be accessed, and third, the researcher(s) should investigate selling situations where both the customer and the salesperson participate. The latter suggestion is time consuming and will most likely require physical presence of the researcher(s) in the selling situation. This would make utilizing of acknowledged scales for customer innovativeness (e.g. by Goldsmith and Hofacker, 1991) possible, which would provide more reliable and valid results.

Conclusion and retrospect

This study, significant and interesting findings have been revealed, and from these it is possible to draw the conclusion that customer innovativeness, to a certain degree, influences proactive behavior and selling performance. Based on this, customer innovativeness is hereby suggested as an important element to include in the conceptual framework by Van der Borgh. Thus, one might say that this master thesis project contributes with new knowledge regarding the selling of new and existing products, which is one of the objectives stated in the beginning of this report. However, the contribution to science might be rather small, but suggestions for prospective research have been provided.

The most important objective of this master thesis project was to gain high- level knowledge and improve the research skills of the student who is executing the project. In order to achieve this objective, a number of acknowledged scientific methods, procedures and tools have been utilized. Access to the university's accounts on the major scientific databases and software programs made this project possible. Including to this, continuous self – reflection by the student has played an important part in the building of skills. By reflecting on the executed processes, one becomes consciously aware of one's abilities, capacities, competencies and opportunities for improvements. The most cardinal factor for achieving this objective is the help provided by the supervisors. Especially, the cooperation with Michel van der Borgh, the student's 1st supervisor at TU/e, should be mentioned in this section. Frequent exchange of e – mails and regularly arranged meetings have been critical for achieving the knowledge – and skill level the student possesses today.

It is important to mention that the results can have some implications for Euronics, the company where the data collection was performed. By taking the results into account Euronics can increase their selling performance for both new and existing products.

This master thesis project has been executed within a time period of 21 weeks. However, the data collection at Euronics will proceed even after finalization of this report and the student has received his diploma. This decision was made by the TU/e supervisors because the scales show significant internal consistency and because the topic is highly interesting, but due to the low response rate, the collection of data is still proceeding. The executor of this master thesis project will assist this extended project when needed.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Online survey (English version)

Dear Euronics employee,

This questionnaire you are about to fill out, is a part of a master thesis project executed at University of Agder and Eindhoven University of Technology. In this project, it is crucial to perform an adequate survey in order to complete the master thesis. Thus, I ask you, who has a sales function, for 15 minutes of your time to participate.

The objective of the survey is to uncover how customer innovativeness affects the salesperson's proactive selling behavior.

Please use your username when login.

If you have any problems, feel free to contact Stig- Endre by e-mail (s.elvevoll@student.tue.nl) or by phone (+31631281154).

Store			
01	In what province do you work?	[Action bar pull- down] Nord- Norge Midt- Norge Vestlandet Sørlandet Østlandet	New
02	In what store do you work? (If you work in several stores in Euronics, choose the one where you work the most)	[Action bar pull- down] List of stores	New

Individual traits								
First, we would like you to consider some characteristics of your job within Euronics. Please take time in answering them.								
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your job?								
		Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5		
03	Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.	□	□	□	□	□	Wieseke et al. 2009	
04	I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.	□	□	□	□	□	Wieseke et al. 2009	
05	I frequently think of quitting this job. [R]	□	□	□	□	□	Wieseke et al. 2009	
06	I enjoy working in situations involving competition with others.	□	□	□	□	□	Brown et al. 1998	
07	It is important for me to perform better than others on a task.	□	□	□	□	□	Brown et al. 1998	
08	I try harder when I am in competition with other people.	□	□	□	□	□	Brown et al. 1998	
09	I always sense exactly what customers want.	□	□	□	□	□	Wieseke et al. 2009	

10	I realize what customer's mean even when they have difficult saying it.	□	□	□	□	□	Wieseke et al. 2009
11	It is easy for me to take customer's perspective.	□	□	□	□	□	Wieseke et al. 2009
12	I am allowed complete freedom in selling products.	□	□	□	□	□	De Jong et al. 2004
13	I am allowed to sell products the way I think best.	□	□	□	□	□	De Jong et al. 2004
14	I am permitted to use my own judgment in selling products.	□	□	□	□	□	De Jong et al. 2004
15	I am allowed a high degree of initiative in selling products.	□	□	□	□	□	De Jong et al. 2004

Customer orientation

Regarding your customer orientation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	
16	I try to figure out what a customer's needs are.	□	□	□	□	□	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
17	I have the customer's best interests in mind.	□	□	□	□	□	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
18	I take a problem solving approach in selling products or services to customers.	□	□	□	□	□	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
19	I recommend products or services that are best suited to solving problems.	□	□	□	□	□	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
20	I try to find out which kinds of products or services would be most helpful to customers.	□	□	□	□	□	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001

Salesperson's innovativeness

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	
21	I am the kind of person who would get really excited about new features of the latest arrivals.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)
22	I directly want to find out more about new developments of technical products.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)
23	I get really enthusiastic while exploring new features of innovations.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)

Salesperson's proneness to recommend high tech

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	
24	I really think everyone should be able to enjoy latest product novelties.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)

25	I always tend to convince people of the usefulness of latest products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Based on Raju (1980)
26	Often I feel the urge to introduce my customers to our most innovative products/ models.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Based on Raju (1980)
27	I have an inclination towards promoting new rather than old products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Based on Raju (1980)

Exploratory selling orientation manager							
Next, we would like you to consider to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Note that new products are products introduced during the last 6 months in the product portfolio.							
	My sales managers want us to spend our time and attention primarily to…	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	
28	…the selling of new products and services in our assortment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
29	…the development of a sales argument for the new products and services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
30	…experimenting with the selling tactics for the new products and services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
31	…the utilization of new selling opportunities for new products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
32	…spotting of new, rising needs at customers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010

Exploitative selling orientation manager							
Please consider to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Note that existing products are products introduced more than one year ago in the product portfolio.							
	My sales managers want us to spend our time and attention primarily to…	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	
33	…the selling of existing products in our portfolio.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
34	…the selling of upgrades of existing products en services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
35	…the exploitation of the sales argument for existing products in our assortment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
36	…the complete utilization of the selling opportunities for existing products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
37	…to maximize the selling of existing modules.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010

Control of product category				
38	During the last 3 months, have you sold both a new and an existing product in the following product category: [product category x]?	Yes	No	
		☐	☐	

If no on previous question		
Which of the following product categories have you sold (at least) both a new and an existing product during the last 3 months? If several, select the product category in which you have sold the most.		
39a	Mobile phones	□
39b	Washing machines	□
39c	Headsets	□
39d	Laptops	□

Product category/ class involvement			
		Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very important	
40	Please indicate how ***important*** this product class is for you.	□ □ □ □ □ □ □	New
		Not interested 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very interested	
41	Please indicate how ***interested*** you are in this product class.	□ □ □ □ □ □ □	New
		Not concerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very concerned	
42	Please indicate how ***concerned*** you are with this product class.	□ □ □ □ □ □ □	New

Knowledge level on customers you serve			
		Very low expertise 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very high expertise	
43	Please indicate the ***level of expertise*** of your customers regarding product and features in this product category.	□ □ □ □ □ □ □	New
		Much lower share 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Much higher share	
44	Compared to your colleagues, please indicate ***the share of*** expert/ knowledgeable customers you serve in this product category.	□ □ □ □ □ □ □	New

Role manager in aligning sales reps- customers			
Sometimes sales managers want that the most experienced sales reps help the most experienced/demanding customers and that less experienced reps focus on the less demanding customers.			
		To a low extent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 To a high extent	
45	To what extent does your manager explicitly assign sales reps to different types of customers?	□ □ □ □ □ □ □	New
		Little direction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Much direction	

46	How much direction does your manager give in linking the most knowledgeable sales reps with the most demanding customers?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Little Feedback 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extensive feedback	
47	How much feedback does your manager provide regarding your performance ratio for existing/new products?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Few comments 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Many comments	
48	How many comments does your manager provide regarding your performance ratio for existing/new products?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New

Proaktivitet

We would like to ask about how you sell <u>new</u> and <u>existing</u> products.

Previously, you were provided with a product category (mobile phones, washing machines, headsets or laptops) which you have sold at least one new and one existing product of. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your behavior in selling existing products within this product category during the last 3 months? We remind you that existing products are introduced to the product portfolio for more than 12 months ago.

	In the Euronics store where I work, I am the one who…	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	
49	…is proactive in selling these existing products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
50	…does not give up easily when encountering a customer who is difficult to sell these existing products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
51	…anticipates potential problems with selling these existing products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
52	…is constantly on the lookout to identify opportunities to sell these existing products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
53	…actively scans the need for these existing products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your behavior in selling new products within this product category during the last 3 months? We remind you that new products are products introduced during the last 6 months in the product portfolio.

	In the Euronics store where I work, I am the one who…	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5	
54	…is proactive selling these new products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
55	…does not give up easily when encountering a customer who is difficult to sell these new products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
56	…anticipates potential problems with selling these new products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
57	…is constantly on the lookout to identify	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010

58	opportunities to sell these new products. …actively scans the need for these new products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010

Perceived customer innovativeness for existing products.

Please consider a typical type of customer to who you sell existing products in the focal product category. Remember, existing products are products introduced more than 12 months ago in the product portfolio. Which factors do you think are the most important for this customer with respect to buying existing products?

Please rank the factors by allocating rank "1" for the most important factor, rank "2" for the second most important factor, and so forth.

Click on the factors in the upper box, and add them to the lower box by using the arrow.

		Highest rank			Lowest rank	
		1	2	3	4	
59	Low technological entry level/ complexity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
60	Low price.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
61	Product novelty.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
62	Innovative brand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New

Perceived customer innovativeness for new products.

Please consider a typical type of customer to who you sell new products in the focal product category. Remember, new products are products introduced during the last 6 months in the product portfolio. Which factors do you think are the most important for this customer with respect to buying new products?

Please rank the factors by allocating rank "1" for the most important factor, rank "2" for the second most important factor, and so forth.

Click on the factors in the upper box, and add them to the lower box by using the arrow.

		Highest rank			Lowest rank	
		1	2	3	4	
63	Low technological entry level/ complexity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
64	Low price.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
65	Product novelty.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
66	Innovative brand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New

Performance for existing products.

In this part, we would like you to answer these statements which characterize performance regarding existing products in this category.

	Compared to colleagues in general I am, for selling existing products, more successful in…	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	
67	…generating high level of sales volume.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
68	…quickly generating sales.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000

69	…exceeding sales targets set.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
70	…assisting the sales manager in achieving the objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000

Performance new products							
In this part, we would like you to answer these statements which characterize performance regarding new products in this category.							
	Compared to colleagues in general I am, for selling new products, more successful in…	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5	
71	…generating high level of sales volume.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
72	…quickly generating sales.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
73	…exceeding sales targets set.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
74	…assisting the sales manager in achieving the objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Hultink & Atuahene 2000

Demographics			
Finally, some questions about yourself.			
75	Gender	□ Male □ Woman	New
76	Year of birth	[Action bar pull- down] <1944 – 2000]	New
77	Highest completed education.	□ Lower secondary school □ Upper secondary school □ Country college □ Basic courses □ Bachelor degree □ Master degree	New
78	How many years have you been working for Euronics?	[Action bar pull- down] <1 – 40+]	New

Thank you for participating in the survey! If you have any questions, feel free to contact Stig-Endre by e-mail (s.elvevoll@student.tue.nl) or by telephone (+31631281154)

Appendix B – Online survey (Norwegian version)

Kjære Euronic- ansatt,

Denne spørreundersøkelsen du er i ferd med å fylle ut er en del av en masteroppgave utført ved Universitetet i Agder og Eindhoven University of Technology. Masteroppgaven krever at det gjennomføres en spørreundersøkelse. Derfor ber jeg om at du som har en salgsfunksjon kan bruke 15 minutter på besvare skjemaet.

Målet med undersøkelsen er å avdekke hvordan kunders innovativitet påvirker salgsadfereden til selgere.

Vennligst benytt ditt brukernavn ved innlogging.

Ved problemer ta gjerne kontakt med Stig- Endre via e-post (s.elvevoll@student.tue.nl) eller via telefon (+31631281154)

Butikk			
01	I hvilken landsdel arbeider du?	[Action bar pull- down] Nord- Norge Midt- Norge Vestlandet Sørlandet Østlandet	New
02	I hvilken butikk arbeider du? (Hvis du arbeider i flere Euronics- butikker, velg den butikken du jobber mest i)	[Action bar pull- down] List of stores	New

Individuelle karaktertrekk								
Først ber vi deg ta stilling til noen kjennetegn ved din jobb i Euronics.								
I hvilken grad er du enig eller uenig i følgende utsagn?								
		Sterkt uenig 1	2	3	4	Sterkt enig 5	
03	Jeg er generelt veldig tilfredstilt med jobben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Wieseke et al. 2009
04	Jeg er generelt tilfredstilt med den type arbeid jeg gjør i jobben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Wieseke et al. 2009
05	Jeg tenker ofte på å slutte i jobben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Wieseke et al. 2009
06	Jeg liker å jobbe der det er konkurranse med andre.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Brown et al. 1998
07	Det er viktig for meg å utføre bestemte oppgaver bedre enn andre.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Brown et al. 1998
08	Jeg prøver å yte mer når jeg konkurrerer med andre personer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Brown et al. 1998
09	Jeg oppfatter alltid nøyaktig hva kunder ønsker.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Wieseke et al. 2009
10	Jeg forstår hva kunder mener selv når	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Wieseke et al. 2009

	de har vanskelig for å uttrykke det.						
11	Det er lett for meg å se ting fra kunders synspunkt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Wieseke et al. 209
12	Jeg har full frihet når det gjelder å selge produkter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	De Jong et al. 2004
13	Jeg kan selge produkter slik jeg mener er best.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	De Jong et al. 2004
14	Jeg kan bruke min egen dømmekraft når det gjelder å selge produkter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	De Jong et al. 2004
15	Jeg kan ta mye eget initiativ for å selge produkter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	De Jong et al. 2004

Kundeorientering

Angående din kundeorientering, i hvilken grad er du enig eller uenig i følgende påstander?

		Sterkt uenig 1	2	3	4	Sterkt enig 5	
16	Jeg forsøker å finne ut hva kundenes behov er.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
17	Jeg tenker på kundenes beste.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
18	Jeg tenker på å løse kunders problem når jeg selger produkter eller tjenester.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
19	Jeg anbefaler produkter eller tjenester som best kan løse kundenes problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001
20	Jeg prøver å finne ut hvilken type produkter eller tjenester som er mest nyttig for kundene.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001

Salgspersonens innovativitet

I hvilken grad er du enig eller uenig i følgende utsagn?

		Sterkt uenig 1	2	3	4	Sterkt enig 5	
21	Jeg blir virkelig begeistret av nye funksjoner på nylanserte produkter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Based on Raju (1980)
22	Jeg ønsker å finne ut mer om nye utviklinger av teknologiske produkter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Based on Raju (1980)
23	Jeg blir virkelig entusiastisk når jeg utforsker nye funksjoner på innovasjoner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Based on Raju (1980)

Salgspersonens tendens for anbefaling av high tech

I hvilken grad er du enig eller uenig i følgende utsagn?

		Sterkt uenig				Sterkt enig	

		1	2	3	4	5	
24	Jeg synes alle burde ha muligheten til å nyte godt av de siste produktnyhetene.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)
25	Jeg har en tendens til å overbevise andre om nytteverdien til nye produkter.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)
26	Jeg legger ofte vekt på å introdusere kunder til våre mest innovative produkter.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)
27	Jeg er mer tilbøyelig for å promotere nye foran gamle produkter.	□	□	□	□	□	Based on Raju (1980)

Utforskende salgsorientering hos leder

I neste avsnitt ber vi deg ta stilling til i hvilken grad du er enig eller uenig i følgende utsagn. Til opplysning er nye produkter introdusert i produktporteføljen løpet av de siste 6 månedene.

	Min salgssjef ønsker at vi primært bruker tid på og retter oppmerksomhet mot…	Sterkt uenig 1	2	3	4	Sterkt enig 5
28	… salg av nye produkter og tjenester i vår assortiment.	□	□	□	□	□
29	… utvikling av salgsargument for nye produkter og tjenester.	□	□	□	□	□
30	… eksperimentering med taktikk for salg av nye produkter og tjenester.	□	□	□	□	□
31	… utnyttelse av nye salgsmuligheter for nye produkter.	□	□	□	□	□
32	… å oppdage nye, voksende behov hos kunder.	□	□	□	□	□

Utbyttende salgsorientering hos leder

Vennligst ta stilling til i hvilken grad du er enig eller uenig i følgende påstander. Til opplysning er eksisterende produkter introdusert i produktporteføljen for mer enn 12 måneder siden.

	Min salgssjef ønsker at vi primært bruker tid på og retter oppmerksomhet mot…	Sterkt uenig 1	2	3	4	Sterkt enig 5
33	… salg av eksisterende produkter i vår produktportefølje.	□	□	□	□	□
34	… salg av oppgraderinger av eksisterende produkter og tjenester.	□	□	□	□	□
35	… argumenter for salg av eksisterende produkter i vårt assortiment.	□	□	□	□	□
36	… fullstendig utnyttelse av mulighetene for salg av eksisterende	□	□	□	□	□

37	produkter. … maksimering av salg av eksisterende moduler.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

Kontroll av produktkategori			
38	Har du solgt både nye og eksisterende produkter av følgende produktkategori: [product category x] i løpet av de siste 3 månedene?	Ja ☐	Nei ☐

Alternativ spørsmål hvis ”nei” på forrige…			
Hvilken av produktkategoriene nedenfor har du solgt (minst) både et nytt og et eksisterende produkt av i løpet av de siste 3 månedene? Hvis flere av alternativene er mulige, velg produktkategorien hvor du har solgt flest produkter.			
39a	Mobiltelefoner	☐	
39b	Vaskemaskiner	☐	
39c	Hodetelefoner	☐	
39d	Laptoper	☐	

Produktkategori/ klasseengasjement			
		Ikke viktig 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Veldig viktig	
40	Vennligst indiker hvor ***viktig*** denne produktgruppen er for deg.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Ikke interessert 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Veldig interessert	
41	Vennligst indiker hvor ***interessert*** du er i denne produktgruppen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Ikke opptatt 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Veldig opptatt	
42	Vennligst indiker hvor ***opptatt*** du er av denne produktgruppen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New

Kunnskapsnivå på kunder du betjener			
		Veldig liten 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Veldig mye	
43	Vennligst gi en indikasjon på kundenes ***ekspertise*** angående denne produktgruppen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Veldig høy andel 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Veldig lav andel	
44	Sammenlignet med dine kolleger, vennligst oppgi ***andelen*** kunnskapsrike kunder du betjener ved salg av denne	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New

	produktgruppen.		

Lederens rolle i samkjøring av selger- kunde			
Noen ganger ønsker salgssjefen at de mest erfarne selgerne tar hånd om de mest krevende kundene, og at de mindre erfarne selgerne fokuserer på mindre krevende kunder.			
		I lav grad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I høy grad	
45	I hvilken grad har din sjef eksplisitt tildelt selgere til forskjellige typer kunder?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Lite anvisning 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mye anvisning	
46	Hvor mye anvisning gir din sjef for å tildele de mest kunnskapsrike selgerne til de mest krevende kundene?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Lite tilbakemelding 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mye tilbakemelding	
47	Hvor mye tilbakemelding gir din sjef angående din ytelse for nye/eksisterende produkter?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New
		Få kommentarer 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Mange kommentarer	
48	Hvor mye kommentarer gir din sjef angående din ytelse for nye/eksisterende produkter?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New

Proaktivitet			
Her spør vi om hvordan du selger nye og eksisterende produkter. Tidligere snakket vi om en produktkategori (mobiltelefoner, vaskemaskiner, hodetelefoner eller laptoper) som du har solgt minst et nytt og et eksisterende produkt av. I hvilken grad er du enig eller uenig i følgende påstander om din atferd knyttet til salg av eksisterende produkter i denne kategorien i løpet av de siste 3 månedene? Vi minner om at eksisterende produkter er introdusert i produktporteføljen for mer enn 12 måneder siden.			
	I Euronics- butikken der jeg jobber er jeg den som…	Sterkt uenig 1 2 3 4 5 Sterkt enig	
49	… er proaktiv i å selge disse eksisterende produktene.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Van der Borgh 2010
50	… ikke gir opp lett når jeg møter kunder det er vanskelig å selge disse eksisterende produktene til.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Van der Borgh 2010
51	… forventer mulige problemer med å selge disse eksisterende produktene.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Van der Borgh 2010
52	… er konstant på utkikk etter å oppdage muligheter for å selge disse eksisterende produktene.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Van der Borgh 2010

53	… utforsker aktivt behov for disse eksisterende produktene.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010

I hvilken grad er du enig eller uenig i følgende påstander om din atferd for å selge nye produkter i den aktuelle produktkategorien i løpet av de siste 3 månedene? Vi minner om at nye produkter er introdusert i produktporteføljen løpet av de siste 6 månedene.

	I Euronics- butikken der jeg jobber er jeg den som…	Sterkt uenig 1	2	3	4	Sterkt enig 5	
54	… er proaktiv i å selge disse nye produktene.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
55	… ikke gir opp lett når jeg møter kunder det er vanskelig å selge disse nye produktene til.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
56	… forventer mulige problemer med å selge disse nye produktene.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
57	… er konstant på utkikk etter å oppdage muligheter til å selge disse nye produktene.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010
58	… utforsker aktivt behovet for disse nye produktene.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Van der Borgh 2010

Oppfattet innovativitet hos kunder for eksisterende produkter

Vær vennlig og tenk deg en typisk kundetype som du selger eksisterende produkter til i den aktuelle produktkategorien. Husk at eksisterende produkter er introdusert i produktporteføljen for mer enn 12 måneder siden. Hvilke faktorer mener du er viktigst for den aktuelle kundetypen med tanke på eksisterende produkter?

Ranger faktorene nedenfor med å gi rangering "1" til den viktigste faktoren, rangering "2" til den nest viktigste faktoren, rangering "3" til den tredje viktigste faktoren, og så videre.

Klikk på faktorene i den øverste boksen, og plasser dem i den nederste boksen ved å trykke på pilen.

		Høyeste rangering 1	2	3	Laveste rangering 4	
59	Lav teknologisk brukerterskel/ kompleksitet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
60	Lav pris.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
61	Produktets nyhet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New
62	Innovativt varemerke.	☐	☐	☐	☐	New

Oppfattet innovativitet hos kunder for nye produkter

Vær vennlig og betrakt en typisk kundetype som du selger nye produkter til i den aktuelle produktkategorien. Husk at nye produkter er introdusert i produktporteføljen i løpet av de siste 6 månedene. Hvilke faktorer mener du er viktigst for den aktuelle kundetypen med tanke på nye produkter?

Ranger faktorene nedenfor med å gi rangering "1" til den viktigste faktoren, rangering "2" til

den nest viktigste faktoren, rangering ”3” til den tredje viktigste faktoren, og så videre.

Klikk på faktorene i den øverste boksen, og plasser dem i den nederste boksen ved å trykke på pilen.

		Høyeste rangering			Laveste rangering	
		1	2	3	4	
63	Lav teknologisk brukerterskel/ kompleksitet.	□	□	□	□	New
64	Lav pris.	□	□	□	□	New
65	Produktets nyhet.	□	□	□	□	New
66	Innovativt varemerke.	□	□	□	□	New

Salgsprestasjon for eksisterende produkter

Her vil vi at du tar stilling til følgende utsagn som karakteriserer din prestasjon ved salg av eksisterende produkter i denne produktkategorien.

	Sammenliknet med kolleger generelt sett lykkes jeg bedre med å selge eksisterende produkter når det gjelder …	Sterkt uenig				Sterkt enig	
		1	2	3	4	5	
67	…å få til et høyt nivå på salget.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
68	…å skape salg raskt.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
69	…å overstige salgsmål.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
70	…å bistå salgssjefen med å oppnå målene.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000

Salgsprestasjon for nye produkter

Her vil vi at du tar stilling til følgende utsagn som karakteriserer din prestasjon ved salg av nye produkter i denne produktkategorien.

	Sammenliknet med kolleger generelt sett lykkes jeg bedre med å selge eksisterende produkter når det gjelder …	Sterkt uenig				Sterkt enig	
		1	2	3	4	5	
71	…å få til et høyt nivå på salget.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
72	…å skape salg raskt.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
73	…å overstige salgsmål.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000
74	…å bistå salgssjefen med å oppnå målene.	□	□	□	□	□	Hultink & Atuahene 2000

Demografi

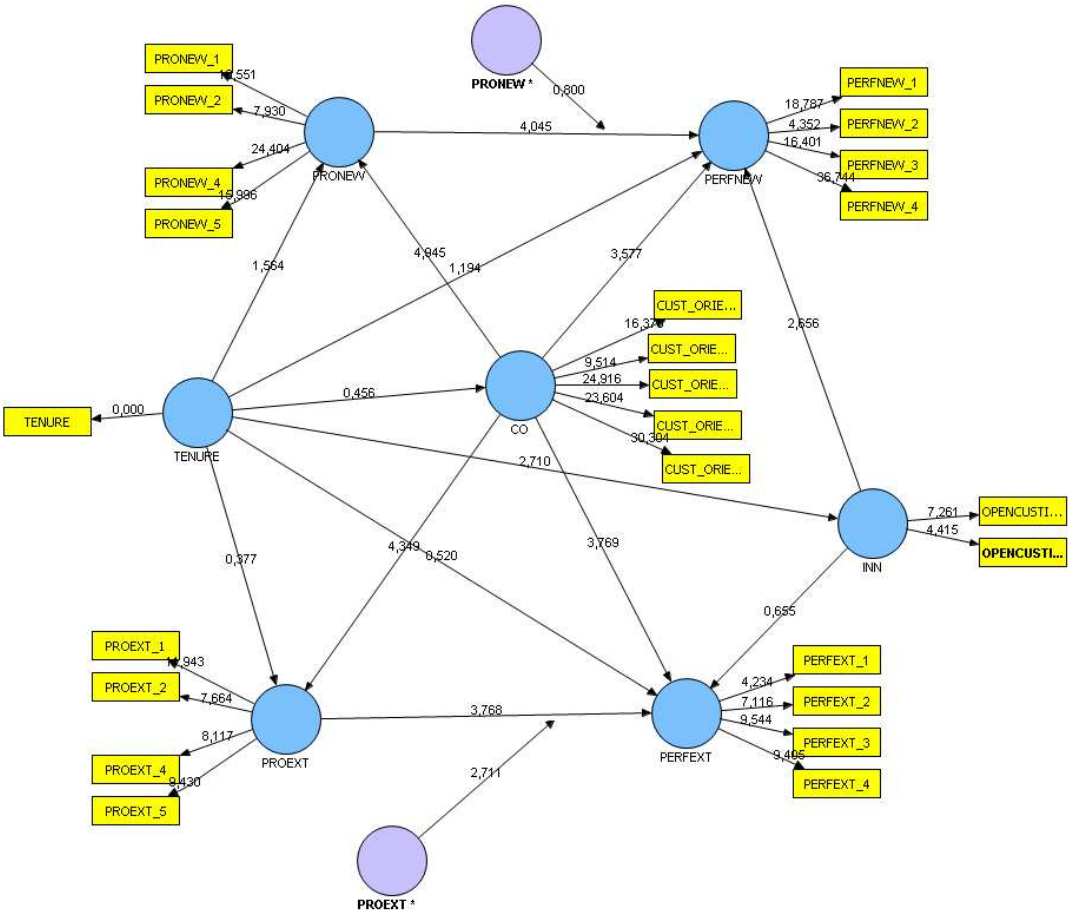
Til slutt noen spørsmål om deg selv.

75	Kjønn	□ Mann □ Kvinne	New

76	Fødselsår	[Action bar pull- down] <1944 – 2000]	New
77	Høyest fullført utdanning	□ Ungdomskole □ Videregående skole □ Folkehøyskole □ Årsstudium, høyere utdanning □ Bachelorgrad □ Mastergrad	New
78	Hvor mange år har du arbeidet for Euronics?	[Action bar pull- down] <1 – 40+]	New

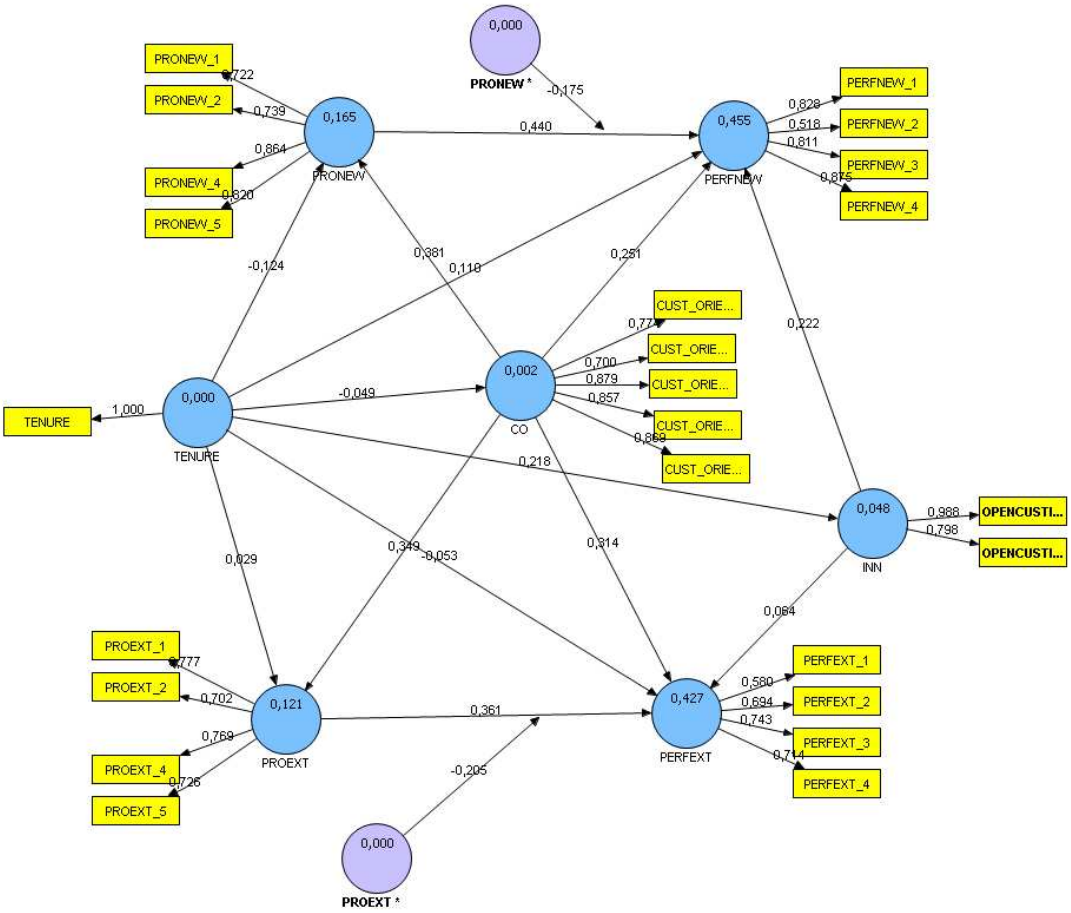
Mange takk for at du deltok I undersøkelsen! Hvis du har spørsmål kan du kontakte Stig-Endre via e-post (s.elvevoll@student.tue.nl) eller via telefon (+31631281154).

Appendix C – Comprehensive Significant Model



The model includes seven main elements, respectively proactive selling behavior for new products (PRONEW), proactive selling behavior for existing products (PROEXT), company tenure (TENURE), customer orientation (CO), customer innovativeness (INN), selling performance for new products (PERFNEW) and selling performance for existing products (PERFEXT). The square elements represent the items included in each main element. PROEXT* indicates the moderating effect of customer innovativeness on the relationship between proactive selling behavior for existing products and selling performance for existing products, and PRONEW* indicates the moderating effect of customer innovativeness on the relationship between proactive selling behavior for new products and selling performance for new products. The t- values presented on the arrows between the elements exceeding 1,650 are considered as significant relationships.

Appendix D – Comprehensive Fit Model



The model includes seven main elements, respectively proactive selling behavior for new products (PRONEW), proactive selling behavior for existing products (PROEXT), company tenure (TENURE), customer orientation (CO), customer innovativeness (INN), selling performance for new products (PERFNEW) and selling performance for existing products (PERFEXT). The values in the circles of the main elements represent the R- Square. The square elements represent the items included in each main element. PROEXT* indicates the moderating effect of customer innovativeness on the relationship between proactive selling behavior for existing products and selling performance for existing products, and PRONEW* indicates the moderating effect of customer innovativeness on the relationship between proactive selling behavior for new products and selling performance for new products. Values presented on the arrows indicate the correlation of the relationships. It can vary from -1 (perfect negative correlation) to 1 (perfect positive correlation), where 0 indicates no correlation at all.

Appendix E – Table of path correlations (t- values)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	**PRONEW**	1,000								
2	**PROEXT**	-	1,000							
3	**TENURE**	-0,124	0,029	1,000						
4	**CO**	0,381	0,349	-0,049	1,000					
5	**INN**	-	-	0,218	-	1,000				
6	**PRONEW***	-	-	-	-	-	1,000			
7	**PROEXT***	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000		
8	**PERFNEW**	0,440	-	0,110	0,251	0,222	-0,175	-	1,000	
9	**PERFEXT**	-	0,361	-0,053	0,314	0,064	-	-0,205	-	1,000