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# A PILOT STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALES EMPLOYEE CAREER STAGE, LABOR PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPENSATION PLANS

By

Vanessa Prier Wickliffe

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ABSTRACT

A PILOT STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALES EMPLOYEE CAREER STAGE, LABOR PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPENSATION PLANS

By

Vanessa Prier Wickliffe

This study investigated the relationship of career stage and compensation plan to the productivity rates of retail salespeople. The study further sought to validate an instrument in a retail context in which it was not initially developed. Sixty questionnaires were administered to sales associates affiliated with two retail department stores. A response rate of 50 percent resulted. The level of productivity of these sales associates could not be differentiated by career stage position. Productivity rates of sales associates were found to differ by type of compensation plan used in regard to the ratio of actual sales to assigned, department and store sales. Finally, the Career Concern Inventory for adults scale was found to be a reliable but not valid measure of career concerns for this retail sample.

*To*
*my mother, Mary R. Kelley*
*and my dearest friend*
*Joyce Jones*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

For decades, retailers and other business and government officials have focused on productivity and more specifically labor productivity. The importance of labor productivity is based on the consensus that mankind is the reason for marketing activities as well as a means of creating those activities (Ingene, 1982). Labor productivity is of great importance to retailers because labor costs far exceed all other merchandising expenses in operating a retail store (Mark, 1971). Because of the utilization of goods and services produced by man and the high cost of labor to produce these goods and services, it is of great importance to retailers and marketers to identify, recruit and maintain a strong workforce consisting of the best qualified workers. Moreover, maintaining a strong, productive workforce requires an understanding of employees regarding changes that occur as they progress through a chosen career.

## Background

Productivity studies extend as far back as the 1960's (Hall, Knapp & Winston, 1961). In the beginning, productivity had two purposes: political and statistical (McAnally, 1963). The political purpose used labor productivity data to question the usefulness of a particular business enterprise. Today, however, greater emphasis is placed on the statistical purposes. There was a time when people were satisfied with

judging the success and efficiency of an enterprise by its profits, but when the desire arose to compare industrial efficiency between different countries, manpower was felt to be the best measure of productivity (McAnally, 1963). Hence, labor productivity began to be measured by the quantity of things produced against the manpower to produce them (Hall, Knapp & Winston, 1961). Beginning in the 1960's and continuing through the 1980's, research focused on the impact of market forces on productivity or changes in productivity over time (George, 1966; Good, 1984; Hall, Knapp & Winston, 1961; Ingene, 1982 & 1984; Lusch & Moon, 1984; Ratchford & Stoop, 1988). Continually, studies are developed to compare market forces relative to employee sales.

**Significance**

By the year 2000 it is predicted that the service industries--such as healthcare, education, government, advertising, communications, retail trade, insurance, and finance--will be a leading creator of new jobs and new wealth (Crooks, 1989). During this same time span, America will continue to age and the makeup of the labor force will continue to change. There will be 45 million workers ages 45 to 64 by the year 2000 (Kotulak, 1990). As Americans are living longer, their job tenure is lengthening. Moreover, retailers have acknowledged an increase in the number of salespeople making a career of entry-level positions. This has created a change in labor costs, which are a retailer's greatest investment (Cron, 1984). Because retailers want to achieve and maintain a high return on investment, it is imperative that high levels of productivity are evoked from the salespersons.

Motivating employees toward high productivity can be done more efficiently and effectively if management better understands how people change and develop over the span of a career.

## Statement of the Problem

Sales associate productivity is an important issue for retailers (Cron, 1988). High levels of productivity can be dependent on the proper use of human resources. The focus of most human resource departments is the training and development of sales associates as high producers. However, the problem is that training and development programs do very little to determine what underlying factors may influence levels of productivity of sales associates.

## Purpose of the Study

Retailers continually acknowledge the importance of labor productivity. Knowledge to help in the improvement of sales associate's productivity is needed. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between full-time salesperson's career stages and their labor productivity rates. This study also examined retail labor productivity rates by compensation plans. Lastly, the study tested the validity and reliability of a career development instrument in a retail setting.

## Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. to determine the productivity rates of full-time salespeople.
2. to identify the career stage position of full-time salespeople.
3. to identify the compensation plans for full-time salespeople.

4. to determine if full-time salesperson's productivity rates differ by their career stage position.

5. to determine if full-time salesperson's productivity rates differ by their compensation plan.

6. to test the career stage instrument in a retail setting.

## Research Questions

1. Will the productivity level of retail salespeople vary among the career stages?

2. Will the level of productivity differ by the sales associate's compensation plan?

3. Will the instrument be reliable and valid in a retail setting?

## Theoretical Framework

A career is a lifelong process that includes the preparation for and choice of an occupation (Cron & Slocum, 1986). Researchers in sociology, clinical psychology, and vocational psychology suggest that an individual's career can be viewed as a series of stages (Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977; Super, 1957) [See Table 1.1]. Researchers suggest that an individual's career concerns, developmental tasks, personal challenges, and psychosocial needs vary as progression occurs between stages. Issues regarding each concern occurs within each career stage. However, an individual is placed in a particular stage based on the level of importance of these issues.

Table 1.1

**Career Stage Characteristics**

| | Exploration → | Establishment → | Maintenance → | Disengagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Career Concerns** | -Finding an appropriate Occupational Field. | -Establishing a career in a particular Occupational Field. | -Holding on to what has been achieved. | -Completing one's career. |
| **Developmental Tasks** | -Matching skills with job requirements. | -Using skills to increase productivity.<br>-Developing creativity and innovativeness.<br>-Adjusting to working with greater autonomy. | -Maintaining a high level of performance.<br>-Developing a broader view of work and organization. | -Establishing a stronger personal identity outside of work.<br>-Maintaining an acceptable performance level. |
| **Personal Challenges** | -Professional self development. | -Producing superior results on the job in order to be promoted.<br>-Balancing the conflicting demand of family and career. | -Maintaining motivation and productivity.<br>-Facing concerns about aging and disappointments about what one has accomplished. | -Acceptance of career accomplishments as they are.<br>-Adjustment of self image. |
| **Psychosocial Needs** | -Seeks peer acceptance.<br>-Challenging position. | -Achievement.<br>-Self esteem.<br>-Independence.<br>-Competition. | -Mentoring of younger colleagues.<br>-Reduced competitiveness.<br>-Security. | -Detachment from organization and organizational life. |

Most identify these stages as exploration (preparation, trial, early career), establishment (development, mid-career), maintenance (maturity, late-career), and disengagement (decline) (Cron, 1984; Cron & Slocum, 1986; Cron, Dubinsky & Michaels, 1988; Jolson, 1974; Rosen & Jerdee, 1990). A discussion of the major issues, tasks, challenges and needs that researchers have suggested are associated with each career stage follows (Cron, 1984; Cron, Dubinsky & Michaels, 1988; Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977; Milkovich & Boudreau, 1988; Super, 1957).

Exploration

The exploration stage is considered to be the beginning of an individual's relationship with the work world. During this stage, an individual is concerned with finding an occupation in which he or she can succeed and grow as an individual (Cron & Slocum, 1986; Super, 1957). This stage also includes developing an understanding of self (a period of self discovery) and finding ones place in the community (Cron,1984). When an individual accepts an entry-level position, very little knowledge of skills and abilities needed to become a success on the job is known. Therefore, in order to become a contributing part of the organization, the individual attempts to match his or her talents with those required by the job (Cron, 1984; Cron & Slocum, 1986). Thus, the exploration stage occurs when the individual learns, follows, is taught and depends on others for help (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1988). Finally, the employee seeks support, peer acceptance and a challenging position within the organization during this stage.

Establishment

The second stage is the establishment stage where a commitment is made to an occupational field (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1988). Efforts are focused on stabilizing oneself and establishing a secure place in an organization (Super, 1957). The individual has learned the fundamentals of the job and the primary developmental emphasis is on using learned skills to increase productivity (produce superior results) as well as to achieve financial and personal success (Cron & Slocum, 1986). Other developmental tasks of great concern include: developing creativity and innovativeness and adjusting to working with greater autonomy. Personal challenges include producing superior results on the job in order to be promoted and balancing the conflicting demands of career and family (Cron, 1984; Cron, Dubinsky & Michaels, 1988; Super, 1957). The psychosocial needs of a person at this stage include achievement, esteem, independence and competition (Cron, 1984; Milkovich & Boudreau, 1988).

Maintenance

Once a person has established himself/herself in a career, the next stage is maintenance. During this stage, the individual's career concerns include holding on to what has already been achieved and reassessing one's career with the idea of possible redirection (Cron, 1984). The organization begins to draw on the individual's wisdom and perspectives. Also the individual is expected to serve as a mentor and role model for younger employees (Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977; Milkovich & Boudreau, 1988). Developmental task concerns include developing a broader view of work and organization, while maintaining a high performance level (Cron, 1984). Maintaining

a high level of performance requires adapting to changes, keeping current with new developments, and acquiring special knowledge and new skills (Cron, Dubinsky & Michaels, 1988). Personal challenges for persons at this stage include: (a) maintaining motivation although possible rewards have changed; (b) facing concerns about aging and disappointment over what one has accomplished; and (c) maintaining motivation and productivity (Cron, 1988). The psychosocial issues inherent in this stage include the individual's reduced interest in competitiveness, security in one's job, and taking responsibility for others (Cron, 1984; Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977; Milkovich & Boudreau, 1988).

Disengagement

The final stage of ones career is disengagement. This stage is considered to be the completion of one's career or withdrawal from the organization (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1988). The developmental tasks include: establishing a stronger self-identity outside of work and maintaining an acceptable performance level (Cron, 1984; Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977). Personal challenges include the ability to accept career accomplishments as they are and adjustment of self-image. The major psychosocial needs include: an individual's ability to successfully detach from the organization as well as the organizational world (Cron, 1984).

As a salesperson progresses through the stages, it is noted that various factors relative to career concerns, developmental tasks, personal challenges and psychosocial needs vary in importance. The variation in the importance of these factors may cause a variation in the performance/productivity of the salesperson.

Therefore a modified version of the Super (1957) and Levinson (1986) model is offered [See Figure 1.1].

## Conceptual Definitions

Productivity - "any innovation or measure, manipulation, change, or adjustment that can improve the performance of retailer for a given combination of resources (Samiee, 1990, p. 56)."

Career - "the individually percieved sequences of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences over the span of a person's life (Hall, Knapp and Winston, 1961, p. 4)."

Career Stages - "an established period of an individual's career as predicated by present career development."

Compensation plan- the method of pay used as an incentive or compensation for work done in a retail establishment as a sales associate.

## Research Assumptions

All individuals who choose a career develop that career through stages; therefore, as a person progresses in age, the development of the chosen career progresses. Further, the longer a person holds a sales position, the more likely they will consider it a career.

## Delimitation of the Study

This study only examines full-time salespeople in a retail establishment. Full-time sales associates are examined because they are more likely to develop a sales position as a career.

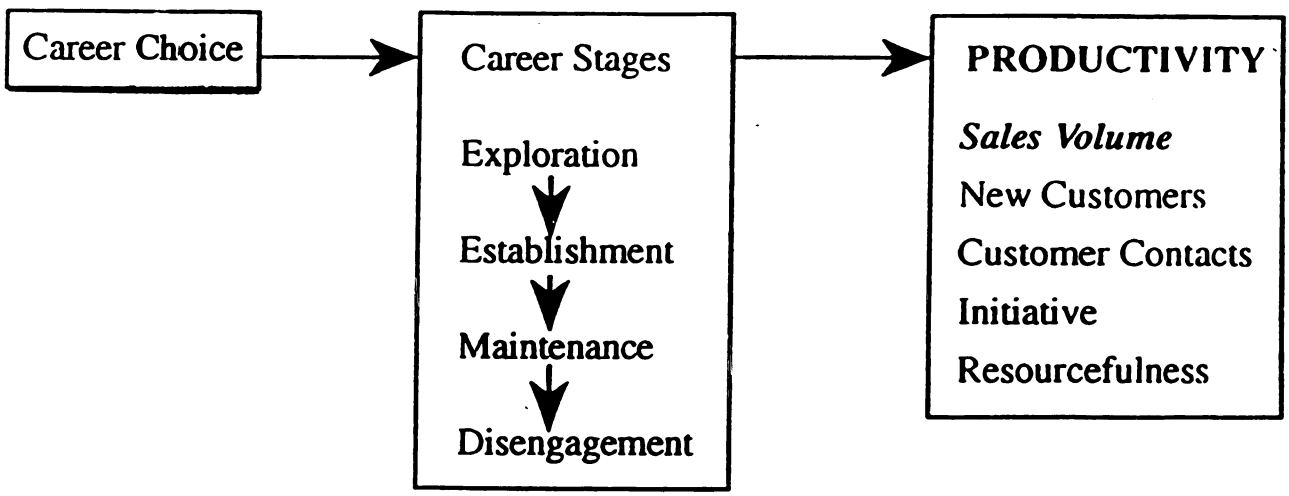



Figure 1.1. Career stage model for retail salespeople.

## Organization of Chapters

Chapter I provided an abstract of the present study, its background, significance and theoretical framework. A statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, conceptual definitions and research assumptions were also presented. Chapter II contains a review of literature relative to each of the research variables. Chapter III describes the research methodology. In Chapter IV the findings as they relate to the proposed hypotheses are discussed. Chapter V summarizes the study and offers recommendations for future studies.

## Chapter 2

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is evidence that as humans progress through life they choose a career to support needs that are "human constructed". That is, human constructed needs are those which are identified by man as necessary for everyday living and cannot be supplied by the natural environment. As life progresses, so does one's chosen career. The development of a chosen career through specified stages has been examined and researched by several scholars. Moreover, research has examined this progression through career stages and the effects of this progression on salesperson job performance. Most of this research has focused on how work-related perceptions, attitudes and motivation vary across career stages. Overall, salesperson performance is the center of most research studies instead of the actual level of productivity produced as this progression occurs.

Motivating employees toward high levels of productivity is an important managerial goal in any organization. In order to evoke the best level of productivity from all employees, it is necessary to investigate variables that may relate to any variation of productivity. This literature review first examines salespeople's characteristics followed by established models of career stages. This is followed by a review of research which investigates the relationship between performance and

productivity. An overview of productivity and the importance of measuring productivity is also explored in this section, and is followed by a discussion of retail labor productivity. Next, research concerning the relationship between career stage and performance is explored. The types of compensation plans and there relationship to labor productivity in the retail industry are also discussed.

## Salesperson Characteristics

The aging of America has changed the makeup of the workforce and the characteristics of persons who normally fill entry-level positions. Youth, ages 16-24, are those who normally embody the traditional retail sales position. However, the decrease in the number of youths ages 16-24 and an increase in the number of workers ages 45-65 causes a differential makeup of the entry level workforce (Davids, 1988; Wendling, 1988).

Retail sales associates also are characterized as people who have interest in sales work, a neat appearance, and the ability to communicate clearly. Their main responsibilities are to assist customers with their selections and purchases (Occupational Handbook, 1992-93). Persons filling the entry level position require no formal education and or other qualifications. Generally those filling these positions are students, retirees, and persons wanting to supplement their income (Occupational Handbook, 1992-93). However, some seek employment in retail as a prospective career.

## Career Stage Models

Research concerning career development is based on models developed by Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and Mckee (1978), Levinson (1986) and Super (1957) and Super, Zelkowitz & Thompson (1981). The Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) model, relates to individual career decisions, while Super's (1957) model relates to individual job attitudes. Another model developed by Jolson (1974) describes the career of employees as being cyclical. Only the Levinson, et. al. (1978), Super (1957, 1981), and Jolson's (1974) models are the most relevant to the current study and will be explored in greater detail.

### Model of Life Development

Levinson (1978) and his colleagues performed in-depth interviews with 40 men over a two-year period and proposed a model of life development. The central thesis of this model is that people (men), no matter what occupation or background, will grow through specific life stages during which there are different crucial activities and psychological adjustments that must be completed (Ornstein, Cron & Slocum, 1987). This model also suggests that these periods are closely associated with one's biological age and identifies four "life eras"- childhood (0-20), early adulthood (20-40), middle adulthood (40-60), and late adulthood (over 60). Research utilizing this model focuses on an individual's career adjustments as influenced and moderated by age.

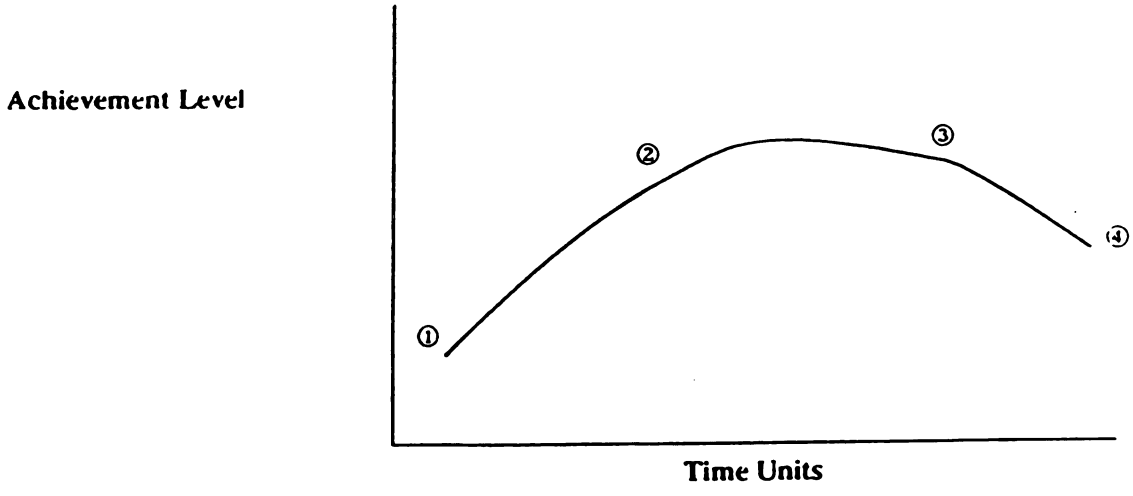
Career Stage Model

Super's (1957, 1981) model of career development suggests that an individual's career grows through life stages; however, this author states that the age of transition is very flexible and that each transition can involve a recycling through the stages. Super's (1957) formulation of career stages is determined by an individual's current circumstances and perceptions whereas Levinson's et.al (1978) model is based strictly on age.

The stages include exploration (age 15 to 25), establishment (age 25 to 45), maintenance (45 to 65) and decline (65 and older).

Salesman's Career Cycle

Jolson's (1974) salesman's career cycle implies that a salesman's career develops through stages identified as preparation, development, maturity and decline [See figure 2.1]. Jolson (1974) suggests that a salesman can repeat any stage or the entire cycle any number of times. The movement between stages is measured in terms of revenues and profits produced by the salesman. The salesman uses criteria of personal earnings, longevity, security, personal and family pleasures as well as other ego builders as measures to determine actual positions in the cycle. Under ideal conditions, the slope of the career curve in the preparation and development stage is steep, the time period of the maturity stage is substantial, and decline arrives as automatically as old age.




① Preparation Stage

② Development Stage

③ Maturity Stage

④ Decline

Figure 2.1. Career achievement model representing the progression of salesman's career development.

Note. This figure is from "The Salesman's Career Cycle" by M.A. Jolson, 1974, Journal of Marketing, 38,39.

## Performance and Productivity

The ability to use natural and human resources efficiently and effectively is the basis for the success of marketing institutions as well as the success of an economy which allows for a comfortable standard of living. The issue of productivity and performance emanates from these activities in the marketing field, thus making it necessary to understand their significance.

### The Nature of Performance

In Figure 2.2, the nature of performance is examined. An ***organization's role*** is to produce and distribute goods and services for the larger society. The complex task of distributing items rests on the shoulders of the retailing industry where jobs are divided into smaller, specialized components. In organizations, ***group roles*** are created and tasks are defined for each category. Performance expectations (dimensions of performance/role behavior), then, are determined by organizational structure (Miner, 1988). Hence, performance can be expressed as the extent to which an individual meets the expectations regarding how he or she should function or behave in the job (Miner, 1988). A set of expectations about what a person should do is identified as their ***individual role*** in the organization and is measured and evaluated by their actual workplace behavior (Miner, 1988). Workplace behavior includes: quality of output; quantity of output; time at work; and cooperation with others.

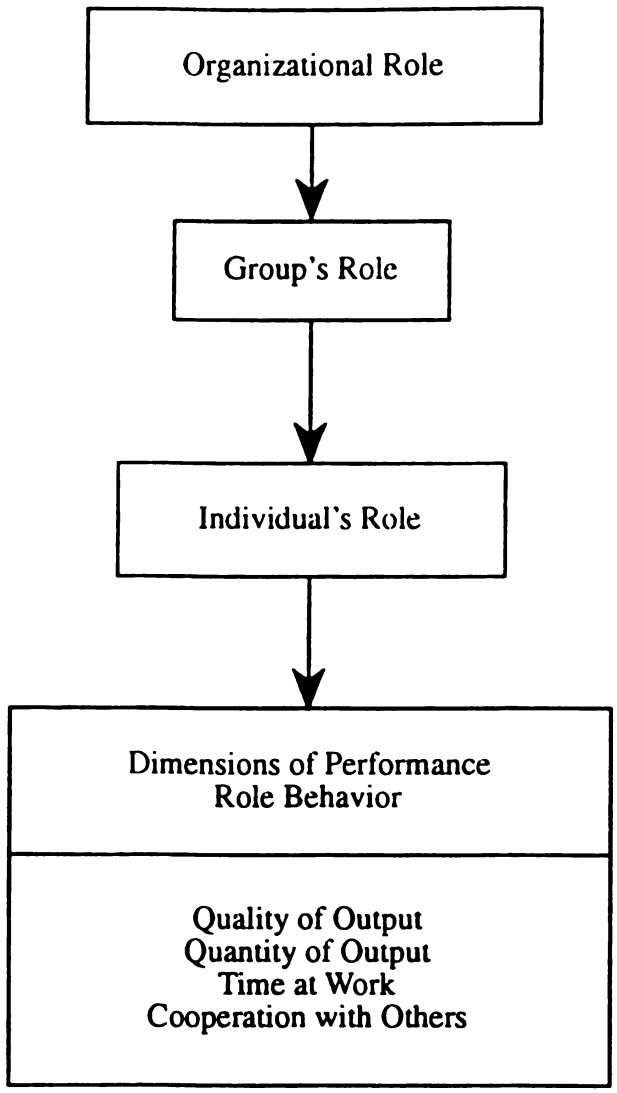



Figure 2.2. Organizational Role/Behavior Model

Note. This drawing is based onreadings from Organizational Behavior: Performance and Productivity by J. B. Miner, 1988, New York: Random House.

The Nature of Productivity

The efficient use of resources is an important issue in any business. Productivity has been defined as, "the relationship between the quantity of goods and services produced and the amount of labor, monetary capital, and natural resources used in production (Miner, 1988 p-21)." The importance of productivity varies from the *industrial* level to the *individual* level. On the industrial level, productivity growth leads to declines in costs and prices, while on the organizational level, productivity is essential to profits and ultimately to the company's survival. The group or team level must create a productivity level sufficient to meet company expectations in order for it to continue to exist. Finally, an individual's increase in productivity can contribute to self-fulfillment, financial rewards, and a higher standard of living. The method of measuring productivity also varies accordingly. Measuring productivity on the industrial, company, and group level is based on how efficient resources are used according to the actual output, compared to competitors and the established goals of the industry, company. However, on the individual level, productivity is the same as performance and the terms are used interchangeably (Miner, 1988) [See Figure 2.3].

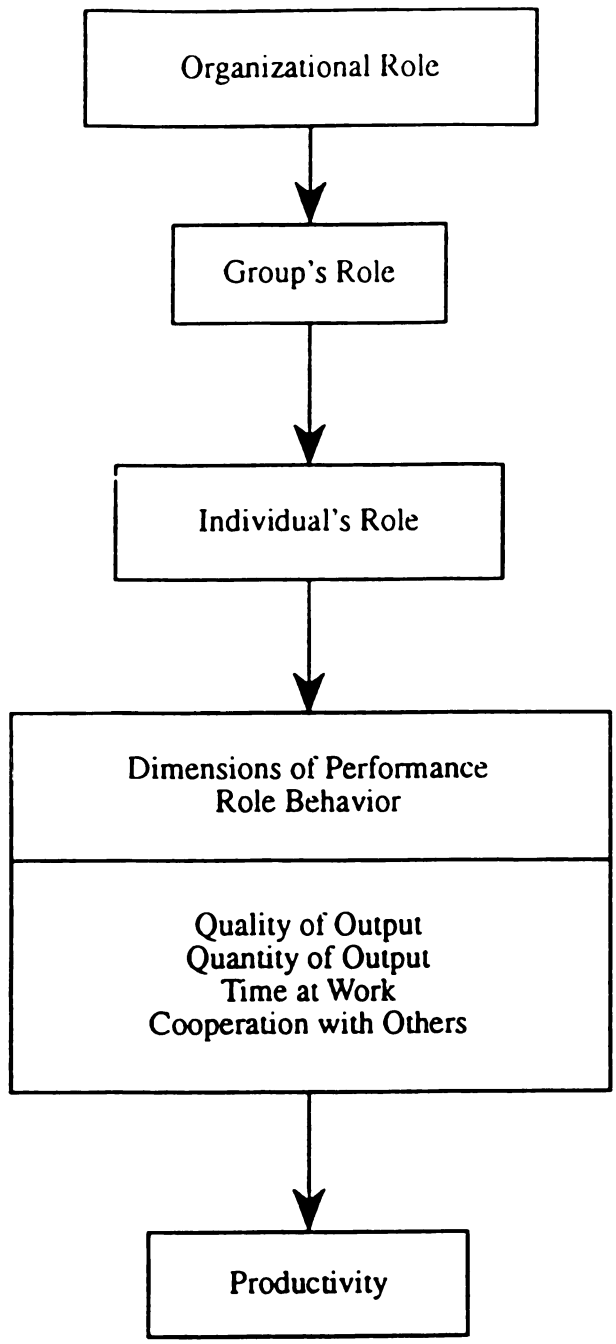



Figure 2.3. Retail Organizational Role/Behavior Model.

Note. This drawing is a modified representation of the original Organizational Role/Behavior model based on the readings from Organizational Behavior: Performance and Productivity by J. B. Miner, 1988, New York: Random House.

Retail Labor Productivity

Retail labor productivity has been a major issue for decades. During the 1980's, retailing was considered to be a major contributor to the United States' productivity *decline*. Labor productivity is of great importance to retailers because retailing is an intensive labor and inventory business. Additionally, labor productivity has continued to be lower in retailing than in any other economic sector (Bucklin, 1978b; Samiee, 1992; Takeuchi & Bucklin, 1977). Research concerning productivity explore areas such as food & clothing ( Hall, Knapp & Winston, 1961; Takeuchi & Bucklin, 1977); Store size (Good, 1984); store location (Lusch & Moon, 1984); advertising, (Lusch & Moon, 1984); and wage (Lusch & Moon, 1984, Schwartzman, 1971). The measure of productivity in retailing utilized in previous studies was sales per employee. The level of analysis was sales employee's in aggregate retail trade.

Hall, Knapp and Winston (1961) began this research stream using per capita income as a productivity measure. This study indicates that per capita income significantly affects labor productivity. Hall, Knapp, and Winston (1961) concluded that higher income influences consumer shopping patterns through increased automobile ownership. An increase in automobile ownership allows for increased shopping areas, thus causing increased competition among stores. Higher-income households value their time so they are likely to buy in higher quantities; hence, enhanced labor productivity. This is supported by Ingene (1982) who used data gathered from the National Retail Hardware Association. Further indications of the

Hall, Knapp, and Winston (1961) study suggests that higher savings are possible due to higher capital availability. Employees expect higher wages; thus the capital to labor ratio is higher. Labor is employed more carefully, therefore labor productivity increases.

A study conducted by George (1966) using seven industry groupings as well as an aggregate retailing index, support Hall, Knapp and Winston's (1961) findings concerning per capita income. Takeuchi and Bucklin (1977) analyzed per capita income in the United States and Japan and found it to affect labor productivity. Schwartzman's (1971) study, in which a U.S. grocery store sample was used, did not support Hall's et. al. (1961) findings.

Further discussion of wage as a determinant of labor productivity can be found in Schwartzman (1971) and Lusch and Moon (1984). Both studies suggest that higher wages create higher productivity. If low wages are paid, low quality employees would be attracted and low productivity as well as profitability would result.

Hall, Knapp, and Winston (1961) measured the growth rate of a food and clothing store in the United States over a twenty year period and found it to significantly affect labor productivity. Areas with high population growth tend to have higher profits, and higher profits imply more capital intensive technologies and superior layouts (Good, 1984). High profit levels are an indication of high labor productivity. Takeuchi and Bucklin (1977) examined United States and Japanese growth rates using retail establishments as their sample. They found that the rate of

growth did not significantly affect labor productivity. These findings are also supported by Ingene (1982).

According to Good (1984), grocery store size positively affects labor productivity. Good (1984) suggests that as store size increases, labor productivity increases, but only to a certain point. The implications of this is that as store size increases, labor productivity increases as well. Labor intensity, however, can cause labor productivity to decline.

Hardware store location was researched by Lusch and Moon (1984). Their findings suggest that store location is critical in determining and maximizing labor productivity. Further, the type of store along with store location influences level of labor productivity.

Capital intensity was examined by Ingene (1984). Increases in capital, when store size and retail space saturation are held fixed, will increase labor productivity. Advertising was not found to significantly influence productivity. According to Lusch and Moon (1984), stores with lower levels of advertising as a percentage of inventory had higher levels of labor productivity. This negative relationship between advertising and productivity occurs when the ratio of advertising to inventory is low.

Other variables that were examined and found not to significantly influence labor productivity include type of business, accounting practices, labor turnover rates, presence of unions (Good, 1984) sales per household, sales per geographical area (Schwartzman, 1971) and legal form of ownership (Lusch, Moon, 1984).

## Career Stage and Performance

The research that is available on career stage is related to job attitudes, work perceptions, performance, and motivation. The samples used among the studies consisted of industrial salespersons, public agencies and salaried professionals (Cron, 1984; Gould, 1979; Morrow & McElroy, 1987; Raelin, 1985). Gould (1979) defined career stages by using age classifications of: trial (under age 30); stabilization (ages 30 to 44); and maintenance (age 45 and over). Gould's (1979) revised version of Super's (1957) career stages grouped the decline stage with the maintenance stage. Using 133 employees of a public agency, Gould (1979) sought to investigate the relationship of job complexity to work satisfaction and performance over three career stages. The results of the investigation suggest that ones career stage impacts the relationship between (1) perceived job complexity and work satisfaction and (2) independently measured job complexity and performance.

Job complexity is defined as the "...extent to which a job: 1) lacks repetitiveness and routineness 2) provides opportunities for exercising independent judgement and 3) requires creativeness and originality in the performance of duties (Gould, 1979, p. 211)." Job complexity is estimated by a self-report measure and a report done by independent observers who rated job complexity after an extensive interview with each participant. Gould (1979) found a strong positive relationship between perceived job complexity and work satisfaction during the trial stage (ages 20-29). This suggests that the level of perceived job complexity affects the level of work satisfaction of people in the trial stage of their career. More specifically, the

less complex the salesperson perceived his/her job to be, the higher the satisfaction of salespeople in the trial stage. The researcher expected to find a negative relationship between complexity and satisfaction for the older group (maintenance stage), however, no support was found for this hypothesis. Further findings indicated that job complexity was found to be positively related to job performance in the stabilization stage (ages 30-44) which is considered to be the most creative stage of ones career. Stabilization is considered to be the most creative stage because persons in this stage have decided on a career and are attempting to be high - producers. Because the worker requires greater challenges and responsibilities, greater job complexity is considered to be a great motivator. Therefore, higher performers are given jobs that are less routine and have more opportunity for creativity and are allowed to make independent decisions. The researcher also found there was no significant relationship between job performance and job complexity in the trial or maintenance stage. These years are a period of learning and developing skills which are required in the chosen vocation. Therefore, performance is more likely to be related to the quality of supervision and coaching received during this period than to the complexity of the job itself.

Slocum and Cron (1985) tested the career stage model developed by Super (1957) and suggested that there are four distinct career stages (trial, stabilization, maintenance and decline) between the ages of 20 and 65 and that each stage has its own career issues, job-related attitudes, and behaviors. Because Super (1957) suggested that trial, stabilization and maintenance stages occur during a person's

working life (ages 20-65), the researchers only used those ages as the basis for the study. Using a sample of 675 salespersons from seven industrial companies, and attitudinal and career measures taken from previously developed instruments, Slocum and Cron (1985) found that within each stage, different attitudes and behaviors were found to predict sales performance. The findings suggest that one's career stage impacts one's attitudes and job behavior. More than those in any other stage, people in the trial career stage tend to shift jobs more frequently and have a greater propensity to relocate or leave their present employer to find the right job if it means a promotion. These findings also support Super's (1957) findings that persons in the stabilization career stage have stopped looking for different occupational choices and that these persons typically move between jobs and companies to advance in their chosen occupation. Further, the data supported Super's (1957) findings that people in the stabilization stage value their lifestyle moreso than greater increases in responsibility, pay or more challenging work. Finally, the findings support Super's (1957) implications that persons in the maintenance stage have leveled-off in terms of career aspirations and advancements. Slocum and Cron (1985) suggest that people in the maintenance stage are more satisfied with their work than people in any other stage, and people in the trial career stage are lower performers than people in the other stages.

Cron and Slocum (1986) assessed how job-related attitudes, perceptions of the work environment, and job performance vary according to a salesperson's career stage and the effects of territorial assignments, business strategies, job attitudes,

work perceptions, and age on the job performance of people in different career stages. A sample was drawn from six manufacturers of industrial equipment and supplies (ranging from building supplies to industrial chemicals) all of which had entry-level sales positions. The findings indicated that salesperson performance, regardless of career stage, is affected by their firm's business strategy and territorial assignment. Other data suggested that career stage positively affects job attitudes and work perceptions. Salespeople in the exploration stage lacked job commitment was reflected by their low job involvement. They were less satisfied with their work, supervisors, and promotional opportunities than people in other career stages. Exploration stage people were also found to be lower performers than those in the establishment and maintenance stage. During the establishment stage, salespeople were found to be more settled in their career choice and are attempting to build on that career choice. The change in career focus was accompanied by feelings of greater job involvement, success, and satisfaction. The findings suggest that people in the maintenance stage are very positive despite their movement into this stage. Responses further indicated that maintenance stage salespeople are highly involved and challenged by their work describing themselves as successful. Most importantly, salespeople in the maintenance stage generally had high performance rates. The disengagement stage indicated that these people may disengage from their jobs before being faced with retirement. It also indicated that job attitudes and perceptions of the work environment are not associated with performance in the disengagement stage.

Cron, Dubinsky and Michaels (1988) examined the influence of career stage on salesforce motivation (as measured by the Expectancy Theory). A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 227 salespeople employed by a manufacturer of commercial and residential building materials and supplies. The findings suggest that a salesperson's career stage is not related significantly to higher order reward valences or to expectancy estimates, but is significantly related to lower order valences and instrumentalities. Age was found to be inversely related to the valence for promotion, the sales quota expectancy, and the promotion instrumentality. That is, younger salespeople have a greater desire to be promoted and they feel that if they work harder, they will be more likely to exceed their sales quota. Additionally, younger people feel that they will be promoted if they surpass their performance targets. Further, these findings suggest that exploration stage salespeople do not feel they will be rewarded for being effective performers. Exploration salespeople were found to have the lowest levels of performance in both dollar volume of sales generated and percent of quota achieved. For the establishment stage, it was found that promotion is an important aspect of the success ladder. Promotion signifies personal growth as well as corporate acknowledgement for a job well done. Findings for the maintenance stage do not support the view that these individuals are passive. With the exception of promotion, maintenance stage salespeople are found to be similar to establishment stage salespeople, and have higher average sales volumes and quota percentages than salespeople in the other three career stages. Cron, Dubinsky and Michaels (1988)

also indicated that people in the disengagement stage are found to perform at minimally acceptable levels. Salespeople in the disengagement stage are also found to have a low desire for pay increases and their performance relative to quotas are likely to be below average.

## Retail Compensation Plans

The consensus among sales executives and human resource managers is that compensation is the most important element in a program for the management and motivation of sales associates (Steinbrink, 1978). The available findings, however, focus on determining the appropriate method needed to improve sales associate's productivity and therefore increase profits. Presently, stores are using wage-plus-commission and commission-only compensation plans (Bivens, 1989; Dunkin, 1989; Gilman, 1992). The commission plan allows the salesperson to be paid in direct proportion to their sales (Steinbrink, 1978). Such a plan includes straight commission and commission with a draw[1]. This compensation plan has several variations, which includes: base salary, base salary plus commission on all sales; salary plus bonus on sales over quota, salary plus commission plus bonus and commission only (Steinbrink, 1978). Base salary for retail sales range from $4.25 (minimum wage) to $6.56 an hour (Occupational Handbook, 1992-93; Wright & Dwyer, 1990). However, base pay can be found to be higher in areas where retailers find it hard to attract and retain workers. Commission rates vary by type of establishment and merchandise sold (Occupational Handbook, 1992-93).

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[1]Base salary.

## Retail Compensation Plans and Labor Productivity

Over the years, retail sales commissions were a fairly simple, non-controversial concept and seemed to work well (Gilman, 1992). However, controversy has arisen relative to the effectiveness of commission compensation plans. Some retailers cite problems such as lower productivity and job dissatisfaction of sales associates followed by a sales-by-intimidation erosion of customer loyalty and retention (Gilman, 1992). Others find that commission plans entice high-producing salespeople and consequently higher profits (Dinkins, 1989). Because the findings are conflicting, retailers are seeking the help of their human resource departments to develop programs that will enhance the commission plans. The improvement of the commission plans would help to attract productive salespeople and aid in training them to retain customers.

## Summary

A review of literature indicates that sales associate's performance level is an important issue in the retailing industry. Researchers suggest that several factors may influence this productivity rate, which include: 1) the current makeup of the workforce; 2) the career stage position of the sales associate; and 3) the effects of market forces on productivity.

Researchers suggest that the aging of America has changed the makeup of the workforce, in general, and the entry level workforce in particular. An increase in current life span has generated a greater number of workers between the ages of 45 and 65. This factor, along with the decline in the number of workers between the

ages of 16 and 25, has caused an increase in the number of years spent in entry-level positions.

Current research concerning career stages examines its relationship to and/or effects on work perceptions, job attitudes, performance and motivation. The findings suggest that career stage position positively affects work perception, job attitudes, performance and motivation.

During the exploration stage an individual attempts to find an occupation in which growth and success is possible (Cron & Slocum, 1986; Super, 1957). Once the individual chooses a career, he or she goes through a period of learning and skill development (Gould, 1979). Workers in this stage, therefore, are perceived as lower performers than those in other stages (Cron, Slocum & Michaels, 1988; Slocum & Cron, 1985). Moreover, the worker's performance level may be dependent on the amount of supervision and coaching received from superiors (Gould, 1979). Other findings indicate that salespeople in the exploration stage with lower perceived job complexity have higher job satisfaction (Gould, 1979). More specifically, the less complex the salesperson perceives his/her job to be, the higher their job satisfaction. Another finding indicates that salespeople in the exploration stage have a higher propensity to relocate and leave their present job because they are searching for the right job and promotions (Slocum & Cron, 1985).

During the establishment stage, a commitment has been made to an occupational field and the main focus of the worker is to use the learned skills to increase their productivity levels as well as achieve financial and personal success

(Cron & Slocum, 1986). Thus, the establishment stage is considered to be the most creative stage because workers are concerned both with developing creativity and innovativeness as well as adjusting to working with greater autonomy (Cron & Slocum, 1986). Job complexity was found to be positively related to job performance. Sales associates in this stage are continually motivated by jobs that are less routine and more complex as well as opportunities to be creative and independent in decision-making (Gould, 1979). However, promotion was found to be an important motivator in this stage because it signifies growth and corporate acknowledgement of a job well done (Cron, Slocum & Michaels, 1988).

Sales associates in the maintenance stage are found to be very similar to those in the establishment stage, with the exception of the importance of promotion to the salespeople in the establishment stage. Career aspirations and the need for advancement has leveled-off. Moreover, salespeople in this stage are found to be more satisfied with their work than people in any other stage and generally have high performance rates.

The final career stage is the disengagement stage. Salespeople in this stage may separate themselves from their jobs before they are faced with retirement. Here, salespeople are found to perform at minimally acceptable levels, have low desire for pay increases and perform below average relative to quotas.

Another factor found to affect salespeople's productivity are market forces (competitive and environmental). Although many market forces were found to affect the productivity of salespeople, wages, store size and location were found to be the

major contributors to the level of productivity evoked from salespeople. Further, conflicting evidence was found relative to the use of commission compensation plans. While some believe that a commission compensation plan may lower labor productivity and customer retention, others believe contrary to the aforementioned.

# Chapter 3

# METHODOLOGY

The first section of this chapter describes the research design used in the study. The next section describes the population and sample selected for the study. Third, the method of data collection is described followed by a statement of the research propositions. The final sections include operational definitions, instrumentation and the appropriate statistical analyses used to test the research questions.

## Research Design

In order to carry out the objectives of this pilot study, a cross-sectional survey research design was used. A pilot study is a smaller scale version of a proposed investigation (Grosof & Sardy, 1985). An appropriately planned pilot study will help the researcher to avoid and minimize errors. A pilot study helps to improve instruments and data collection procedures, identify sources of error, try out a variety of designs as well as a variety of data analysis techniques, check coding procedures and verify documentation. A cross-sectional study is used to investigate growth and/or change in cohorts at one specified time. A problem with cross-sectional studies is that data collected at that given time are used to explain causality. This may not allow the researcher to identify other major factors that

occur over a period of time.

A survey is a method of collecting information about a human population by means of a standardized questionnaire. A sample survey examines a portion of the chosen population and is expected to represent the whole population. Survey research can be used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes. It generally is used in studies that have individuals as the unit of analysis. Surveys can also be used to measure attitudes and orientations of a large population (Babbie, 1992).

## Population and Sampling Procedure

The sample for this study was drawn from the retail industry. The type of retail establishments were department stores. The researcher chose department stores as the population to draw from because of the great number of department stores in the retail industry. The actual sampling frame was established by identifying salespeople who were employed at least one year with their current company and who were employed full-time. Further, only those entry-level salespeople identified as having an available record of sales for the previous year were included.

## Method of Data Collection

A letter asking the retail organization's participation in the research project was mailed to the human resource managers [See Appendix A]. Enclosed with the letter was a copy of the proposed questionnaire to be administered to the salespersons [See Appendix B]. The data were collected at a specified time, conveniently arranged by the human resource manager. At the specified time, the

researcher passed out the questionnaire and explained the method of completion. The participants were also told by the researcher that complete anonymity and confidentiality would occur relative to their answers, and the information would only be processed in an aggregate form. This was further relayed to the participants in a letter attached to each questionnaire. Although the data processing procedures were explained, some participants were still reluctant to participate. Their reluctance was further shown by refusing to place identification numbers on the questionnaire and/or requesting to keep the questionnaire. Each department manager participated in the study by completing an evaluation form on all of their full-time employees. This procedure was necessary in order to assure anonymity and confidentiality. The data requested regarding each full-time sales associate included: actual sales, assigned sales, type of compensation plan, the amount of pay and the commission rate. The form filled out by the manager concerning the participants was then matched to the questionnaires by employee identification number. The human resource manager was asked to volunteer information concerning the annual sales volume of the individual departments and the store, along with the total number of full-time and part-time employees.

## Research Propositions

Specific questions were developed from the research objectives outlined previously. The questions are as follows:

$R_1$. A salesperson's

a) assigned sales productivity level
b) department sales productivity level and
c) store sales productivity level

differ by his or her career stages position.

$R_2$ A sales associate's level of productivity will be differentiated by the type of compensation plan.

$R_{3a}$. The Career Concern Inventory for Adults will be valid in a retail sales setting.

$R_{3b}$. The Career Concern Inventory will be reliable in a retail sales setting.

## Operational Definitions

Labor Productivity - the ratio of individual actual sales quotas to assigned, department and store sales over a previous one-year period.

Career Stage - the measure of the importance of an individual's concerns (i.e., career concerns, developmental task, personal challenges and psychosocial needs) at a given point in time (Super, 1957, 1981).

Compensation plan - the method of wage incentive or compensation (salaried, hourly, hourly plus commission, straight commission).

Full-Time - sales associates working a minimum of thirty hours per week.

## Instrumentation

In order to examine the relationship of productivity to career stages, it is necessary to identify the actual career stage of participants. To accomplish this portion of the study, a revised version of Super's (1957) Career Development Adult

Form (CDAF) will be used. The original Super (CDAF) instrument was developed in 1957 and revised in 1981 by Super, Zelkowitz and Thompson. The revised version is called "Career Concerns Inventory For Adults" (CCI) which is a self-report inventory that focuses on awareness of and concern for career development. The 60-item inventory uses a five-point Likert scale to identify the level of concern for the task. A rating of "1" (I have not thought seriously about this) indicates that the issue has not yet been a concern, while a "5" (no longer a concern) indicates that the issue was addressed in the past. A rating of "3" (a growing concern at this time) indicates that the issue is of current concern and therefore, places the individual in a career stage. Those stages are identified as Exploration (Q1 - Q15); Establishment (Q16 - Q30), Maintenance (Q31 - Q45); and Disengagement (Q46 - Q60). Responses for each stage were averaged across the 15 items in each stage. Respondents were then classified according to the smallest absolute deviation from an average score of three for the fifteen questions in each stage. The CCI instrument was used in Cron and Slocum, 1986; Ornstein, Cron and Slocum, 1985; and Cron, Dubinsky and Michaels, (1988). The labor productivity portion of the instrument was developed by the present researcher. Labor productivity is measured as the ratio of actual sales to assigned sales (prodasn), actual sales to department sales (prodDpt) and actual sales to total sales (prodstr) of departments (which represents the store sales) that participated in the study. The sales associates sales figures were used as a measure of productivity because retailers base pay evaluations on sales produced. Demographic data were also collected in order to establish

background information relative to the firm and to the salespeople. This information included age, ethnicity, marital status, head-of-household, income, previous job held, tenure in previous job, present job title and tenure in present job.

**Statistical Analysis of Data**

The analysis of collected data will necessitate the use of several types of statistical procedures. Frequency calculations were used to analyze demographic data. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedure was used to determine whether the productivity level of sales associates differs by career stage and compensation plan. Factor analysis was used to determine the dimensional stability of the Career Concern Inventory. Cronbach's (1951) Alpha was used to measure scale reliability for purposes of internal consistency. The analyses were performed on SPSS on the CMS mainframe at Michigan State University.

# Chapter 4

# RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between retail labor productivity and career stage of full-time salespeople. A second purpose of the study was determine if levels of labor productivity could be differentiated by career stage and compensation plan. A final purpose was to determine the validity and reliability of an instrument not previously used in a retail sales setting. A description of the response to the survey, including sample and instrument characteristics, is provided in the first section of this chapter. Findings from each statistical procedure used in the analysis are examined. Discussion of the results are also included.

## Response Rate

In order to acquire the necessary sample, letters were mailed to 35 retail establishments in the mid-Michigan area [again, See Appendix A]. Three stores responded to the request, however, only two stores participated. The researcher and the human resource manager identified a day, convenient to the firm, whereupon the volunteers and the department managers could complete their portion of the questionnaire. Further, to assure anonymity and confidentiality, the participants were asked to read a cover letter before completing the questionnaire. The letter

expressed how confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires and forms from the participants and the human resource managers. As well, appreciation was expressed through the offer of a one dollar bill for their participation. Finally, a gift was mailed to each human resource manager, along with a letter expressing appreciation for their participation in the study [See Appendix C].

A total of 60 questionnaires were administered. However, problems such as incomplete questionnaires, inconsistent availability of sales figures and the inability to match employee questionnaires to department manager's evaluations of the employee, produced a usable response rate of 50% (n=30).

**Sample and Instrument Characteristics**

Table 4.1 lists respondent characteristics. The mean age of the sample in years was 37.72 with a standard deviation of approximately 13.8 years. Eighty-three percent of the respondents were white, with 93 percent being female and approximately 36% of the sample completing high school. The modal estimated income occurred in the range of $10,000 to $14,999 annually. Approximately 40% of the respondents identified themselves as head-of-household. Fifty percent of the participants indicated their job title as being sales associate and their tenure on the job as being 1-5 years. Table 4.2 lists the departments participating in the study: coats & dresses, cosmetics, jewelry, lamps & gifts, misses sportswear, petite, styling salon, women's sportswear and window coverings. Also included in Table 4.2 are annual sales of the departments and the number of full-time and part-time sales

associates in each department. Table 4.3 groups the participants by department as well as their respective identification number. Further, it lists their individual, actual, assigned and department annual sales. The individuals are ranked by their assigned sales figures within each department.

**TABLE 4.1**
**Sample Characteristics**

| Variable | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Age | | |
| 20-30 | 13 | 45.0 |
| 31-40 | 3 | 10.0 |
| 41-50 | 4 | 14.0 |
| 51-60 | 9 | 31.0 |
| Sex | | |
| Male | 2 | 6.7 |
| Female | 28 | 93.3 |
| Education | | |
| High School | 11 | 36.7 |
| Bachelor | 8 | 26.7 |
| Master's | 1 | 3.3 |
| Doctoral | 0 | 0.0 |
| Professional | 5 | 16.7 |
| Other | 5 | 16.7 |
| Income | | |
| <$9,999 | 7 | 23.3 |
| $10,000-$14,999 | 10 | 33.3 |
| $15,000-$19,999 | 7 | 23.3 |
| $20,000-$24,999 | 5 | 16.7 |
| $25,000-$29,999 | 0 | 0.0 |
| $30,000-$34,999 | 0 | 0.0 |
| $35,000-$39,999 | 0 | 0.0 |
| $40,000> | 1 | 3.3 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Black | 5 | 16.7 |
| White | 25 | 83.3 |
| Head of Household | | |
| Yes | 12 | 40.0 |
| No | 18 | 60.0 |

**TABLE 4.1 (Continued)**

| Variable | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 8 | 26.7 |
| Married | 15 | 50.0 |
| Divorced | 6 | 20.0 |
| Widowed | 1 | 3.3 |
| Current Job Title | | |
| Salesperson | 15 | 50.0 |
| Manager Assistant | 7 | 23.3 |
| Merchandising Assistant | 4 | 13.3 |
| Beauty Advisor | 2 | 6.6 |
| Jewelry | 1 | 3.3 |
| Tenure in Current Job Title | | |
| <Less than 1 year | 3 | 10.0 |
| 1-5 years | 15 | 50.0 |
| 6-10 years | 5 | 17.0 |
| 11-15 | 2 | 6.6 |
| 16-20 years | 2 | 6.6 |
| >greater than 20 years | 3 | 10.0 |

**TABLE 4.1 (Continued)**

| Variable | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Previous Job Title | | |
| Sales | 10 | 33.3 |
| Beauty Advisor | 7 | 23.3 |
| Receptionist | 1 | 3.3 |
| Photographer | 1 | 3.3 |
| Store Manager | 3 | 10.0 |
| Supervisor | 1 | 3.3 |
| Housewife | 1 | 3.3 |
| Student | 1 | 3.3 |
| Catalog Coordinator | 1 | 3.3 |
| Restaurant owner | 1 | 3.3 |
| Consumer Correspondent | 1 | 3.3 |
| Bookkeeper | 1 | 3.3 |
| Prep. Cook | 1 | 3.3 |
| Tenure in Previous Job Title | | |
| <Less than 1 year | 9 | 30.0 |
| 1-5 years | 10 | 33.3 |
| 6-10 years | 7 | 23.3 |
| 11-15 years | 3 | 10.0 |
| 16-20 | 0 | 0.0 |
| >greater than 20 years | 1 | 3.3 |

N = Frequency of response; % = Percentage of responses.

**TABLE 4.2**
**Department Store Characteristics**

| [1]Department Name | Sales Volume | Number of Employees | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Full-Time | Part-Time |
| Coats & Dresses | [3]$2,140,000 | 9 | 4 |
| Cosmetics | [4]$ 800,000 | 8 | 3 |
| | [4]$1,450,000 | 7 | 8 |
| Jewelry | [3]$1,565,000 | 8 | 4 |
| | [4]$2,450,000 | 9 | 3 |
| Lamps/Gifts | [4]$1,126,000 | 3 | 3 |
| Misses Sportswear | [4]$2,950,000 | 10 | 9 |
| Petite | [4]$ 831,000 | 3 | 2 |
| Shoes | [3]$1,600,000 | 8 | 6 |
| Styling Salon | [4]$ 125,000 | 21 | 0 |
| Women's Sportswear | [3]$4,000,000 | 12 | 6 |
| | [4]$3,625,000 | 12 | 4 |
| Window Coverings | [3]$3,137,000 | 8 | 4 |
| | [4]$3,000,000 | 8 | 4 |

[2]DEPARTMENT STORE # 1 = $25,000,000
[2]DEPARTMENT STORE # 2 = $48,000,000

[1]The list of departments included in the study; [2]Total annual sales of all the departments in the store; [3]Store #1 annual department sales; [4]Store #2 annual department sales.

**TABLE 4.3**
**Individual Sales History**

| DEPT. NAME | ID Number | Assigned Sales | Actual Sales | Department Sales |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cosmetics | 14002 | $ 53,000 | $ 47,000 | $ 800,000 |
| | 14102 | $ 73,125 | $ 87,000 | $ 800,000 |
| Coats & Dresses | 10201 | $ 44,520 | $ 67,564 | $2,140,000 |
| | 12301 | $100,275 | $143,990 | $2,140,000 |
| | 11001 | $112,929 | $178,049 | $2,140,000 |
| Jewelry | 11801 | $ 24,000 | $ 28,000 | $1,565,000 |
| | 11901 | $ 37,430 | $ 64,662 | $1,565,000 |
| | 10801 | $ 92,151 | $169,504 | $1,565,000 |
| | 14302 | $ 96,000 | $130,000 | $2,450,000 |
| | 10501 | $ 96,449 | $126,720 | $1,565,000 |
| Lamps & Gifts | 14202 | $100,285 | $ 84,000 | $1,126,000 |
| Misses Sportswear | 14602 | $210,000 | $300,000 | $2,950,000 |
| Petite | 14502 | $210,000 | $248,810 | $ 831,000 |
| Shoes | 11301 | $ 87,281 | $104,000 | $1,600,000 |
| | 10901 | $ 97,100 | $112,373 | $1,600,000 |
| | 13902 | $106,971 | $179,000 | $1,450,000 |
| | 11401 | $175,000 | $149,000 | $1,600,000 |
| | 10101 | $185,000 | $190,849 | $1,600,000 |
| Styling Salon | 13101 | $ 12,064 | $ 17,053 | $ 125,000 |
| | 13701 | $ 17,473 | $ 13,621 | $ 125,000 |
| | 13501 | $ 20,336 | $ 27,648 | $ 125,000 |
| | 13601 | $ 22,032 | $ 19,229 | $ 125,000 |
| | 13401 | $ 23,378 | $ 20,915 | $ 125,000 |
| | 13301 | $ 24,192 | $ 30,646 | $ 125,000 |

**TABLE 4.3 (Continued)**

| DEPT. NAME | ID Number | Assigned Sales | Actual Sales | Department Sales |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Women's Sportswear | 12701 | $235,000 | $244,000 | $4,000,000 |
| | 12902 | $240,000 | $260,000 | $3,625,000 |
| | 12601 | $245,000 | $261,000 | $4,000,000 |
| Window Coverings | 12501 | $121,713 | $165,490 | $3,000,000 |
| | 11601 | $245,490 | $226,193 | $3,000,000 |
| | 14402 | $250,000 | $334,000 | $3,000,000 |

All sales figures are annual.

The productivity scores of each participant are listed in Table 4.4. As indicated by the table, the salespeople's level of productivity is greater among the ratio of actual sales to assigned sales, than the ratio of actual to department and store sales. The types of compensation plans reported included wage-plus-commission, 80% (n=24) and commission-only, 20% (n=6) [See Table 4.5].

The career stage subscale characteristics are detailed in Table 4.6. As previously referred to, each career stage consisted of 15 items. The mean scores for each of the stages ranged from a low of 2.52 to a high of 3.54 (the possible range was one to five). The coefficient alpha scores computed for the instrument in this study were: Exploration, $\alpha$ =.96, Establishment, $\alpha$ =.94, Maintenance, $\alpha$ =.93 and Disengagement, $\alpha$ =.89. The number of participants in each stage consisted of Exploration--16.7% (n=5), Establishment--13.3% (n=4), Maintenance--23.3% (n=7) and Disengagement--33.3% (n=10). Approximately 13% (n=4) of the participants could not be placed in a specific career stage. These participants had similar mean scores in more than one career stage.

**TABLE 4.4**
**Calculated Productivity Rate**

| ID No. | Prodasn | ProdDpt | Prostr |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10801 | 1.85 | .11 | .01 |
| 11901 | 1.76 | .04 | .01 |
| 13902 | 1.70 | .13 | .01 |
| 11001 | 1.59 | .09 | .01 |
| 10201 | 1.55 | .01 | .00 |
| 12301 | 1.44 | .07 | .01 |
| 14602 | 1.43 | .10 | .02 |
| 13101 | 1.42 | .14 | .00 |
| 14302 | 1.35 | .05 | .01 |
| 14402 | 1.34 | .11 | .02 |
| 12501 | 1.32 | .05 | .01 |
| 10501 | 1.31 | .08 | .01 |
| 13301 | 1.29 | .25 | .00 |
| 11301 | 1.21 | .07 | .01 |
| 11801 | 1.17 | .02 | .00 |
| 10901 | 1.15 | .07 | .01 |
| 14502 | 1.14 | .30 | .02 |
| 12902 | 1.08 | .06 | .02 |
| 12601 | 1.07 | .07 | .02 |
| 10101 | 1.03 | .12 | .02 |
| 12701 | 1.02 | .08 | .02 |
| 11601 | .92 | .14 | .02 |
| 13401 | .91 | .17 | .00 |
| 14002 | .89 | .01 | .00 |
| 14202 | .84 | .08 | .01 |
| 13601 | .86 | .15 | .00 |
| 11401 | .86 | .09 | .01 |
| 13701 | .82 | .11 | .00 |
| 13501 | .71 | .16 | .00 |
| 14102 | .64 | .06 | .00 |

Prodasn=actual sales ÷ assigned sales; ProdDpt=actual sales ÷ department sales; Prodstr=actual sales ÷ store sales.

**TABLE 4.5**
**Compensation plans**

| Variable | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Wage + Commission | | |
| $4.50 | | |
| 7% | 18 | 60.0 |
| 8% | 2 | 6.7 |
| 10% | 3 | 10.0 |
| $5.30 | | |
| 7% | 0 | 0.0 |
| 10% | 1 | 3.3 |
| Commission only | | |
| 55% of annual sales | 6 | 20.0 |

f = Frequency of response; % = Percentage of responses.

**TABLE 4.6**
**Instrument Analysis**

| CCI | No. of Items | Mean | SD | Alpha | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exploration | 15 | 3.54 | .96 | .96 | 5 |
| Establishment | 15 | 3.11 | .76 | .94 | 4 |
| Maintenance | 15 | 3.00 | .71 | .93 | 7 |
| Disengagement | 15 | 2.52 | .73 | .89 | 10 |
| Unidentifiable | - | - | - | - | 4 |

## Results of Hypotheses Testing

***Anova.*** Analysis of Variance was used to examine the differences among mean scores from groups of subjects. The dependent variable in this study was labor productivity. The independent variables were career stage and compensation plans. The mean score for salesperson labor productivity within each career stage was compared to every other career stage in order to determine the differences between the means and the significance of those differences ($p \leq .10$). These results are shown in Table 4.7.

$\mathbf{R_{1a}}$ A sales associate's assigned sales productivity level differs by his or her career stage position.

A comparison of the means show that while the salesperson's assigned sales productivity level was found to differ with the prospective career stage, it was not significant ($p > .10$). This research question, then, was not supported.

$\mathbf{R_{1b}}$ The sales associates department sales productivity level will differ by his or career stage position.

The sales associate's department sales productivity level differs with respect to career stage position; however, these differences were not significant ($p > .10$); terefore, this research question was not supported.

$\mathbf{R_{1c}}$ The sales associate's store sales productivity level will differ by his or career stage position.

The sales associate's store sales productivity level was not found to significantly ($p > .10$) differ with respect to career stage position. This research question was not supported.

**TABLE 4.7**
**Career Stage and Labor Productivity**

| Career Stages | | Labor Productivity | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Prodasn** | **ProdDpt** | **Prodstr** |
| Exploration | | | | |
| | mean | 1.184 | .073 | .010 |
| | SD | .346 | .029 | .005 |
| Establishment | | | | |
| | mean | 1.309 | .112 | .009 |
| | SD | .113 | .098 | .009 |
| Maintenance | | | | |
| | mean | 1.367 | .084 | .011 |
| | SD | .437 | .047 | .006 |
| Disengagement | | | | |
| | mean | 1.093 | .119 | .011 |
| | SD | .233 | .075 | .008 |
| | F = | 1.19 | .734 | .036 |

Prodasn=actual sales ÷ assigned sales; ProdDpt=actual sales ÷ department sales; Prodstr=actual sales ÷ store sales; *p ≤ .10.

$R_2$ The sales associate's level of productivity is differentiated by the compensation plans, wage-plus-commission and commission-only.

The sales associate's level of productivity, with regard to assigned sales was found to differ significantly by the compensation plan, wage-plus-commission. Further, as shown in Table 4.8, the salesperson's level of productivity in regard to the ratio of actual sales to department sales [ProdDpt] ($p \leq .10$) and the ratio of actual sales to store sales varied significantly [Prostr] ($p \leq .10$). This research question was therefore, supported.

$R_{3a}$ The Career Concern Inventory will be valid in a retail sales setting.

The validity of the CCI used in this study was tested using the Principal Components Factor Analysis procedure in order to determine the concerns of the retail sales associates. While Super (1957, 1981) identified four concerns (career concerns, developmental tasks, personal challenges and psychosocial needs) in his career stage model, a previous study by Slocum and Cron (1985) identified twelve concerns (crystallization, specification, implementation, stabilizing, consolidating, advancement, holding, updating, innovating, decelerating, retirement planning and retirement living). Six factors (concerns of retail sales associates) were developed as result of the Principal Component Factor Analysis and they are listed in Table 4.9 along with their respective item loadings and alpha coefficients. An evaluation of each set of questions reveals a particular concern within the questions, therefore the identified concern is used as the factor name. The six factors indicate that retail sales associates concerns vary from those developed in previous studies. Therefore this research question is supported.

**TABLE 4.8**
**Compensation Plans and Productivity**

| | Level of Productivity | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Compensation plans** | **Prodasn** | **ProdDpt** | **Prodstr** |
| Wage + Commission | | | |
| mean | 1.23 | .084 | .012 |
| SD | .311 | .058 | .006 |
| Commission only | | | |
| mean | 1.00 | .163 | .002 |
| SD | .282 | .046 | .0005 |
| F = | 2.75 | 9.68* | 15.52* |

Prodasn=actual sales ÷ assigned sales; ProdDpt=actual sales ÷ department sales; Prodstr=actual sales ÷ store sales; *p ≤ .10.

**TABLE 4.9**
**Factor Loading of Items**

| Factor | Items | Loading | Coefficient Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Identification** | | | .95 |
| 8. | Finding a line of work that appeals to me. | .836 | |
| 3. | Finding what line of work I am really suited for. | .804 | |
| 4. | Learning more about various kinds of opportunities that might be open to me. | .753 | |
| 2. | Deciding what I really want to do for a Living. | .729 | |
| 43. | Deciding what new fields to open up and develop. | .706 | |
| 9. | Making sure of my current occupational choice. | .595 | |
| 6. | Choosing among the best career alternatives I now see. | .571 | |
| 11. | Getting started in my chosen career. | .568 | |
| 13. | Meeting people who can help me get started in my chosen field. | .529 | |
| 7. | Choosing a job, among several that interest me, that will provide the most challenge. | .501 | |
| **Implementation** | | | .91 |
| 32. | Holding my own against the competition of new people entering the field. | .681 | |
| 15. | Making specific plans to achieve my current career goals. | .654 | |
| 47. | Concentrating on things I can do as I get older. | .632 | |
| 14. | Finding the opportunity to do the kind of work I really want to do. | .516 | |
| 12. | Deciding how to qualify for work I now want to do. | .513 | |
| **Stabilization** | | | .94 |
| 21. | Developing a reputation in my organization. | .735 | |
| 20. | Making my position in the organization secure. | .734 | |
| 19. | Achieving stability in my occupation. | .733 | |
| 22. | Making a reputation in my line of work. | .691 | |
| 18. | Doing things that will help me stay in my chosen job. | .690 | |
| 37. | Attending meetings and seminars on new methods. | .632 | |
| 26. | Planning how to get ahead in my line of work. | .605 | |
| 38. | Visiting places where new developments can be seen. | .534 | |

TABLE 4.9 (continued)

| Factor | Items | Loading | Coefficient Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Redevelopment** | | | .93 |
| 42. | Finding out about new opportunities as my field changes. | .757 | |
| 45. | Developing special knowledge or new skills to help me improve on the job. | .745 | |
| 46. | Developing easier ways of doing my work. | .704 | |
| 44. | Developing new skills to cope with new needs and opportunities. | .701 | |
| 5. | Learning what skills and training are required for certain jobs in which I think I might be interested. | .557 | |
| 16. | Settling down in a job that I can really stay with. | .507 | |
| **Advancing/Maintaining** | | | .92 |
| 30. | Advancing to a more responsible position. | .831 | |
| 31. | Maintaining the occupation position I have achieved. | .791 | |
| 40. | Getting refresher courses. | .735 | |
| 41. | Identifying new problems to work on. | .666 | |
| 27. | Getting ahead in the organization. | .666 | |
| 39. | Taking part in non-work (leisure time) activities that will help me keep up-to-date with my work. | .520 | |
| 17. | Making a place for myself in my organization. | .464 | |
| **Retirement** | | | .89 |
| 57. | Having a good life in retirement. | .865 | |
| 55. | Setting aside enough assets for retirement. | .853 | |
| 53. | Making sure I can have a good life when I retire. | .774 | |
| 54. | Talking to retired friends about the problems they faced and the adjustments they made when they retired. | .769 | |
| 56. | Finding an area of the country to retire. | .737 | |
| 60. | Doing things I have always wanted to do but never had the time for because of my work. | .712 | |

$R_{3b}$ The Career Concern Inventory will be reliable in a retail setting.

Coefficient alpha scores were used to determine the scale reliability for purposes of internal consistency. Because the instrument reliability had not previously been established in a retail setting, new scores were necessary to determine reliability. The coefficient alpha scores computed for the instrument in this study were: Exploration, $\alpha$ =.96, Establishment, $\alpha$ =.94, Maintenance, $\alpha$ =.93 and Disengagement, $\alpha$ =.89 [refer to Table 4.6]. These reliabilities were all well above the acceptable criterion of ±.70 (Hair, Anderson & Tathum, 1987); therefore, the instrument can be used to identify career stage position of retail sales associates.

***Post-hoc Examination of Validity and Reliability.*** A post-hoc examination of the newly identified career concerns for retail sales associates was performed to determine the validity and reliability of the new concerns. As noted earlier in this study, individuals are lodged into a particular career stage depending on what concerns predominate, thus, the ANOVA procedure was used here as a method of validating that certain concerns significantly dominate (rendering it important for individuals) each career stage. Table 4.10 lists these results.

The identification concern varied across the four career stages and is important for those in the exploration stage. Implementation, establishment and advancing/maintaining also varied across the four career stages and was found to be most important to those in the establishment stage. Sales associates positioned in the maintenance and disengagement stage did not report a significant and distinct set

of concerns.

Coefficient alpha scores were computed to measure scale reliability for purposes of internal consistency (again, see Table 4.9). The scores suggest that the scale is a reliable measure of career concerns for retail sales associates.

**TABLE 4.10**
**Mean Career Concern Scores by Career Stage**

| Concerns | | Exp | Est | Mai | Dis | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identification | | | | | | |
| | mean | 2.760 | 3.275 | 3.586 | 4.150 | 2.71 |
| | SD | .568 | .492 | 1.20 | .958 | |
| Implementation | | | | | | |
| | mean | 2.200 | 3.050 | 3.257 | 3.760 | .03* |
| | SD | .583 | .341 | .964 | 1.014 | |
| Stabilization | | | | | | |
| | mean | 2.250 | 3.156 | 2.607 | 3.538 | 4.07* |
| | SD | .870 | .313 | .623 | .864 | |
| Redevelopment | | | | | | |
| | mean | 2.400 | 2.958 | 3.405 | 3.500 | 2.22 |
| | SD | .641 | .286 | .912 | .962 | |
| Advancing/Maintaining | | | | | | |
| | mean | 2.486 | 3.000 | 2.980 | 3.657 | 2.30 |
| | SD | 1.048 | .849 | .878 | .744 | |
| Retirement | | | | | | |
| | mean | 2.133 | 2.208 | 1.905 | 2.733 | .28 |
| | SD | .767 | .985 | 1.075 | .717 | |

Exp= Exploration (n=5); Est= Establishment (n=4); Mai= Maintenance (n=7); Dis= Disengagement (n=10); *$p \leq .10$.

## Chapter 5

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of retailers and business industries has been on labor productivity. Retailer's interest in labor productivity stems from the fact that labor is its most costly expenditure, which by far exceeds their merchandising expenses. Moreover, retailers have continued to lag behind manufacturing and service industries in growth productivity. The productivity of sales associates is measured as their level of performance in the retail industry. Other factors found to influence the productivity/performance of sales associates include: 1) the current make-up of the workforce; 2) market forces; and 3) the improper utilization of employees by human resource departments.

The make-up of the workforce has and will continue to change through the year 2000. The aging of America has been cited as the major cause of changes in the workforce. Increasing life spans have generated greater numbers of workers between the ages of 45 and 65, while a fewer births have caused a decrease in the number of people between the ages of 16 and 35. Traditionally, retailers have depended on the 16-24 age group to fill entry-level positions. However, the aforementioned changes have generated a new mixture of age groups within the retailing workforce. Further, because of the increased longevity of workers, retailers

are finding that sales associates are increasing their tenure in sales positions. Entry-level sales jobs are generally made up of students, retirees and persons attempting to supplement other incomes. Persons working as sales associates are required to have no formal education and/or other qualifications. The ability to assist customers with their selection and purchases, as well as being able to work long and odd hours are the major requirements. The literature review revealed that sales associate's productivity was found to be affected by competitive and environmental market forces. The market forces found to significantly affect labor productivity include: wages, store size and store location. Wages offered by the retail industry are said to significantly affect labor productivity. Lower wages are said to attract low producers while higher wages are said to attract and retain higher producers. Another factor found to affect levels of productivity of sales associate's is the improper utilization of available human resources. Human resource (HR) departments are developed to support the missions and goals of the firm and not those of the salespeople. Growth and development of sales associates within their sales position is not the main focus of the HR departments.

Career development has been the focal point of many researchers. Some researchers indicate that salespeople progress through stages as they develop within their chosen career. The successful progression within a chosen career is based of the individual's career concerns, personal challenges, developmental tasks, and psychosocial needs. Four stages of development include the exploration stage, establishment stage, maintenance stage and the disengagement stage. The four

concerns vary in level of importance among the stages. Further, the issues relative to the career concerns may vary among the career stages.

The focus of this study was to determine if a salesperson's assigned, department and store productivity level differs by career stage position. A second focus of the study was to test a previously developed instrument in a retail setting. Further, the study attempted to determine if a sales associate's level of productivity could be differentiated by compensation plan. Previous studies examine the relationship and/or influence of career stage on work perceptions, job attitudes, performance and motivation. This review of literature revealed no research that examined the relationship of retail salespeople's labor productivity to career stage. Further, no research was identified that examined the productivity of individual salespeople within a business making comparisons among salespeople as opposed to comparison among firms. This chapter provides a summary of the findings and conclusions based on the results of the study. Additionally, implications of the present study and recommendations for future studies are offered.

**Summary of Procedures**

Two retail stores in the Mid-Michigan area agreed to participate in the research project. The human resource managers of the two stores solicited volunteers from all departments in which records of salespeople were continuously recorded. Questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher on the premises of each store. Data were collected relative to the study's independent variables, career stage and compensation plan. The dependent variable, labor

productivity, was measured as the ratio of actual sales to assigned, department and store sales. Further, demographic data were also collected.

In a pilot study format, a cross-sectional research design was used to acquire the necessary responses. Useable questionnaires reflected a response rate of 50 percent (n=30). The instrument used to determine the career stage of individual sales associates was developed by Super (1957) and revised by Super, Zelkowitz & Thompson, (1981). The productivity instrument was developed by the researcher. The managers were requested to list the individual's actual and assigned sales, along with their average hours worked and type of compensation plan. Lastly, the human resource manager was asked to complete a form which indicated the stores annual sales volume, number of full-time and part-time employees and square footage of the store [See Appendix B].

**Summary of Findings and Conclusions.**

The retail sales associates surveyed ranged in age from 20 to 60. Other features of these sales associates include: a greater number of females (93.3%); income levels which ranged from less than $9,999 to $24,999; and primarily high school educated individuals (36.6%). A greater number of sales associates with high school diplomas is reflective of the retail industry which traditionally has required little or no training for sales positions. Sixty percent of those surveyed indicated that they were not head-of-household, all of which were female. This suggests that their income was secondary and considered to be supplementary, therefore, the importance of their job would differ from those who are head-of-household and

those who consider their job a career.

This study purports, the salesperson's assigned, department and store productivity level will differ by career stage position. An Analysis of Variance (Anova) of labor productivity and career stage indicated an increase of productivity level from the exploration stage to the maintenance stage, along with a decrease in productivity in the disengagement stage. However, no significance ($p > .10$) in these differences were found, which suggests that retail salespeople do not experience major differences in productivity among the career stages.

An Anova was performed to determine if a salesperson's level of productivity differs by compensation plan. A salesperson's level of productivity was found to significantly ($p > .10$) differ by compensation plan with regard to the ratio of actual sales to assigned, department and store sales. Previous studies indicate that compensation plans such as wage-plus-commission and commission-only have varying effects on productivity. Findings from these studies offer conflicting results regarding the improvement of productivity among sale's associates when commission-only and wage-plus-commission compensation plans are used. While some studies suggest that commission compensation plans can improve productivity, others suggests that these plans can cause problems such as lower productivity, job satisfaction and high turnover among salepeople, along with the erosion of customer loyalty and retention. The findings from this study indicate that both wage-plus-commission and commission only salespeople are high producers. However, wage-plus-commission sales associates had a higher productivity score than commission-

only sales associates.

The instrument used to identify the actual career stage of each sales associate was the Career Concern Inventory (Super, 1957, Super, et. al, 1981). It is a self-report inventory that focuses on awareness of and concern for career development. The 60-item instrument uses a five-point Likert scale to determine the level of concern for a particular task. The 60 items are divided into four sets of questions, which are identified as career stages. Those stages are identified as Exploration (Q1 - Q15); Establishment (Q16 - Q30), Maintenance (Q31 - Q45); and Disengagement (Q46 - Q60). The sales associates were classified in a career stage [Exploration (n=5), Establishment (n= 4), Maintenance (n= 7) and Disengagement (n= 10)] based on the smallest absolute deviation from the average score of three for the fifteen questions in each stage. Responses from four sales associates were eliminated because their pattern of responses did not indicate a definite career stage. Among those sales associates, a deviation from a mean of three were identical in more than one career stage. A factor analysis was performed and the Career Concern Inventory was found to be dimensionally stable. Internal consistency was evident by the alpha scores ($\alpha > .70$).

A second factor analysis of the sixty questions was necessary to identify the specific concerns of the retail sales associates. This factor analysis was also done to determine if the concerns of sales associates were similar to those identified in previous studies. The findings were that: a) sales associates lodged in the exploration stage were more concerned with the identification construct; b) sales

associates lodged in the Establishment stage were found to associate highly with implementation, stabilization, and advancing/maintaining concerns; c) person's lodged in the maintenance stage were not found to be concerned with maintaining their position with the business; and d) sales associates lodged in the disengagement stage were not found to be concerned with leaving the business and retiring.

The ***identification*** of a chosen field, that is "choosing a job that interests me, and that will provide the most challenge" and "finding a line of work that appeals to me" is an important issue to retail salespeople. The ***implementation*** construct is concerned with "deciding how to qualify for work I want to do", making specific plans to achieve my current career goals" and finding the opportunity to do the work I really want to do". The concerns of the identification and implementation constructs are similar to those of Super (1957), which suggests that person's in the Exploration stage are trying to determine what skills they have and finding a job to use those skills. ***Stabilization*** in a chosen field as a concern of retail salespeople was viewed as "Making my position in the organization secure", "developing a reputation in my line of work" along with "planning to get ahead in my line of work". "***Maintaining*** the occupational position I have achieved" and "getting ahead in the organization" was also important issues of salespeople. Super's study also suggests that person's in the Establishment stage are more concerned with being productive enough to establish themselves in the chosen field. The establishing and Advancing/Maintaining constructs were found to be similar to the Establishment stage, in that, they are concerned with being productive enough to establish a

position in the chosen field and developing a reputation in the industry. In the retail industry, competitiveness among the salespeople may necessitate the need to be concerned with stabilizing and maintaining their position. High producers can be assured a job. The ***redevelopment*** of a career as a concern of retail salespeople was viewed as "developing new skills to cope with needs and opportunities", along with "developing special knowledge or new skills to help me improve on the job". The redevelopment construct was found to be similar to the Maintenance stage, in that, people in this stage are concerned about redeveloping and updating their skills in order to continue to be competitive among the other workers. Super (1957) suggested that people in the Disengagement stage are concerned with sustaining their job until they have accepted the need to retire as the next step in their life. Retail sales associates in the retirement stage were not found to be concerned with "having a good life in retirement".

**Implications.** According to this study, the concerns of sales associates are highly career-oriented. The identification of a career stage does not indicate the productivity rates of sales associates; however, the identification of a compensation plan does help in determining a sales associates productivity rate in regard to the ratio of actual sales to assigned, department and store sales. Perhaps the higher level of competitiveness among sales associates and other departments is based on the type compensation plan, which would create an increase in productivity level. A valid and reliable instrument is needed in order to determine what programs would be helpful to improve productivity. Age of sales associates within the stages range as: exploration (21 -52), establishment (43 -57), maintenance (22 - 51) and disengagement (23 -60). This suggests that a sales associate positioned in any career stage can be of any age and could possibly acquire different levels of productivity.

***Recommendations.*** The following recommendations for future research are offered:

1. In this study, reasons for differentiation in the productivity levels of salesperson's are reviewed. Findings regarding level of productivity differences among career stages differ from those of previous studies. A replication of the study with a larger sample is needed to determine if career stage position is a relevant measure of retail sales associates productivity.
2. The concerns of sales associates are suggested as being highly career-oriented. Future research is needed to determine the actual concerns of retail sales associates. Further research is also needed to determine the relationship of these concerns to personal development outside of the work world. This

would also allow human resource managers to understand how and why people change. Pinpointing the actual concerns and their level of importance would help retailers develop training programs relative to these concerns. Such information would also help in the development of training and development programs, as well as benefit programs that actually fit the needs of sales associates.

3. The differences in the age of sales associates and the growing number of older Americans necessitates the need to determine the relationship between labor productivity rates and age of sales associates.

4. The importance of sales associates productivity necessitates a reliable and valid instrument that would measure productivity. Such an instrument would allow human resource managers to develop programs based on the needs of the sales associates. Therefore, future research should examine present productivity measures and test in a retail setting. Further, sale's associates input regarding their productivity may be examined to to identify other factors that may used as measures of productivity within the instrument.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A:

**Letter to retailer**

Dear :

Labor costs are generally the highest expense for the retail trade; therefore, it is imperative that factors which may influence the level of salesperson productivity are understood.

Because the make-up of the retail labor market continues to change, it is necessary to understand why and how people develop in their chosen career. Once an understanding is developed, human resource managers can develop training methods that will evoke the highest level of productivity from salespeople.

We hope that you can realize the benefit of a study such as this one and will consent to participate. A detailed agenda for expediting the study is attached.

Thank you very much for your time and I hope to hear from you soon. If you have any further questions or concerns, please call me at (517) 355-7714. In appreciation for your participation in this study, a one dollar bill is attached to the last page of the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Prier Wickliffe
Master's Student

Karen J. Cummings, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

## APPENDIX A (continued):

**Plan of action**

1. Send copy of questionnaire to personnel director, requesting participation in the research project.

2. Acquire letter of confirmation from retailer.

3. Identify dates to administer questionnaires to participants.

4. Administer questionnaires to participants.

5. Collect questionnaires from paticipants.

6. Have managers fill forms on participants from their department.

7. After receiving all questionnaires, the researcher will evaluate them and determine if they are all usable.

8. Questionnaires will then be processed for data analysis.

9. Results of data analysis are written.

10. Discussion and recommendations are made to retailer.

11. Findings and recommendations are written for publication.

**Optional features:**

1. Pay each participant one dollar after completing the questionnaire.

2. Pay the managers one dollar for each form completed concerning their employees.

# APPENDIX B

## Sample Questionnaire

Dear Participant:

It has been predicted that retail industry will be one of the major contributors to the job market through the year 2000. People are lengthening time spent in sales positions and we would like to examine what effects this has on productivity levels. Because labor productivity assures the success of the retail firm, Hudson's has agreed to participate in a university research project that will examine possible factors that may influence your level of performance/productivity as a sales associate.

We asking for your contribution to the study by simply completing the questionnaire and returning it to the researcher. Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary and your response will remain anonymous and confidential. Only the summarized findings will be made available to store staff.

Thank you very much for your support in our research project and you can be assured that such support will be beneficial to all involved in the retail industry.

COLLEGE OF
HUMAN ECOLOGY
Department of Human Environment and Design
Michigan State University
204 Human Ecology Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1030
517/355-7712
FAX: 517/336-1058

Sincerely,

Vanessa Prier-Wickliffe
Master's Student

Karen Cummings, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

I. This section consists of statements about your CAREER CONCERNS. How much THINKING OR PLANNING have you done in these areas? For each statement below, please CIRCLE the scale value which indicates your LEVEL of THINKING or PLANNING.

1. Have not yet had to think seriously about this
2. A growing concern; Beginning to become important.
3. A strong concern at the present; Actively engaged in this.
4. Still some concern but declining in importance
5. No longer a concern; Past that stage

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Clarifying my ideas about the type of work I would really like to do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Deciding what I really want to do for a living. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Finding what line of work I am really best suited for. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Learning more about various kinds of opportunities that might be open to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Learning what skills and training are required for certain jobs in which I think I might be interested. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Choosing among the best career alternatives I now see. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Choosing a job, among the several that interest me, that will provide the most challenge. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Finding a line of work that really appeals to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | Making sure of my current occupational choice. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | Choosing a job that will really be satisfying for me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | Getting started in my chosen field. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Deciding how to qualify for the work I now want to do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Meeting people who can help me get started in my chosen field. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | Finding the opportunity to do the kind of work I really like. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Making specific plans to achieve my current career goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Settling down in a job that I can really stay with. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | Making a place for myself in my organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | Doing things that will help me stay in my chosen job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Achieving stability in my occupation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | Making my place in my organization secure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Developing a reputation in my organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Making a reputation in my line of work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1. Have not yet had to think seriously about this.
2. A growing concern; Beginning to become important.
3. A strong concern at the present; actively engaged in this.
4. Still some concern but declining in importance.
5. No longer a concern; Past that stage.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. | Becoming a dependable producer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | Becoming especially skillful in my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | Winning the support of my supervisor and employer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | Planning how to get ahead in my established field of work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | Getting ahead in the organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | Doing the things that make people want me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | Finding ways of making my competence known. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | Advancing to a more responsible position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | Maintaining the occupational position I have achieved. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | Holding my own against the competition of new people entering the field. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | Adapting to changes introduced since I became established in my job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | Keeping in tune with the people I work with. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. | Keeping ahead of the workers below me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. | Reading the new literature and publications in my field. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. | Attending meetings and seminars on new methods. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. | Visiting places where new developments can be seen. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. | Taking part in non-work (leisure time) activities that will help me keep up-to-date on my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. | Getting refresher training. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. | Identifying new problems to work on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. | Finding out about new opportunities as my field changes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. | Deciding what new fields to open up or develop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. | Developing new skills to cope with new needs and opportunities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. | Developing special knowledge or new skills to help me improve on the job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. | Developing easier ways of doing my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. | Concentrating on things I can do as I get older. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1. Have not yet had to think seriously about this.
2. A growing concern; Beginning to become important.
3. A strong concern at the present; actively engaged in this.
4. Still some concern but declining in importance.
5. No longer a concern; Past that stage.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 49. Avoiding excess occupational pressures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. Developing more hobbies to replace work interests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. Finding out what types of activities I would really like to engage in after retirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Planning for retirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Making sure I can have a good life when I retire. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Talking to retired friends about the problems they faced and the adjustments they made when they retired. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. Setting aside enough assets for retirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56. Finding an area of the country in which to retire. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. Having a good life in retirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. Having friends I can enjoy in retirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. Making good use of the increased free time that comes with retirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60. Doing the things I have always wanted to do but never had the time for because of my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**II. Please mark the appropriate response that best describes your performance**

| | Very Low | | Average | | Very High |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Sales Volume | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. New Customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Customer Contacts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Initiative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Resourcefulness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

III. Please choose and mark the appropriate background information.

1. Sex
   _____ Male
   _____ Female
2. Age on Last Birthday _____
3. Are you head of household ___ Yes ___ No
4. Marital Status
   _____ Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Widowed
5. Cultural Heritage
   _____ African-American
   _____ Caucasian-American
   _____ Hispanic-American
   _____ Asian-American
   _____ Mexican-American
   _____ Other _____

6. Education
   A. High School Diploma or equivalent
   B. Bachelor's Degree _____ Major: _____
   C. Master's Degree _____ Major: _____
   D. Doctoral Degree _____ Major: _____
   E. Professional Degree _____ Type: _____
   F. Other _____ Type: _____
7. Level of Income
   A. Less than 9,999 _____
   B. 10,000 to 14,999 _____
   C. 15,000 to 19,999 _____
   D. 20,000 to 24,999 _____
   E. 25,000 to 39,999 _____
   F. 40,000 or more _____

8. Your last job title: ___.

9. How long were you in that position?
   Less than 1 year _____
   1-5 years _____
   6-10 years _____
   11-15 years _____
   16-20 years _____

10. Your current job title is _____.
    How long were you in that position?
    Less than 1 year _____
    1-5 years _____
    6-10 years _____
    11-15 years _____
    16-20 years _____
    More than 20 years _____

## Retail Labor Productivity Survey

Employee Identification Number _____ Dept #_____

**I. Please evaluate the identified employee.**

| | Very Low | | Average | | Very High |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sales Volume | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| New Customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Customer Contacts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Initiative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Resourcefulness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**II. Please provide the actual sales and assigned sales figures concerning this employee for the following months:**

| | Actual Sales | Assigned Sales |
|---|---|---|
| January-March | | |
| April-June | | |
| July-September | | |
| October-December | | |

**III. Average number of hours worked per week** _____

**IV. Compensation Plan**

_____Hourly Wage _____Hourly Wage Amount

_____Salaried _____Salary Amount

_____Wage plus Commission _____Wage _____Commission Rate

_____Commission Only _____Commission Rate

## I. About your Department

A. Name of the Department _____

B. Number of Employees Full Time _____ Part Time _____

C. Annual Department Sales _____

D. Employee turnover rate of this department _____

## II. About your Store

A. Annual Sales Volume _____

B. Total number of Employees _____

C. Store Square Footage _____

D. Employee Turnover Rate _____

Thank you for your Cooperation

_____ _____

Store Branch

# APPENDIX C

## Thank You Letter to Contact Representatives

Dear Mr.:

As times and people change within the workforce, it is imperative that research is continued, whereas human resource management can continue to understand those changes. I write to you at this time to express my deepest appreciation for allowing me the opportunity to contribute to the field of research relative to retail.

At this time we have condensed the data, analyzed it and are presently writing our report, in which we will send you a copy. After all is said and done, we hope to carry out this study on a larger sample, whereas the findings will be generalizable to the whole retail population.

Please find enclosed a token of our appreciation, and again thank you very much for your support. Please be assured that you will hear from us in the near future with our findings.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Prier Wickliffe
Master's Student

Karen J. Cummings, Ph.D.
Merchandising Management