

Examination of the Differences in Selling Behavior on the Basis of Sex and Gender Identity

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ceyda Tanrikulu¹ & Asst. Prof. Dr. I. Efe Efeoglu²

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were any differences among salespeople in selling behaviors—namely adaptive selling behavior (ASB) and customer-oriented selling behavior (COSB)—across sex and gender identity groups. Survey data were collected via self-administered questionnaires mailed to a convenience sample of pharmaceutical salespeople working in Adana, Turkey. While the findings suggested no differences in either ASB or COSB on the basis of sex, they did reveal differences for both ASB and COSB on the basis of gender identity. Consequently, this study's major contributions for literature and for practitioners are to 1) fill the gap in determining the difference in selling behaviors of salespeople on the basis of gender identity in regards to both ASB and COSB; and 2) create a new dimension for explaining COSB. The findings were discussed, and suggestions were provided for theory and managerial implications.

Keywords: sex, gender identity, salespeople, adaptive selling behavior, customer-oriented selling behavior

1. Introduction

An organization significantly depends on its salespeople and their personal selling abilities in order to develop and sustain impactful customer relationships. Personal selling is specified as the only communication vehicle allowing for a marketing message to be adapted to the specific needs and beliefs of each individual customer (Spiro and Weitz, 1990). When an organization's marketing strategy is based on long-term customer relationships, its salespeople hold key roles to establishing them (Robinson et al., 2002; Weitz and Bradford, 1999). Compared to other employees, salespeople who maintain regular contact with customers constantly take advantage of opportunities to learn customer needs and subsequently create targeted product proposals and sales pitches (Chai et al., 2012). As a result, understanding and appropriately responding to selling environments as well as sales force turnover is quite important for an organization to manage customer relationships and achieve business objectives. The most fundamental change in today's selling environments is that of the relationship between the organization and the customer. Seldom, if at all, do customers enter into sales processes that do not provide "added value"; if they do, they end the process as soon as possible. The changing market conditions in recent times have precipitated the emergence of the stage of transition to common relationship in sales, and this stage has made salespeople into "value creators" charged with creating solutions that produce mutual benefits for both organization and customer in terms of profitability and long-term relationships (Çabuk, 2012:9-11). In this context, adaptive selling, admittedly, is success provider at personal selling (Chai et al, 2012). It has also been claimed that customer-oriented selling is the key variable underpinning successful marketing strategies (Genler et al, 1995), and in relationship selling and consultative selling (Guenzi et al, 2011) are key variables. As such, salespeople are expected to promote success in marketing activities by displaying adaptive selling behavior (ASB) and customer-oriented selling behavior (COSB).

¹ Department of International Trade and Finance, Adana Science and Technology University, YesilobaMah. OgretmenlerBulv. 46278 Sok. No:3 01180 Seyhan/ADANA Turkey. E-mail: ctanrikulu@adanabtu.edu.tr fax:+90 0 (322) 455 00 42

² Department of International Trade and Finance, Adana Science and Technology University, YesilobaMah. OgretmenlerBulv. 46278 Sok. No:3 01180 Seyhan/ADANA Turkey. E-mail: e.efeglu@adanabtu.edu.trfax:+90 0 (322) 455 00 42

Another essential shift in selling environments is the observable gender diversification of the sales force. The introduction of women into previously male-dominated sales professions, for instance, stands out because of the change in the biological gender of the sales force. Although the topic of this change in the makeup of the labor force was treated in many prior academic studies, they did not properly highlight the problems arising from the difficulty of establishing a consensus about whether differences exist among salespeople based on biological gender (sex) (Monciref et al., 2000; Beetles and Haris, 2005); furthermore, changes in the sales force resulting from the assertion of psychological gender, i.e., gender identity, also remain unclear. Generally, in terms of gender identity groups, key traits that a salesperson must possess in the sales stage, which is the second phase of the sales evolution, reflect masculinity, while androgynicity is essential in the common relationship stage, which is the current phase of sales evolution (Gelibolu and Tanrikulu, 2014; McFarland and Kidwell, 2006; Jolson and Comer, 1997; Lagace and Twible, 1990). On the other hand, societal shifts regarding gender identification (Demirtaş-Madran, 2012; Özkan and Lajunen, 2005; Twenge, 1997) would continue to have no impact on the diversity of the sales force on the basis of gender identity. According to the literature, COSB is affected by personal characteristics. Within this scope, analysis of differences between males and females is recommended in previous studies (Schwepker, 2003; O'Hara et al, 1991). Furthermore, it is necessary that managers understand the psychological influencers that affect approaches displaying COSB (Harris et al., 2005). Therefore, the consideration of psychological gender is required with respect to customer-oriented selling. However, through literature reviews, it was observed that COSB studies based on biological gender produced mixed results. No analysis based on psychological gender was found about this subject. In a review of literature about ASB, mixed results were also observed concerning the differences between male and female salespeople. Besides that, only limited number of studies based on psychological gender was observed to exist at all (Spiro and Weitz, 1990).

The mixed results based on sex found in the literature; the shift in selling environments; the change in salespeople's roles; and the rising significance of ASB and COSB for organizations make reviews of these two types of selling behavior necessary, in terms of both biological and psychological gender, with respect to theory and practice. Within this scope, review of gender identity based on psychological grounds, alongside male and female bias based on biological gender, can provide fresh new insights to elucidate behaviors of salespeople through classifications based on individual differences. Furthermore, considering that social and economic changes inevitably affect marketing, the impacts of such changes concerning the genders of individuals should not be ignored. In this regard, gender studies enable making significant social, economic, and cultural deductions (Stern, 1988:96). The purpose of the this study was to identify whether there is any difference among sex and gender identity groups for salespeople in terms of ASB and COSB. Unlike previous studies, this study examined gender identity, i.e. psychological gender, as distinct regarding COSB in the sales force. Furthermore, this study was conducted in an emerging market, in contrast to other studies carried out in developed countries. Therefore, the main expected contribution of this study to the literature as well as its managerial implications is the enrichment of knowledge concerning gender-based similarities and/or differences among salespeople in terms of two crucial selling behaviors—ASB and COSB—with a new approach. The remainder of the paper comprises a brief literature review culminating in the research hypotheses; research methodology; gathered results; a discussion of the results; and the conclusion.

2. Background and Hypotheses

2.1. Sex and Gender Identity

Based on biological grounds, gender is evaluated according to two categories: female and male. In addition, gender is also classified as masculine, feminine, androgynous, and indifferent based on psychological grounds (Bem et al, 1976). Those individuals who find the traits attributed to males in a society more appropriate for themselves are called masculine, while those who find the traits attributed to females in a society more appropriate for themselves are called feminine (Özkan and Lajunen, 2005:103). A male may hold feminine traits while a female may hold masculine traits. Androgynous individuals hold high levels of both masculine and feminine traits, while indifferent individuals hold low levels of both masculine and feminine traits (Bem et al, 1976). Words and phrases suggested by Bem include that relate to traits of masculinity include being responsible to family; dominant; generous; secretive; masculine; forceful; man of action; courageous; willing to take a stand; ambitious; idealist; defender of own beliefs; self-reliant; strict; act as a leader; analytical; bossy; willing to take risks; aggressive; and man of his word. Words and phrases used to describe feminine traits include being conscientious; understanding; sensitive to others' needs; yielding; friendly; lover of children; emotional; devoted; conciliator; tender; eager to soothe hurt feelings; non-user of harsh language; feminine; affectionate; solemn; loyal; compassionate; shy; soft spoken; and gentle (Dökmen,1999).

Along with their high levels of both masculine and feminine traits, androgynous individuals may display both instrumental-oriented behavior, namely orientation on having business done or problem-solving orientation; and expressive behavior, namely having emotional concern for welfare of others and group cohesiveness (Bem et al., 1976). Androgynous individuals may also be flexible in terms of mutual relationships between individuals. Such flexibility arises depending on the situational convenience of the behavior (Spiro and Weitz, 1990).

2.2. Adaptive Selling Behavior

Adaptive selling behavior (ASB) is defined as "*the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation*" by B. Weitz, et al. (1986). It relates to a reactive adaptation in selling strategies, tactics, social style, verbal communication, and physical appearance of the salesperson (Giacobbe et al., 2006). In this manner, salespeople who exhibit high levels of ASB utilize different sales approaches and adjust their strategies according to individual sales encounters (Marks et al., 1996; Spiro and Weitz, 1990). In literature, facets of ASB have been predicated as follows: recognition that different sales approaches are needed for different customers (Spiro and Weitz, 1990); confidence in the ability to use a variety of different sales approaches; confidence in the ability to alter the sales approach during a customer interaction; collection of information about a sales situation to facilitate adaption; and the actual implementation in different situations (Robinson et al., 2002; Spiro and Weitz, 1990).

It is argued that the greatest advantages are obtained from ASB under the following conditions (Giacobbe et al., 2006:120):

- the buying task is either a modified re-buy or new task purchase;
- the buyer's perceived purchase risk is high;
- the relationship is believed to produce considerable future profit opportunities;
- the buying center is complex;
- the offering is complex;
- customers' needs vary considerably;
- the seller has the resources to alter various facets of the offering; and
- the seller's perceived importance of the sale is high.

In a review of the sales literature, previous studies on ASB based on gender identity were observed to have reached mixed results. The traits of women that support ASB resulted in hypotheses that female salespeople were more engaged in ASB activities. However, it was revealed in aforementioned studies that there was no difference between male and female salespeople (Kara et al., 2013; Franke and Park, 2006). For instance, female characteristics of being less aggressive, more agreeable, and more emphatic (Franke and Park, 2006) as well as skilled at establishing long-term relationships (Kara et al., 2013; Franke and Park, 2006) would have suggested that female salespeople would display more ASB. However such studies (Levy and Sharma, 1994; Siguaw and Honeycutt, 1995) revealed that there was no difference between male and female salespeople in terms of displaying ASB (Kara et al., 2013; Franke and Park, 2006). On the other hand, although it was claimed to have no general difference between groups based on sex in a study on this subject, young female salespeople were indicated to have displayed more ASB once age and gender variables were considered together. In yet another study, it emerged that women had more of a tendency to use techniques correlating ASB with a slight twist. In light of major findings in the literature on this subject and claims that the discrimination between male and female salespeople decreased due to changing selling environments, no difference was expected to be found between male and female salespeople in terms of adaptive selling behavior. Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: No difference exists between male and female salespeople regarding ASB.

Being flexible about relationships between individuals is regarded to be one of the most significant factors of observable ASB (Spiro and Weitz, 1990). Within this context, androgynous individuals were expected to display higher levels of ASB since they possessed greater flexibility during interpersonal interactions. Such expectation is supported scientifically as well, upon detection of a significant relation between ASB skills of salespeople and androgenicity statistically (Spiro and Weitz, 1990).

According to behavioral flexibility theory, androgynous individuals who hold masculine and feminine traits together can provide more appropriate responses to a variety of situations compared to other individuals (Eichinger, 2000). When viewed from the point of behavioral flexibility, androgynous can have adaptation advantage—in other words they can display masculine or feminine behavior depending on the situation and provide appropriate responses, feel relaxed, and skillfully adapt to unexpected situations in the different sales conditions they face (Jolson and Comer, 1997). In light of this information, it becomes evident that androgynous traits are required to display ASB. Therefore, androgynous salespeople are skilled at displaying examples of ASB that requires flexibility since they hold behavioral flexibility (Gelibolu and Tannıkulu, 2014). Based on the above information, it was expected that there would be a difference between gender identity groups in terms of displaying ASB, and that androgynous individuals would display more ASB. Thus:

H2: There is a difference exists between gender identity groups regarding the adaptive selling behavior.

2.3. Customer Orientation

Customer-oriented selling behavior (COSB) is based on marketing concept (Martin and Bush, 2003). Marketing concept is a management philosophy that requires an organization to coordinate its organizational activities based on the simultaneous satisfaction of customer needs and its own objectives as well. Saxe and Weitz (1982) defined COSB “*as the practice of the marketing concept at the level of the individual salesperson and customer.*” The authors indicated that customer-oriented salespeople displayed behaviors that satisfied customers on a long-term basis. They characterized COSB as follows:

- the desire to help customers make satisfactory purchase decisions;
- helping customers assess their needs;
- offering products that will satisfy those needs;
- describing products accurately;
- avoiding deceptive or manipulative influence tactics; and
- avoiding the use of high pressure.

Recently, a new definition of customer orientation in salespeople has been suggested by Singh and Koshy (2012), in which “customer-centric behaviors, which include gathering and disseminating information relevant to consumers, to understand and continuously fulfill their hierarchy of latent needs, to keep them satisfied by creating and delivering value through long-term relationships”. It is seen that both definitions emphasize satisfying customer needs and establishing long-term relationships. It is not certain that customer orientation increases sales within a short period, yet it can be possible for customer orientation to influence customer relationships positively, increase customer satisfaction, and create long-term relationships (Kara et al., 2013). In a review of customer orientation based on biological genders, mixed results are seen to be available in the literature. It is argued that female salespeople might be more persuasive and effective in selling (Pinar et al., 2007), value customer relationships more compared to male salespeople (Bush and Bush, 1978), and are more concerned with customer satisfaction (Franke and Park, 2006). According to Siguaw and Honeycutt (1995), the possibility of acting as an advisor who provides solutions to customer problems and helping customers achieve their goals is more important for female salespeople compared to male salespeople. The common finding of previous studies on this subject is that female salespeople are more customer-oriented than male ones (Kara et al., 2013; Franke and Park, 2006; Pettijohn et al., 1997; Siguaw and Honeycutt, 1995; O’Hara et al., 1991). However, there is also a finding in the literature that sex is not associated with the customer-orientation level (Pullins et al., 2004; Schwepker, 2003; Widmier, 2002). In this study, it is anticipated that female salespeople are more customer-oriented. Thus:

H3: No difference exists between male and female salespeople regarding COSB.

When handling COSB’s basic characteristics in terms of masculine and feminine traits, it can be recognized that they are compatible with one another. Long-term satisfaction, consideration, and fulfillment of customer needs as well as strong long-term relationships with customers stand out as the common emphasis in definitions of COSB. Feminine traits such as being understanding, sensitive to the needs of others, likable, soft-spoken, gentle, and tactful satisfy the key dynamics of COSB in understanding and fulfilling customer needs. On the other hand, masculine traits such as being dominant, ambitious, analytical, willing to take risks, and a man of his word cannot be overlooked as necessary for enduring and beneficial relationships between the organization and its customers.

Other undeniable traits are flexibility and adaptability, which are attributed to androgenicity. Conciliating between the organization and the customer, consolidating the mutual benefits of these two groups while in the meantime achieving each of their own individual objectives are the primary duties of today's salespeople. However, flexibility and adaptation are required in order to achieve it. Therefore, coherence between the objectives of both parties is quite important for customer orientation. Recent studies in sales management indicating that salespeople with high levels of adaptiveness demonstrate high levels of customer orientation (Kara et al., 2013) support this statement. In light of the information stated above, a difference in terms of customer orientation between gender identity groups is expected to occur in this study. Thus:

H4: A difference exists between gender identity groups regarding COSB.

3. Method

3.1. Sample

The sample consisted of salespeople from the pharmaceutical sector in Adana, Turkey. The study uses convenience sampling, and carried out a survey among salespeople via the method of self-administered mail questionnaires over three months in 2014. The variety of demographical features of the participants was taken into account during the distribution of the questionnaires. Reminder e-mails were sent in order to increase survey response. In total, 225 out of 300 surveys sent via e-mail were returned with feedback, all of which were acceptable for analysis. The demographic characteristics of respondents were presented in Table 1. Female respondents comprised 26.2% of the population and 73.8% were male. Most of the respondents were male as in previous studies (Kara et al., 2013; Efeoglu and Ozgen, 2007; Siguaw and Honeycutt, 1995) owing to the medical sector being predominantly male-dominated. Average age was between 31-35 years; 72.4 % of respondents were married; and 51 % of participants had a monthly income of more than 4000 TL. In addition, most had bachelor's degree (71.2 %).

Table1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	n	%	Variables	n	%
Gender			Income (TL)		
Female	59	26.2	1000-2000	18	8.2
Male	166	73.8	2001-3000	42	18.6
Education Level			3001-4000	50	22.2
Below bachelor's	18	8	4001-5000	51	22.6
Bachelor's	160	71.2	Over 5000	64	28.4
Master's	47	20.8	Age (in years)		
Marital Status			18-24	4	1.8
			25-30	50	22.2
Single	62	27.6	31-35	73	32.4
Married	163	72.4	36-40	59	26.2
			41-45	27	12
			Over 45	12	5.4

3.2. Questionnaire and Scale

The questionnaire form contained items to measure ASB, COSB, and gender identity. The respondents were required to indicate their degree of agreement with a total of 50 statements as well as respond to 5 demographical questions. The seven-point Likert scales formed as, '1 - certainly disagree', '4 - neither agree nor disagree', and '7 - certainly agree' was used for ASB, COSB, and selling-orientation. In the scale of gender identity, '7 means never suitable; 4 means neither suitable nor unsuitable; 1 means always suitable'. Well-established scales were purposive to facilitate appraisal of the research variables. Therefore, all the measures were drawn from previous studies in the literature. Robinson et al.'s (2002) short version of ASB scale (ADAPTSV) was used to measure ASB. COSB was assessed using the short form SOCO scale taken from Thomas et al. (2001). As for gender identity, a brief Turkish form of the Gender Identity Inventory, reliability and validity analyses and adaptation to Turkish society of which was made by Dökmen (1991) was employed. As a pre-test, preliminary versions of the questionnaire were trialed with 44 salespeople to assure that the participants understood the questions clearly and that no semantic and measurement problems existed. After making necessary revisions, the questionnaire was released to participants. Questionnaires took 15 minutes on average to complete.

3.3. Measure Validation and Descriptive Statistics

To determine the reliability of the scales, Cronbach α coefficients were calculated. The internal consistency for all of the scales were acceptable reasonable, seeing that the reliability of each scale exceeded the criterion of 0.70 typically judged as acceptable (Hair, 1998), as shown in Table 2. It was observed that the respondents had medium-level ASB and had relatively high job COSB (Table 2). Also, a medium level of correlation between ASB and COSB was observed ($r=0.598$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	Item	α	Mean	Std. Dev.
ASB	5	0.823	5.701	1.168
COSB	5	0.869	6.294	0.925

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); 1 - certainly disagree; 4 - neither agree nor disagree; 7 - certainly agree; ASB: adaptive selling behavior; COSB: Customer-oriented behavior

3.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 16 software (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). The analysis of independent sample *t*-test was used to determine whether there is a difference in sex and gender identity groups regarding ASB and COSB.

4. Results

The results of the *t*-test analyses carried out to test the hypothesis were reported in Table 3. It can be understood from the *t*-test that there were no significant statistical differences between sex groups in either ASB ($t=-1.357, p>0.05$) and COSB ($t=-0.012, p>0.05$). Therefore, H1 was supported and H3 was not. The results indicated that both women and men had equal means regarding ASB and COSB. Among participants, those with a median score of 5.55 and above for answers given to femininity statements in the gender identity scale were determined as feminine and those with a median of 5.20 and above in respect of answers given to masculinity statements were determined as masculine. Dökmen (1999) suggested that respondents below medians in both categories were classified as indifferent and those above these medians were classified as androgynous. Based on this suggestion, 6.2% (14 participants) of participants were classified as feminine, 35.6 % (80 participants) as masculine, 47.1% (106 participants) as androgynous, and 11.1 % (25 participants) as indifferent. In this study, only masculine and androgynous groups were analyzed since for a solid statistical analysis each group should have at least 30 respondents (Altunışiket.al., 2002).

Table 3: Results of T-Test

Variables	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Levene's sig.	t	Sig.	Results
ADSB Women Men	56 169	5.500 5.768	1.334 1.103	0.017	-1.357	0.178	Women=men
COB Women Men	56 169	6.292 6.294	0.957 0.917	0.753	-0.012	0.990	Women=men
ADSB Mas And	80 106	5.592 6.100	1.079 1.016	0.524	-3.254	0.001	Mas < And
COSB Mas And	80 106	6.190 6.641	0.948 0.562	0.009	- 4.051	0.000	Mas < And

ASB: adaptive selling behavior; COSB: Customer-oriented behavior; mas: masculine; and: androgynous

The results of the *t*-test for the gender identity group differences were presented in Table 3. It was deduced from the results of the *t*-test that there existed statistically significant differences between gender identity groups in both ASB ($t=-3.254$, $p<0.05$) and COSB ($t=-4.051$, $p<0.05$). Thus, H2 and H4 were accepted. Masculine and androgen respondents had different means regarding these selling behaviors. The means of each group were taken account of to determine which group had higher level of them. The results exhibited that the means of androgynous respondents were higher in both ASB (6.100) and COSB (6.641).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined whether there was any difference in salespeople's selling behaviors among sex and gender identity groups, with a focus on adaptive selling behaviors (ASB) and customer-oriented selling behaviors (COSB). According to a significant finding of the study, male and female respondents displayed ASB at equal levels. Such a finding supports previous studies (Kara et al., 2013; Franke and Park, 2006; Siguaw and Honeycutt, 1995; Levy and Sharma, 1994). Although women are less aggressive, more agreeable, and emphatic (Franke and Park, 2006) and considered to be skilled at establishing long-term relationships (Franke and Park, 2006), males may also display traits that can be considered feminine in response to changing selling environments. Accordingly, both male and female respondents were observed to have displayed ASB and COSB. Contrary to assumptions, females did not display COSB more than males; in other words, males and females were observed to have no difference in this regard. Such a finding is consistent with some studies in literature (Pullins et al., 2004; Schwepker, 2003; Widmier, 2002). It might also be accepted as a reflection of the result of previous study in Turkey indicating equality between female and male perceptions of customer-oriented requirements (Tengilimoglu et al., 2005).

The increase in competition in selling environments makes COSB necessary regardless of whether a salesperson is male or female. Salespeople are expected to satisfy customer expectations and establish long-term relationships. In such regard, male salespeople cannot be expected to ignore customer requests and needs. Gender identity (psychological gender) is also required to be taken into consideration in terms of the ASB and COSB displayed by male and female respondents, which have no difference. In psychological gender studies, masculinity traits of females were indicated to increase based on cultural, social, and economic grounds (Özkan and Lajunen, 2005; Twenge, 1997), while changes in gender identities were indicated to continue (Demirtaş-Madran, 2012; Özkan and Lajunen, 2005; Twenge, 1997).

Therefore requirements of changing selling environments and the change in psychological gender of individuals in society suggest that male and female salespeople no longer hold the stereotyped traits based on biological gender. Based on the information submitted up to now, it can be stated that biological gender is not significant in terms of displaying ASB and COSB. In this study, it was seen that there were differences between gender identity groups. Consistent with the literature (Spiro and Weitz, 1990), androgynous salespeople display higher levels of ASB, which is among the key findings of the study. Androgynous individuals' behavioral flexibility, i.e. their outward display of masculine or feminine behaviors based on circumstances as well as skill level in providing appropriate responses, feeling relaxed and thus adapting to unexpected situations (Jolson and Comer, 1997), are the reason why they display ASB. Another significant finding of the study is that androgynous salespeople are more engaged in COSB. Being customer-oriented requires holding both masculinity and femininity together. Feminine traits (being understanding, sensitive to needs of others, etc.) include considering and satisfying customer needs as key dynamics of customer orientation; and masculine traits (being a man of action, man of his word, etc.) include the features required for permanent and effective relationships between company and customer. Neither femininity nor masculinity alone enables being customer-oriented. Therefore such traits need to be combined, and this melding is best exhibited by androgynous salespeople. Also, behavioral flexibility displayed by androgynous salespeople facilitates their roles in being flexible and adaptive in order to establish a lasting relationship between company and customer.

The findings of the study allowed for the development of certain suggestions for theory and implications. In this study, it was seen that individual differences of selling behaviors among salespeople arose from psychological gender differences rather than biological gender differences. Furthermore, it was understood with this study that the business of sales was no longer a masculine profession but one requiring both masculine and feminine traits. In this regard, it is recommended to take gender identity into consideration in order to comprehend differences in sales force and optimize performance. Androgynous salespeople have more of the characteristics that are emphasized and modeled by managers, namely high levels of ASB and COSB; therefore, it is recommended to take androgenicity into account as an important criterion in the selection and training of salespeople. By encouraging androgenicity in current salespeople, it may be ensured that the selling behavior of salespeople reaches desired levels. It can be also helpful to motivate salespeople from other gender groups through professional development that will help them develop androgynous traits, especially behavioral flexibility. As there are mostly masculine persons in the sales profession, this type of training should put emphasis on certain feminine characteristics to steer these salespeople toward androgenicity.

Although this study fills the gap in the literature regarding gender in sales management, it has some limitations. Firstly, the sampling only covered salespeople in the medical sector, and the methods and size of sampling have prevented us from generalizing the results of the study. Therefore, future studies can expand the sample size and use random sampling methods to generalize the results. Secondly, this study examined only ASB and COSB. As studies on gender identity in the sales literature are inadequate, it will be useful to analyze other behaviors of salespeople in terms of gender roles for academic studies so that practitioners can understand these behaviors. Third, in this study, only masculine and androgynous groups were compared among gender identity groups. Therefore, the study gave no information concerning feminine and undifferentiated individuals. However, it is known by nature of sales profession that mostly androgynous and masculine individuals constitute sales force (Gelibolu and Tanrıku, 2014). In conclusion, this study revealed that there were no differences in ASB and COSB between sex groups. This finding may be a sign indicating that male and female salespeople might have similar selling behaviors, and the bias between male and female decreased in sales profession. Also, such a finding may be accepted as a factor that strengthens the position of female salespeople in the sales force and encourages them to adopt this profession. Furthermore, this study showed that gender identity was important in terms of ASB and COSB, and brought a new and different dimension to the explanation of salespeople's selling behaviors. It also provided further support for androgynous individuals having the most appropriate gender identity for the sales profession, considering they had a high level of ASB and COSB.

References

- Altunışık, R., Coşkun, R., Yıldırım, E. and Bayraktaroğlu, S. 2002. Sosyal Bilimlerde Araştırma Yöntemleri. Extended 2. Edition, Sakarya Kitabevi, Sakarya.
- Beetles, A. and Haris, L. (2005). Marketing, Gender and Feminism: A Synthesis and Research Agenda, *The Marketing Review*, 5, 205-231.
- Bem, S. L., Martyna, W., and Watson, C. (1976). Sex typing and androgyny: further explorations of the expressive domain. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34(5), 1016.
- Busch, P. and Bush, R.F. (1978). Women contrasted to men in the industrial sales force: job satisfaction, values, role clarity, performance, and propensity to leave. *Journal of Business Research*, 15, 438-48.
- Chai, J., Zhao, G., and Babin, B. J. (2012). An empirical study on the impact of two types of goal orientation and salesperson perceived obsolescence on adaptive selling. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 32(2), 261-273.
- Çabuk, S. (2012). Profesyonel Satış Yönetimi. Nobel Kitapevleri, Adana.
- Demirtaş-Madran, H. A. (2012). Cinsiyet, Cinsiyet Rolü Yönelimi ve Düşünme İhtiyacı, *Türk Psikoloji Yazıları*, 15(29), 1-10.
- Dökmen, Z. Y. (1999) Bem cinsiyet rolü envanteri kadınsılık ve erkeksilik ölçekleri Türkçe formunun psikometrik özellikleri. *Kriz Dergisi*, 7(1), 27-40.
- Dökmen, Z. Y. (1991). Bem cinsiyet rolü envanterinin geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *Ankara Dil ve Tarih-Cografya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 35(1), 81-89.
- Efeoglu, İ. E. and Özgen, H. (2007). İşaile Yaşam Çatışmasını İş Stresi ve Stresin Doyumu Ve Örgütsel Bağlılık Üzerindeki Etkileri: ilaç Sektöründe Bir Araştırma. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 16(2).
- Eichinger, J., Heifetz, I.H., and Ingraham, C., (1991). Situational shifts in social role orientation: Correlates of work satisfaction and burnout among women in special education. *Sex Roles*, 25(7-8), 427-442.
- Franke, G. R., and Park, J. E. (2006). Salesperson adaptive selling behavior and customer orientation: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(4), 693-702.
- Gelibolu, L. and Tanrikulu, C. (2014). Satışçılarda Cinsiyet Kimliği: Kavramsal Bir İnceleme. *Ç.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 23(2), 243-252.
- Gengler, C. E., Howard, D. J., and Zolner, K. (1995). A personal construct analysis of adaptive selling and sales experience. *Psychology and Marketing*, 12(4), 287-304.
- Giacobbe, R. W., Jackson Jr, D. W., Crosby, L. A., and Bridges, C. M. (2006). A contingency approach to adaptive selling behavior and sales performance: Selling situations and salesperson characteristics. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 26(2), 115-142.
- Guenzi, P., De Luca, L. M., and Troilo, G. (2011). Organizational drivers of salespeople's customer orientation and selling orientation. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 31(3), 269-285.
- Jolson, M. A., and Comer, L. B. (1997). The use of instrumental and expressive personality traits as indicators of a salesperson's behavior. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 17(1), 29-43.
- Kara, A., Andaleeb, S. S., Turan, M., and Cabuk, S. (2013). An examination of the effects of adaptive selling behavior and customer orientation on performance of pharmaceutical salespeople in an emerging market. *Journal of Medical Marketing: Device, Diagnostic and Pharmaceutical Marketing*, 13(2), 102-114.
- Lagace, R. R. and Twible, J. L. (1990). The androgyny level of salespeople: Gooses and ganders, or all geese?. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 5(6), 641-650.
- Levy, M., and Sharma, A. (1994). Adaptive selling: the role of gender, age, sales experience, and education. *Journal of Business Research*, 31(1), 39-47.
- Hair, J.F., Anderson, R.E., Tahtam, R.L. and Black, W.C. (1998) Multivariate data analysis. International Fifth Edition, Prentice-Hall International, Inc., USA.
- Harris, E. G., Mowen, J. C., and Brown, T. J. (2005). Re-examining salesperson goal orientations: personality influencers, customer orientation, and work satisfaction. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 33(1), 19-35.
- Marks, R., Douglas W. V., and Gordon J. B. (1996). A Psychometric Evaluation of the ADAPTS Scale: A Critique and Recommendations. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 16, 4 (Fall), 53-65.

- Martin, C. A., and Bush, A. J. (2003). The potential influence of organizational and personal variables on customer-oriented selling. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 18(2), 114-132.
- McFarland, R. G. and Kidwell, B. (2006). An examination of instrumental and expressive traits on performance: The mediating role of learning, prove, and avoid goal orientations. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 26(2), 143-159.
- Moncrief, W. C., Babakus, E., Cravens, D. W., and Johnston, M. W. (2000). Examining gender differences in field sales organizations. *Journal of Business Research*, 49(3), 245-257.
- O'Hara, B. S., Boles, J. S., and Johnston, M. W. (1991). The influence of personal variables on salesperson selling orientation. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 11(1), 61-67.
- Ozkan, T and Lajunen, T. (2005). Masculinity, Femininity, And The Bem Sex Role Inventory In Turkey. *Sex Roles*, 52(1-2), 103-110.
- Pettijohn, C. E., Pettijohn, L. S., and Parker, R. S. (1997). An exploratory analysis of the impact of salesperson customer-orientation on sales force productivity. *Journal of Customer Service in Marketing and Management*, 3(4), 5-24.
- Pinar, M., Eser, Z., and Hardin, J. R. (2007). A qualitative study of the recruiting of men and women for sales positions in Turkey. *Sex Roles*, 57(11-12), 879-888.
- Pullins, E. B., Reid, D. A., and Plank, R. E. (2004). Gender Issues in Buyer-Seller Relationships: Does Gender Matter in Purchasing?, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 40(2), 40-48.
- Robinson Jr, L., Marshall, G. W., Moncrief, W. C., and Lassk, F. G. (2002). Toward a shortened measure of adaptive selling. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 22(2), 111-118.
- Saxe, R., and Weitz, B. A. (1982). The SOCO scale: a measure of the customer orientation of salespeople. *Journal of marketing research*, 343-351.
- Schwepker Jr, C. H. (2003). Customer-oriented selling: A review, extension, and directions for future research. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 23(2), 151-171.
- Siguaw, J. A. and Honeycutt Jr, E. D., (1995) An examination of gender differences in selling behaviors and job attitudes. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 24(1), p.45-52.
- Singh, R., and Koshy, A. (2012). A new conceptualization of salesperson's customer orientation: Propositions and implications. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 30(1), 69-82.
- Spiro, R. L., and Weitz, B. A. (1990). Adaptive selling: Conceptualization, measurement, and nomological validity. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 61-69.
- Stern, B. B. (1988). Sex-role self-concept measures and marketing: A research note. *Psychology and Marketing*, 5(1), 85-99.
- Tengilimoglu, D., Korkmaz, S., Akinci, F., and Parsons, A. L. (2005). Managerial implications of medical sales representative perceptions of job duties, job qualifications, and other performance-related issues. *Health Marketing Quarterly*, 22(2), 3-26.
- Thomas, R. W., Soutar, G. N., and Ryan, M. M. (2001). The selling orientation-customer orientation (SOCO) scale: A proposed short form. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 21(1), 63-69.
- Twenge, J. M. (1997). Changes in masculine and feminine traits over time: A meta-analysis. *Sex Roles*, 36(5-6), p.305-325.
- Weitz, B. A., and Bradford, K. D. (1999). Personal selling and sales management: A relationship marketing perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27(2), 241-254.
- Widmier, S. (2002). The effects of incentives and personality on salesperson's customer orientation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31(7), 609-615.