

A CROSS COUNTRY COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE SALES PROFESSION: A LOOK AT U.S., PERU, AND GUATEMALA

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Personal selling is a critical marketing activity, accounting for a major portion of the revenue generation for any company. Those who sell the products are the life blood of the organization. Consequently, recruiting future sales professionals from the existing pool of college graduates is vital to the continued success and sustainability of business entities. Nonetheless, students are found to harbor a negative feeling towards salespersons and/or the sales profession. Our research is designed to investigate if and how such negative perception is linked to the students' country of origin i.e. the US, Peru and Guatemala. While the findings vindicate earlier studies and do indicate significant differences among students from these countries, the authors also provide interesting academic and managerial implications, and provide avenues for future research.

INTRODUCTION

Although sales is considered a mainstream profession in many countries, the common man still harbors a negative attitude towards sales as a career and/or salespersons (Castleberry 1990), because salespeople are regarded as pushy, dishonest, deceitful, aggressive, manipulative and desperate. Students are no exception to such negative perceptions either, even though they might have little to no experience with sales and/or salespersons. Their sole impression is shaped by hearsay and exposure to current news items about salespeople, leading to strong negative bias towards sales as a career.

In contrast to the plethora of studies conducted on perception of sales as a profession (Butler 1996; Dubinsky 1980; Harmon 1999), little has been done to investigate if and how such perception varies across different countries other than the US, especially students in Latin American (LatAm) countries. For example, of the annual average of 402 articles published by the top ten business journals between 1985 and 2002, only four focused on LatAm countries (Lenartowicz et al. 2002). Moreover, the few research publications are written in the local

language and as such, largely remain unavailable to the mainstream academics. However, given that LatAm is a major trading partner of the US and has garnered substantial foreign investment in recent years (The World Factbook 2009), we surmise that sales, as a profession, has gained popularity in this part of the world as well. We, therefore, feel that it is important to investigate potential perceptual differences between students of LatAm countries (Peru and Guatemala) and their US counterparts in terms of the different dimensions of sales as a career, such as opinion towards sales persons, future prospects of a career in sales, how sales persons are perceived and interest in a selling job after graduation.

This information can be useful for students, who can rectify some of the misconceptions about salespeople. This might encourage more students to pursue a career in sales. Sales people can benefit from this research by trying to understand why the community perceives sales people in a negative manner in general. Similarly, sales managers can 'train' their sales reps to conduct business in a manner that minimizes the chances of negative opinion on salespeople. Finally, recruiters can utilize this information to more effectively market the 'sales' positions they are hiring for. Therefore,

the authors argue that in addition to filling a gaping hole in cross-country studies pertaining to sales as a career, the current research will pique the interests of and contribute to a diverse audience.

The paper is organized as follows: the next section provides a review of extant literature and develops the theoretical framework for the study. This is followed by a discussion of the hypotheses, data, methods, results and analysis of the results. The concluding sections discuss the limitations and provide avenues for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on identifying, measuring and analyzing student perceptions of the sales profession appears to concentrate on two streams. One stream of thought focuses on how students, in general perceive the sales job. Weibaker et al. (1992) for example, found that job satisfaction, job alignment with student's goals, recruiter morale at the time of the interview, the company's financial health and reputation were some of the most important attributes of a sales job. Other characteristics identified in the literature include the job's reputation, growth prospects and financial stability (Bergman et al. 1984; Wortruba et al. 1989) and the work environment of the company, compensation, job security and scope of advancement leading to job satisfaction, location, responsibilities and employee morale (Castleberry 1990; Harris et al. 1987).

The other school of thought in this field appears to focus on perceptual differences among different dimensions such as sex (Castleberry 1990), and college major, college standing, demographics and work experience (Wortruba et al. 1989). Some studies, for example, found that females attach more importance to company reputation, clear communication paths within the organization and job fit to their personal goals than their male counterparts. However, males might attach greater importance to compensation issues. Furthermore, marketing majors consider 'clear

communication paths' within their organizations a more serious factor in a sales job than their non-marketing counterparts. Sales job applicants also emphasize job location, compensation and encouragement for graduate study (Castleberry 1990; Posner 1981) and creativity, job independence and ability to voice their own opinions on the job (Lacy et al. 1983; Powell 1984) more than the recruiters. Recruiters, on the other hand, emphasize company reputation, compensation and recruiter personality (Posner 1981; Rynes et al. 1986). Nonetheless, from the plethora of studies in this field, it appears that there exists some level of disagreement regarding importance of different criteria. Our literature review, however, identified only one multi-country study involving LatAm countries and the US, which focused on student perception of a sales career (Honeycutt, Jr. et al. 1999). From that perspective, therefore, the authors attempt to fill a significant void in sales field and contribute to a better understanding of how students from different academic and cultural backgrounds perceive a career in sales.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Country Information

The US, arguably one of the most developed countries of the world, boasts of a \$14 trillion economy, growing at the rate of 1.3 percent per annum as of 2008 (CIA World Factbook 2009). However, the recent slump in the labor and housing markets, the financial sector and the ever-increasing level of the trade deficit (\$810 billion as of 2008) has been a matter of serious concern for economists. The US has a per capita GDP of \$48,000. Almost a quarter of the 153 million-strong labor force is engaged in sales and office jobs, which makes this profession critical in terms of employment as well as contribution to overall economic prosperity.

With a population of about 29 million, Peru has a GDP of about \$239 billion. Peru has enjoyed notable economic growth rate of 9 percent in 2007-8. However, an unemployment rate of 8

percent among the 10.4 million-labor forces appears to be a matter of concern (CIA World Factbook 2009). Consequently, almost 45 percent of the population remains below the poverty line with no official record of employment in the sales profession. However, given that the US is one of Peru's major trading partners, it can be argued that there exists a reasonably strong emphasis on the sales profession. Hence, we believe that the current research is significant and relevant.

Finally, only four million of just over 13 million of Guatemala's population is employed. Like Peru, Guatemala does not have any official estimate of the labor force in the sales profession. Even though Guatemala is placed economically better than Peru, both countries share some ingrained problems such as high illiteracy rates, corruption, weak infrastructure and crime rates. Thus, it would be interesting to see how the younger generations in these two countries view a career in sales and try to analyze how their responses compare to overall student perceptions.

Theoretical Framework

Past research suggests that students have strongly negative views about the sales profession and salesperson (Lee et al. 2007; Harmon 1999; Dubinsky 1980). Reasons range from stereotypes (Lee et al. 2007; Thomson 1972), lack of interest towards the profession (Harmon 1999), lack of exposure to sales people (Lill et al. 2007) to negative experiences with salespeople (Jolson 1972). This trend of negative stereotyping has been aggravated by movies, Broadway shows, plays, and sitcoms (Butler 1996). Consequently, many students consider salespeople as overworked and underpaid, relatively uneducated, monotonous, high pressure and phony individuals (Jolson 1972).

Given that salespeople are the first (and sometimes, only) line of contact between the customer and the organization, and the fact that they are responsible for generating sales for their employers, it is expected that the firm will

nurture their professional development and attempt to alleviate any misconceptions about the salesperson's role in the organization. Anecdotes, however, suggest that many sales managers fail to build the trust, dependability and respect in their sales force, often holding the salesperson itself accountable for failure to meet the sales quota. This eventually leads to low morale, frustration and lack of motivation, culminating in high turnover rates of the sales force (Babakus et al. 1996; Rich 1997).

While we do not expect to nullify major findings from past research, given that traditional economies are becoming more and more competitive, it is possible that the sales job is considered more prestigious, responsible and rewarding than what it was in the past. In other words, we might find a perceptible 'softening' of the student's attitude towards the sales career and the salesperson.

METHODOLOGY

Data

The survey instrument was finalized after several rounds of revision and consultation with experts in the field, and was identical for all the three countries. The instrument consisted of four sections: thoughts that come to mind when one considers a sales person and/or a sales job (qualitative); one's level of interest in a sales job after graduation (anchored to "Definitely *would* like a selling job" and "Definitely *would not* like a selling job" scale); level of agreement (anchored to a Strongly Disagree -- Strongly Agree scale) with several traits of a selling job (e.g., frustration, insincerity and deceit) and demographic profile of the respondent. One of the authors recruited personnel to collect data onsite using a paper questionnaire. The final dataset comprised of 261 US, 200 Peruvian and 193 Guatemalan students, for an aggregate sample size of 654.

Results and Analysis

The demographic structure of the respondents is laid out in Tables 1a, 1b and 1c, all of which are self-explanatory.

As the data in Table 2a shows, the average Peruvian student is much more averse to accepting a sales job after graduation than that of his/her American or Guatemalan counterparts. Specifically, the response of the Guatemalan student is significantly different

TABLE 1A
Country of Data X Gender

		Unknown	Male	Female	Total
USA	count	4	108	149	261
	% within country of data	1.5%	41.4%	57.1%	100.0%
Peru	count	0	86	114	200
	% within country of data	.0%	43.0%	57.0%	100.0%
Guatemala	count	9	138	46	193
	% within country of data	4.6%	71.5%	23.8%	100.0%
Total	count	13	332	309	654
	% within country of data	2%	50.8%	47.2%	100.0%

TABLE 1B
Country of Data X Class Standing

	Unknown	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Grad	Total
USA count	5	24	40	59	104	29	261
% within country of data	1.92	9.20	15.33	22.61	39.85	11.11	100
Peru count	3	41	94	34	0	28	200
% within country of data	1.50	20.50	47.00	17.00	0.00	14.00	100
Guatemala count	11	63	56	37	9	17	193
% within country of data	5.70	32.64	29.02	19.17	4.66	8.81	100
total count	19	128	190	130	113	74	654
% within country of data	2.91	19.57	29.05	19.88	17.28	11.31	100

TABLE 1C
Country of Data X Respondent Major

	Unknown/Other	Business	Non-business	Total
USA count	7	221	33	261
% within country of data	2.68	84.67	12.64	100
Peru count	3	173	24	200
% within country of data	1.50	86.50	12	100
Guatemala count	50	81	62	193
% within country of data	25.91	41.97	32.12	100
total count	60	475	119	654
% within country of data	9.17	72.63	18.20	100

from that of both Peru and the US (Table 2b). On the whole, the Guatemalan student is the most receptive towards sales jobs after graduation. Further, the differences among the groups of respondents from the three countries are significant (Table 2c).

In terms of the respondents' level of agreement

regarding how they associate a job in personal selling with 16 different attributes, the results (Table 3a) of our analysis show that the countries differ in all but two of these attributes. As far as the inter-country differences corresponding to each attribute are concerned, there are almost an equal number of those that are significant and those that are not (Table 3b).

TABLE 2A
Interest In Selling Job After Graduation*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness
USA	2.77	261	1.403	1.96	.17
Peru	3.72	200	1.085	1.17	-.56
Guatemala	2.42	192	1.204	1.44	.35
Total	2.96	653	1.359	1.84	-.02

* 1= Definitely would like a selling job to 5= Definitely would not like a selling job

TABLE 2B
Interest in Selling Job after Graduation (Multiple Comparisons, LSD)

(I) Country of Data	(J) Country of Data	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
USA	Peru	-.946*	.118	.000	-1.18	-.71
	Guatemala	.357*	.119	.003	.12	.59
Peru	USA	.946*	.118	.000	.71	1.18
	Guatemala	1.303*	.127	.000	1.05	1.55
Guatemala	USA	-.357*	.119	.003	-.59	-.12
	Peru	-1.303*	.127	.000	-1.55	-1.05

* Mean difference is significant at 0.05 level

TABLE 2C
Interest in Selling Job after Graduation (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	181.234	2	90.62	57.60	.000
Within Groups	1022.650	650	1.57		
Total	1203.884	652			

DISCUSSION

The US has a much more ‘structured’ economy than its LatAm counterparts. Despite the negative attitude that students historically exhibit towards the sales profession, the US salesperson enjoys better work conditions, opportunities for advancement, and compensation that is easily among the highest in the industry. In addition, strict labor laws prohibit firms from overworking their sales force (Lill et al. 2007). Thus, it is not surprising that US students have a somewhat favorable view of the sales job. On the other hand, Guatemala enjoys significant trade relations with the US and therefore, has been somewhat influenced by American capitalism. Moreover, Guatemala is a small country with limited job opportunities and as such, harbors a much ‘open’ view towards all professions in general. Peru, however has failed to capitalize on its trade relations with the US. In addition, the country is more strongly rooted in its Andean traditions than its other LatAm counterparts, who have opened up their economies to the West (Nelson et al. 2008). As a result, Peruvians still attach certain level of ‘stigma’ to the sales profession, characterized by aggressiveness, cheating and falsification of facts to make a sale (Stromquist 1992). In other words, a typical Peruvian student opts for a sales career only after he/she has exhausted all other ‘better’ career options.

As far as perceptual differences in attributes among the three countries are concerned, only two of the 16 attributes are non-significant. The attribute that *Salespeople being ‘money hungry’* is non-significant can be explained by the fact that over the recent years, despite the persistent negative attitude towards the sales job, compensation of salespersons has improved substantially in the form of health benefits, vacation, and flexible work hours (Lill et al. 2007). In terms of ‘job security’, students believe that today’s salesperson is motivated more by the desire to succeed and excel in his/her profession than by the threat of being fired due to non-performance (Castleberry 1990).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study have demonstrated that overall, students from the US, Peru and Guatemala perceive a sales career differently from one another. This difference is strong for both the demographic and perceptual dimensions we have included in our study, and can be accounted for by the vast difference in educational, political, family and economic backgrounds of these countries. As expected, these differences are glaring for US students on one hand, and Peruvian and Guatemalan students on the other. Moreover, our findings reinforce the negative perception that students, in general, harbor towards salespeople and/or a sales career. From a broader perspective, therefore, our findings also reflect who the students are, as individuals. Such perceptual differences about the sales profession warrants attention in a global economy characterized by offshore operations and outsourcing. In other words, companies need to be highly sensitive to cultural and demographic factors if and when they hire salespeople in a foreign country. Students with family members associated with the sales profession also had some major differences in opinion on several factors. This suggests that ideas generated during family discussions may have affected their thinking about the profession.

Curriculum Suggestions

Marketing and sales faculty need to understand the effect of information the students receive on the selling profession, so that teachers can discuss and allay any misconceptions and stereotypes, that students bring into the classroom. These stereotypes can be addressed through exercises, role-plays, and other experiential methods. Since family members’ involvement in the sales field was shown to bear an influence on perceptions, the professors should encourage dialog among all students, regardless of ethnicity, with and without family members in sales. A key suggestion for educators is to establish specific goals each semester relating to an area of sales training

TABLE 3A
ANOVA

Associate a job in personal selling with		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
frustration	between groups	179.36	2	89.68	74.33	.000
	within groups	785.47	651	1.20		
	total	964.83	653			
insincerity and deceit	between groups	112.85	2	56.42	44.33	.000
	within groups	828.50	651	1.27		
	total	941.36	653			
low status and low prestige	between groups	30.84	2	15.42	13.57	.000
	within groups	739.60	651	1.13		
	total	770.44	653			
much traveling	between groups	18.32	2	9.16	6.61	.001
	within groups	902.33	651	1.38		
	total	920.66	653			
salespeople being "money hungry"	between groups	6.85	2	3.42	2.41	.091
	within groups	925.21	651	1.42		
	total	932.06	653			
low job security	between groups	7.58	2	3.79	2.61	.074
	within groups	943.38	651	1.44		
	total	950.96	653			
high pressure forcing people to buy unwanted goods	between groups	153.94	2	76.97	53.83	.000
	within groups	930.76	651	1.43		
	total	1084.71	653			
"just a job" not a "career"	between groups	97.22	2	48.61	31.92	.000
	within groups	991.25	651	1.52		
	total	1088.47	653			
uninteresting/no challenge	between groups	27.10	2	13.55	11.47	.000
	within groups	768.84	651	1.18		
	total	795.95	653			
no need for creativity	between groups	9.66	2	4.83	3.55	.029
	within groups	884.27	651	1.35		
	total	893.94	653			
personality is crucial	between groups	162.70	2	81.35	57.53	.000
	within groups	920.41	651	1.41		
	total	1083.11	653			
too little monetary reward	between groups	54.09	2	27.04	22.35	.000
	within groups	787.74	651	1.21		
	total	841.84	653			
interferes with home life	between groups	71.25	2	35.62	28.05	.000
	within groups	826.88	651	1.27		
	total	898.13	653			
"easy to get" job	between groups	12.54	2	6.27	5.04	.007
	within groups	809.61	651	1.24		
	total	822.16	653			
inappropriate career option	between groups	23.54	2	11.77	9.39	.000
	within groups	815.86	651	1.25		
	total	839.40	653			
difficult to advance into upper management	between groups	25.27	2	12.63	8.55	.000
	within groups	961.54	651	1.47		
	total	986.82	653			

TABLE 3B
Multiple Comparisons (LSD)

Dependent Variable: Associate Job in PS with	(I) Country of Data	(J) Country of Data	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Frustration	USA	Peru	.686*	.103	.000	.48	.89
		Guatemala	1.260*	.104	.000	1.06	1.47
	Peru	USA	-.686*	.103	.000	-.89	-.48
		Guatemala	.574*	.111	.000	.36	.79
	Guatemala	USA	-1.260*	.104	.000	-1.47	-1.06
		Peru	-.574*	.111	.000	-.79	-.36
Insincerity and Deceit	USA	Peru	.032	.106	.762	-.18	.24
		Guatemala	.924*	.107	.000	.71	1.13
	Peru	USA	-.032	.106	.762	-.24	.18
		Guatemala	.892*	.114	.000	.67	1.12
	Guatemala	USA	-.924*	.107	.000	-1.13	-.71
		Peru	-.892*	.114	.000	-1.12	-.67
Low Status and Low Prestige	USA	Peru	-.252*	.100	.012	-.45	-.06
		Guatemala	.308*	.101	.002	.11	.51
	Peru	USA	.252*	.100	.012	.06	.45
		Guatemala	.560*	.108	.000	.35	.77
	Guatemala	USA	-.308*	.101	.002	-.51	-.11
		Peru	-.560*	.108	.000	-.77	-.35
Much Traveling	USA	Peru	.396*	.111	.000	.18	.61
		Guatemala	.236*	.112	.035	.02	.46
	Peru	USA	-.396*	.111	.000	-.61	-.18
		Guatemala	-.160	.119	.179	-.39	.07
	Guatemala	USA	-.236*	.112	.035	-.46	-.02
		Peru	.160	.119	.179	-.07	.39
Salespeople Being "Money Hungry"	USA	Peru	-.146	.112	.192	-.37	.07
		Guatemala	.117	.113	.303	-.11	.34
	Peru	USA	.146	.112	.192	-.07	.37
		Guatemala	.263*	.120	.029	.03	.50
	Guatemala	USA	-.117	.113	.303	-.34	.11
		Peru	-.263*	.120	.029	-.50	-.03

TABLE 3B (continued)
Multiple Comparisons (LSD)

Dependent Variable: Associate Job in PS with	(I) Country of Data	(J) Country of Data	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Inter- val	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low Job Security	USA	Peru	-.051	.113	.650	-.27	.17
		Guatemala	.209	.114	.068	-.02	.43
	Peru	USA	.051	.113	.650	-.17	.27
		Guatemala	.260*	.121	.032	.02	.50
	Guatemala	USA	-.209	.114	.0068	-.43	.02
		Peru	-.260*	.121	.032	-.50	-.02
High Pressure Forcing People to Buy Un- wanted Goods	USA	Peru	-.426*	.112	.000	-.65	-.21
		Guatemala	.805*	.114	.000	.58	1.03
	Peru	USA	.426*	.112	.000	.21	.65
		Guatemala	1.231*	.121	.000	.99	1.47
	Guatemala	USA	-.805*	.114	.000	-.103	-.58
		Peru	-1.231*	.121	.000	-.147	-.99
“Just a Job” not a “Career”	USA	Peru	-.914*	.116	.000	-1.14	-.69
		Guatemala	-.258*	.117	.028	-.49	-.03
	Peru	USA	.914*	.116	.000	.69	1.14
		Guatemala	.656*	.125	.000	.41	.90
	Guatemala	USA	.258*	.117	.028	.03	.49
		Peru	-.656*	.125	.000	-.90	-.41
Uninteresting/ No Challenge	USA	Peru	-.431*	.102	.000	-.63	-.23
		Guatemala	-.398*	.103	.000	-.60	-.20
	Peru	USA	.431*	.102	.000	.23	.63
		Guatemala	.033	.110	.766	-.18	.25
	Guatemala	USA	.398*	.103	.000	.20	.60
		Peru	-.033	.110	.766	-.25	.18
No Need for Creativity	USA	Peru	-.161	.110	.141	-.38	.05
		Guatemala	-.292*	.111	.008	-.51	-.07
	Peru	USA	.161	.110	.141	-.05	.38
		Guatemala	-.131	.118	.266	-.36	.10
	Guatemala	USA	.292*	.111	.008	.07	.51
		Peru	.131	.118	.266	-.10	.36

TABLE 3B (continue)
Multiple Comparisons (LSD)

Dependent Variable: Associate Job in PS with	(I) Country of Data	(J) Country of Data	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Personality is Crucial	USA	Peru	.189	.112	.091	-.03	.41
		Guatemala	1.162*	.113	.000	.94	1.38
	Peru	USA	-.189	.112	.091	-.41	.03
		Guatemala	.973*	.120	.000	.74	1.21
	Guatemala	USA	-1.162*	1.13	.000	-1.38	-.94
		Peru	-.973*	1.20	.000	-1.21	-.74
Too Little Monetary Reward	USA	Peru	-.613*	.103	.000	-.82	-.41
		Guatemala	.025	.104	.809	-.18	.23
	Peru	USA	.613*	.103	.000	.41	.82
		Guatemala	.638*	.111	.000	.42	.86
	Guatemala	USA	-.025	.104	.809	-.23	.18
		Peru	-.638*	.111	.000	-.86	-.42
Interferes with Home Life	USA	Peru	.632*	.106	.000	.42	.84
		Guatemala	.711*	.107	.000	.50	.92
	Peru	USA	-.632*	.106	.000	-.84	-.42
		Guatemala	.079	.114	.488	-.14	.30
	Guatemala	USA	-.711*	.107	.000	-.92	-.50
		Peru	-.079	.114	.488	-.30	.14
"Easy to Get" Job	USA	Peru	-.186	.105	.076	-.39	.02
		Guatemala	.171	.106	.107	-.04	.38
	Peru	USA	.186	.105	.076	-.02	.39
		Guatemala	.357*	.113	.002	-.58	-.14
	Guatemala	USA	-.171	.106	.107	-.38	.04
		Peru	.357*	.113	.002	-.58	-.14
Inappropriate Career Option	USA	Peru	-.434*	.105	.000	-.64	-.23
		Guatemala	-.060	.106	.571	-.27	.15
	Peru	USA	.434*	.105	.000	.23	.64
		Guatemala	.374*	.113	.001	.15	.60
	Guatemala	USA	.060	1.06	.571	-.15	.27
		Peru	-.374*	.113	.001	-.60	-.15

TABLE 3B (continued)
Multiple Comparisons (LSD)

Dependent Variable: Associate Job in PS with	(I) Country of Data	(J) Country of Data	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Inter- val	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Difficult to Advance into Upper Manage- ment	USA	Peru	-.422*	.114	.000	-.65	-.20
		Guatemala	-.376*	.115	.001	-.60	-.15
	Peru	USA	.422*	.114	.000	.20	.65
		Guatemala	.046	.123	.708	-.19	.29
	Guatemala	USA	.376*	.115	.001	.15	.60
		Peru	-.046	.123	.708	-.29	.19

that will positively acquaint the students with the sales field.

An important part of a student's training is developing or improving communication skills. Generally, those who can communicate well have the ability to excel in a sales position. Educators, therefore, should create measurable standards to assess students' progress. And yet, very few business programs have communication skills as a requirement for their curriculum.

Limitation and Future Direction

As per the authors' literature review, there does not exist any research on LatAm students' perceptions of a sales career. Limited extant research is available in the local language, making it extremely difficult for the researcher to utilize such information for the present purpose. The only relevant study we were able to unearth was the one by Lee et al. (2007). All other literature on student perception and/or sales career dates back to the 1990-s or earlier. This also made it impossible for us to test for presence of potential relationship between different dimensions of a sales job and country or demographic characteristics of respondents. Another limitation was our inability to collect more data from students who have had some sales experience in the past, which could have provided us with more meaningful student perceptions of a sales career. Nonetheless, the

authors made every effort to collect data from published and unpublished journal articles, magazines, webzines and government documents (such as the CIA Factbook) and even contact local experts in the field (Dennis Smith of the Evangelical Center of Pastoral Studies in Central America).

It would also be interesting to conduct two other types of comparative studies in this regard: one involving all the LatAm countries, while the second one might be a longitudinal study featuring one of the larger LatAm countries.

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