

**AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING SALESPERSON'S
EFFORT INTENTION TOWARDS COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE IN
TUNISIAN COMPANIES**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the respective impact of attitude and motivation towards salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence. The conceptual model proposed was based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).

The proposed model was empirically tested using survey data provided by 104 respondents and was analyzed using a structural Equation model (SEM). The results of the study revealed that attitude as a mediator between intrinsic motivation and salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence. Salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence is largely influenced by monitoring, directing and organizational commitment. Furthermore, our results indicate that role ambiguity and role conflict negatively contribute to the salesperson's intrinsic motivation towards competitive intelligence. This study can provide to managers some guidelines to develop strategies and to improve their services in order to increase salesperson's contribution in competitive intelligence activities.

Originality/value –Tunisian managers can use the results of this study in order to increase their understanding salesperson's behavior towards competitive intelligence.

Keywords: Attitude, Intrinsic motivation, Intention, Salesperson's, Competitive intelligence, Tunisia.

Introduction

Today's environment has a rapidly changing landscape where new competitors, suppliers or customers are entering the market place, and where current competitors are offering new products. The need to be proactive is vital, and that requires monitoring of changes both within and outside the firm such as: which companies are going out of business? Which new products or services are being introduced? What products or services might be substitutes? What are customers or suppliers doing? Such an activity may help managers to know what happens in the environment and to anticipate its evolution in order to make operational, tactical and strategic decisions (Pearce, 1971) and to gain competitive advantages (Porter, 1980).

Because of their access to the market, salespeople have the unique capacity to monitor and report shifts in customer needs and competitive activity without sacrificing an exorbitant amount of selling time. They are well positioned to communicate strategic information generated at the point of customer contact to key managers within the company (Flaherty and Pappas, 2009). This information ultimately contributes to the development of responsive marketing strategies (Webster, 1965). They are also, a potentially valuable source of market information for organizations (Evans and Schlacter, 1985).

Salespeople are the most frequently used source for obtaining information on the competitors (Mellow, 1989), and in the industrial sector for example, their activity of collecting and transmitting information from the market has been classified as being the forth their tenth most important missions (Moncrief, 1986). Many salespeople do not understand the value of the information that they possess (Klomp maker, 1980). Only a minority of salespersons do actively allocate effort to their collection and dissemination within their company (Albaum, 1964; Robertson, 1974; Thietart and Vivas, 1981). Robertson, (1974) also observes that few salespersons do really disseminate environmental information within the ir company (respectively 16.7% and 10.9% of the salespersons in the two observed companies). Therefore, sales managers have the crucial responsibility to make sure that their sales forces contribute to the competitive intelligence. However, few authors have analyzed the role the salespeople can play in gathering competitive information. However, few authors have analyzed the role of the salespeople in gathering competitive information (Le Bon and Merunka, 1998; Le Bon, 1998a; 1998b; Nasri, 2011a, 2011b, Nasri and Charfeddine, 2012; Nasri and Zarai, 2012). They have more particularly focused on the salespeople's abilities to serve the marketing intelligence system than the market intelligence one (Fouss and Salomon 1980; Grace and Pointon 1980; Chonko et al., 1991).

This research investigates the respective impact of attitude and motivation towards salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence. Thus, this study may help managers to understand the determinant factors that influence salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence

The paper is organized as follows. The second section is presented with review of literature related to competitive intelligence containing theoretical background, development of research model and hypotheses. In the third section, research methodology and data analysis are presented. Then, Section 4 discusses the empirical findings and the article concludes with the conclusions, implications, limitations and recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

Theoretical framework

There are a number of theories and models that have been employed over the years in understanding behaviors. The theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), were the most frequently used theoretical frameworks to study behaviors. In this research, the theory of

reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), one of the best established theories to predict behavioural intentions, is used as the theoretical framework. Fishbein and Ajzen, (1975) suggested that the proximal cause of behavior is one's intention to engage in the behavior. Attitudes influence behavior by their influence on intentions, which are decisions to act in a particular way (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

Intention towards Competitive intelligence

Behavioral intentions are indicators of a person's readiness to perform behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010). The fundamental underlying dimension characterizing an intention to perform behavior is the person's estimate of the likelihood or perceived probability of performing a given behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) assumes that human behaviour is the outcome led by behavioural intentions. It is the degree of an individual's intention to perform a specified behaviour. This relation between intention and behavior is previously verified in many different studies and is researched in many different contexts (Armitage and Conner, 2000; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Sutton, 1998).

Intrinsic motivation

Motivation has been presented over the years as a central variable in organizational life. In all enterprises motivation plays a key role in driving employees towards achieving their goals, organizational goals and to a certain extent the dreams of their nations.

According to Luthans (1998), motivation can be defined as the process that arouses, energizes, directs, and sustains behavior and performance. On the other hand, Linder (1998) argues that motivation can be defined as "the inner force that drives individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals".

Based on a combination of various definitions, the concept of motivation can be understood as the internal force or impulse that predisposes individuals to an action to achieve an objective. This force has implications for the form, direction, intensity, and duration of behavior. That is, it explains what employees are motivated to accomplish, how they will attempt to accomplish it, how hard they will work to do so, and when they will stop (Mayer et al., 1989).

There are multiple theories that discuss the motivation and divided by Johnson, (2005) into four categories. Employee motivation needs theories which profile motivational need theorists Maslow, (1943) and McClelland, (1961). Employee motivation equity theories which explain the theories of Adams, (1963), based off of prior work by Festinger, (1957). Employee motivation expectancy theories developed by Vroom, (1964), expanded by Hackman and Porter, (1968) and further extension of expectancy theory by Porter and Lawler (1968), and Task and goal employee motivation theories developed by Herzberg, (1966), Locke and Latham, (2002) based from prior work of Ryan, (1970), derived from Rosenthal and Jacobson, (1968), followed by Hackman and Oldham, (1975) and concluding with McGregor, (1960).

Motivation is often described as being "intrinsic" or "extrinsic" in nature (Sansone and Harackiewicz, 2000). Extrinsic motivation refers to performing something that has a separable

outcome other than the activity performed such as high salary, increasing job performance, etc., whereas intrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity because it is inherently enjoyable and interesting, etc. Several researches have been done with extrinsic motivation in Management Information Systems and explores what instrumental consequences outside the activity influences the performance of an activity (Davis, 1989; Igarria et al., 1995, 1996).

Davis pointed out that intrinsic motivation has been given inadequate attention and there are few studies that have emphasized the role of intrinsic motivation, which involves performing an activity because it is inherently enjoyable or challenging (Venkatesh, 1999). Findings of Davis et al. (1992) suggest that people's intention to use computer at the work place is influenced primarily by their perception of how useful computers are for enhancing their job performance and secondarily the level of enjoyment they experience when using computers. Highly motivated employees appear to develop positive work related attitudes and behaviors such as: they exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment (Crewson, 1997; Pandey et al., 2008), Salesperson motivation has been identified in terms of global intrinsic and extrinsic (I /E) motivation in the sales and marketing literature (Anderson and Oliver, 1987).

Global intrinsic motivation is defined as "the pleasure or value of an activity itself," while global extrinsic motivation "emphasizes the value an individual places on the results of an action and the individual's assessment of the probability of realizing the results" (Ingram et al., 1989). Intrinsic motivation has been postulated to be a stronger predictor of performance than extrinsic motivation (Anderson and Oliver, 1987; Weitz et al., 1986). For instance, Tyagi, (1985) found that global intrinsic motivation positively affects sales performance more strongly than extrinsic motivation.

Attitude toward Competitive intelligence

The concept attitude is especially useful for understanding and explaining behavior. The first concept that directly influences the intention towards use of behavior according to the TRA is Attitude. In fact, the Theory Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), the Theory Planned Behaviour (Schifter and Ajzen, 1985), have included this variable as a clear antecedent of the behavior and the final decisions of the individuals. Also, these theories assume that the attitude leads to understand the reasons which justify those behaviors.

An attitude can be defined as a stable predisposition leading to a favorable or unfavorable response towards an object or a behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). From a conceptual point of view, attitude appears as a multidimensional construct composed of cognition, affect and which implies conation (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960). The cognitive dimension describes what people think about the attitude object (e.g. the salesperson's beliefs about the importance of doing competitive intelligence, necessity, and advantageousness). The affective dimension describes how people feel about the attitude object (e.g. the salesperson's appreciation or disdain for looking for competitive information). The conative dimension describes people's behavior in response to the attitude object (e.g. the salesperson's plan to do competitive intelligence). In the context of competitive intelligence the salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence is defined as "favorable or unfavorable predisposition of the salesperson towards acquisition,

evaluation and transmission of information related to marketing and sales intelligence” (Le Bon and Merunka, 1998). Salespersons may both develop personal affects and beliefs towards competitive intelligence.

Le Bon and Merunka, (1998) classified salesperson’s attitude towards competitive intelligence into two types. Cognitive responses imply that the salesperson is clearly aware of the strategic importance of monitoring what is happening on the market and that these events could influence his company competitiveness. Affective responses imply that the salesperson likes to actively participate to competitive intelligence activities.

Finally, instrumental responses are the actions already taken or will be taken in the future to diffuse immediately to marketing and sales managers, all potentially interesting information, controlled and detailed. The study of Le Bon and Merunka, (1998) showed the effective power of explanation of the concept of attitude on the salesperson’s effort intention towards competitive intelligence and the salespersons’ attitude towards competitive intelligence is a mediating factor of the relation between motivation and effort intention. Based on this evidences in the literature, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis H1 - The salespersons’ attitude towards competitive intelligence is a mediating factor of the relation between motivation and effort intention towards competitive intelligence.

The mediating effect of the salespersons’ attitude towards competitive intelligence has three main consequences (Baron and Kenny 1986; Le Bon and Merunka, 1998). The hypotheses have been formulated as follow:

Hypothesis H1a-The more favorable the salespersons’ attitude to wards competitive intelligence, the stronger their effort intention towards competitive intelligence.

Hypothesis H1b - The impact of intrinsic motivation on attitude towards competitive intelligence is significant.

Hypothesis H1c - The impact of intrinsic motivation on effort intention towards competitive intelligence is not significant, when attitude is modelled as a mediating factor.

Sales management control

Sales management control is defined as “the extent to which sales managers perform several monitoring, directing, evaluating and rewarding activities in carrying out their responsibilities” (Anderson and Oliver, 1987). Anderson and Oliver, (1987) conceptualise sales management control as two opposite systems: behaviour-based and outcome-based sales management control.

Outcome-based control systems involve relatively little monitoring of salespeople by management; rely on straightforward, objective measures of results (e.g., sales); and use compensation methods that shift risk to the salesperson (i.e., commission or bonus). In contrast, a behavior-based control system emphasizes considerable levels of supervisor monitoring, direction and intervention in activities and results and subjective and more complex methods of

evaluating performance based on the salesperson's job inputs (e.g., aptitude, product knowledge, activities and sales strategies).

More recently, Challagalla and Shervani, (1996) disaggregated behavioral control into activity control and capability control. Activity control refers to the specification of the activities a person is expected to perform on a regular basis, the monitoring of actual behavior, and the administering of rewards and punishments based on the performance of specified activities. Capability control emphasizes improving competence through better skills and abilities. It involves setting goals for the level of skills and abilities salespeople must possess, monitoring their skills and abilities, providing guidance for improvement, and rewarding and punishing individuals based on their level of skills and abilities.

Behaviour based control is also expected to be associated with positive attitudes in terms of commitment to the sales organization, acceptance of direction and control, more team co-operation and enthusiasm for performance reviews, but lower propensity to take risks, while outcome-based control is expected to be associated with less positive attitudes and a greater propensity to take risks.

Past studies have investigated the effect of sales management control on salespersons' motivation (Miao et al., 2007), satisfaction with supervisors (Challagalla and Shervani, 1996), role stress (Lusch and Jaworski, 1991), sales force performance (Piercy et al., 1998), and ethical standards (Ingram et al., 2007). The results of these empirical studies suggest that sales management control has an impact not only on a salesperson's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, but also on sales force effectiveness. Baldauf et al., (2005) reviewed previous empirical studies and concluded that a consensus existed that behavior controls had a positive influence on salespersons' attitudes, behaviors, and performance, as well as on sales organization effectiveness (sales revenue, market shares, profitability, customer satisfaction).Based on this evidences in the literature, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Monitoring positively influences salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence.

Hypothesis 3: Directing positively influences salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence.

Hypothesis 4: Evaluating positively influences salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence.

Hypothesis 5: Rewarding positively influences salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence.

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as psychological state that relates the individual to the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Theoretically, commitment to an organization is logically tied to quality of relations between employees with the organization.

According to Meyer and Allen, (1990), organizational commitment can take three distinct forms. Affective commitment refers to identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization, in the sense that employees with strong affective commitment remain with the organization because they want to do so. Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on employee's recognition of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Thus, employees with strong continuance commitment remain with the organization because they have to do so, either because of low perceived alternatives or because of high personal sacrifice associated with leaving the organization.

Normative commitment refers to commitment based on a sense of obligation to the organization. Mark and Nancy, (1991) studied that when the employees are more involved and attached with the job it means that they are more committed to their work it implies that the employees are satisfied towards organization. Along with the other behavioral indicators like; learning, perception, motivation and thinking, organizational commitment is considered to be most important factor to determine the behavior of people in the organizations.

A number of previous studies investigated the relationship between organizational commitment and attitudes toward organizational change. Nevertheless, empirical findings support the influence of organizational commitment on attitudes toward organizational change (Iverson, 1996; Cordery et al., 1993). Employees with high organizational commitment are more congruent with the goals and values of the organization, willing to expend considerably more effort on behalf of the organization, and thus more likely to accept organizational change, provided that such a change would not alter the basic values and goals of the organization and it is perceived as beneficial to the organization. Thus, behavior based control is hypothesized as:

Hypothesis 6: Organizational commitment positively influences salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence.

Role conflict

Role conflict is defined as the difference, perceived by an employee, between job expectations conveyed by multiple sources (Rizzo et al., 1970). In addition, Katz and Kahn, (1970) defined role conflict as the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) role outputs or requirements, in such a way that the performance of one of them makes the performance of the other more difficult. Several investigations have revealed the negative impact of role conflict on employees' job satisfaction through the past decades. The studies of Tosi and Tosi, (1970) and Tosi, (1971) showed that role conflict was significantly related to overall low job satisfaction. Therefore, in this study, role conflict was proposed to have only one direct influence on the actual usage. Hence, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 7: Role conflict negatively influences the salesperson's intrinsic motivation towards competitive intelligence.

Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity is one of the dimensions of role theory construct. Role ambiguity is conceptualized as a stressful condition due to employees' confusion concerning expectations of what their responsibilities are (Low et al., 2001) and lack of information regarding appropriate actions in a given situation or not understanding the expectation of management (Babin and Boles, 1996). It is also referred to as the incompatibility between information required to perform a task and available information (Burney and Widener, 2007).

According to Fisher, (2001), role ambiguity is born when an executive does not have useful information that allows him/her to effectively perform his/her duties. This information should provide evidence of: (i) relevant expectations regarding the performance of a role, as well as its scope in terms of rights, duties, and responsibilities; (ii) crucial activities for effectively fulfilling a position's duties, as well as the steps or the best way to achieve this; (iii) the consequences of carrying out and of not carrying out the duties; (iv) behavior that is compensated or punished, the nature of compensation and punishments, behavior that is satisfactory or unsatisfactory in performing the role; and finally, (v) opportunities for advancement. If subordinates are not clear about what they are expected to achieve and how they will be judged, they will hesitate to make decisions and they will try to meet the superior's expectations by trial and error (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Several studies have empirically proved that role ambiguity is negatively related to employee job satisfaction (Walsh, 2011; Karatepe et al., 2006), job performance (Babin and Boles, 1996), and self-efficacy (Karatepe et al., 2006). Le Bon and Merunka, (1998) found negative and significant influences of role ambiguity on the salesperson's intrinsic motivation towards competitive intelligence. Hence, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 8: Role ambiguity negatively influences the salesperson's intrinsic motivation towards competitive intelligence.

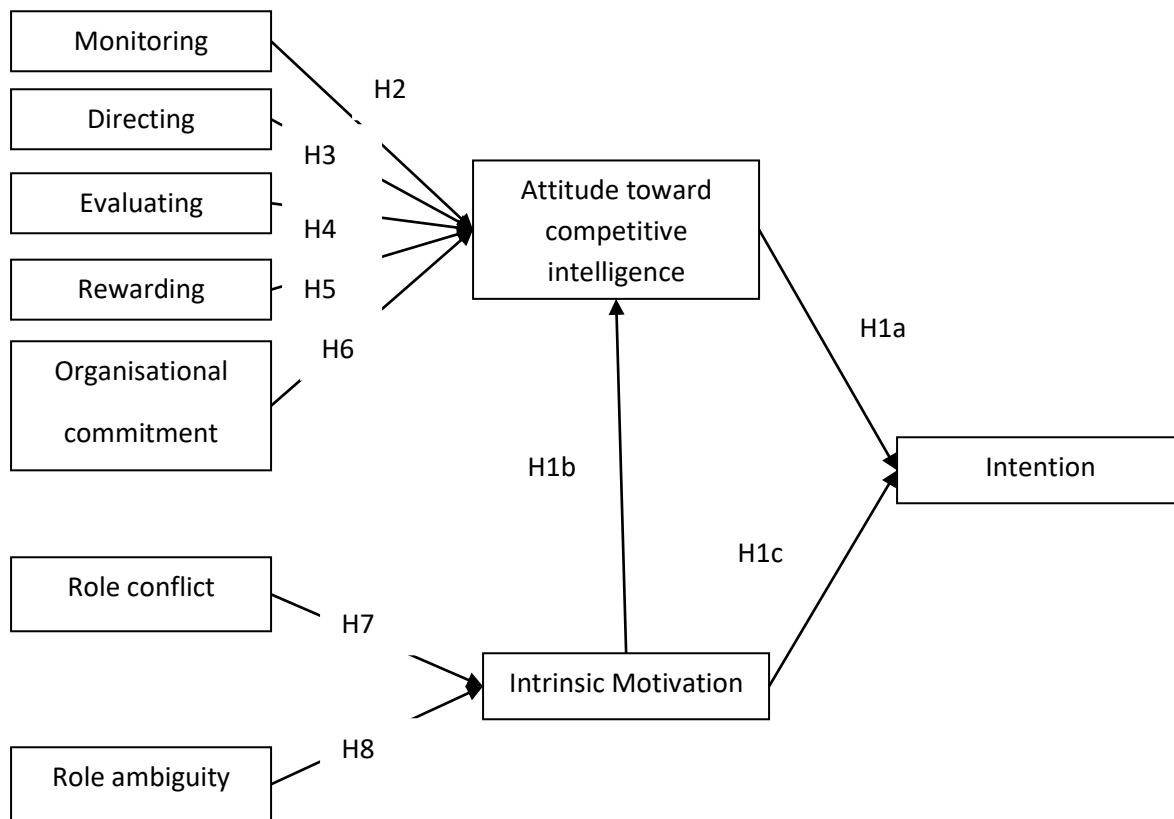


Figure.1. Theoretical model

Research Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

To investigate the respective impact of attitude and motivation towards salesperson’s effort intention towards competitive intelligence, an online survey is administered to collect data over a period of three month, because it is a more speedy and convenient way to acquire viewpoints. The survey was administered to salespeople across sectors, such as Insurance, Manufacturing, Telecommunication and Banking. A total of 128 individuals participated in the survey. Of these, 24 responses had to be removed on account of various reasons. 79 per cent of the respondents were male and 21 per cent were female salespersons. In terms of age, 62.5% were age group 31-40 years and 16% participants between 21 and 30 years old, which followed by 13.46% respondents between 41 and 50 years and rest 7.69% respondents above 51 years old. Finally, majority of the respondents (45 per cent) belonged to sales function of manufacturing companies (50.96 per cent) followed by telecommunication (25.96 per cent), banking (14.42 per cent) and

Insurance companies (8.65 per cent). The demographic profile of survey participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample demographics.

Profile	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Gender		
Male	82	78.84
Female	22	21.16
Age		
21 - 30	17	16.34
31 - 40	65	62.5
41 - 50	14	13.46
51 and above	8	7.69
Sectors		
Insurance	9	8.65
Manufacturing	53	50.96
Telecommunication	27	25.96
Banking	15	14.42

Measurement model

A structured questionnaire was designed, distributed, and collected in order to investigate the respective impact of attitude and motivation towards salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence in Tunisia country. The survey questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire is inquired demographic profile of the respondents. While, the second part of the questionnaire sought to measure various constructs related to competitive intelligence to establish relationship among them. Therefore, items selected for the constructs were mainly adapted from prior studies to ensure content validity.

Attitude was measured using the 12 items adopted from Le Bon and Merunka, (1998): 3 items for the affective dimension (sample item, 9 items for the cognitive and 3 items for the behavioural). The scale items of behaviour based management control were developed using Cravens et al. (1993) sales management scale: 5 items to for monitoring, 5 items for directing, 5 items for evaluating and 7 items for rewarding. Intrinsic motivation was measured using the 4 items adopted from Anderson and Oliver, (1987); Cravens et al., (1993) and Oliver and Anderson, (1994). Eight items to measure role conflict were adopted from Johnston et al., (1989) and Rizzo et al., (1970). Role ambiguity was measured using 6 items which were adapted from Rizzo et al., (1970). Finally, self efficacy was measured using 10 items from Riggs et al., (1994). All items were measured using a five point Likert scale, with the anchors being “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree.”, with the responses rated as follows: 1 “as strongly disagree”, 2 as “disagree”, 3 as “somewhat agree”, 4 as “agree”, and 5 as “strongly agree”.

The questionnaire was translated from English to Arabic and administrated in Arabic language. In this research we adopted Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for data analysis to investigate the strength and direction of relationships among theoretical constructs. When using Structural Equation Modelling for data analysis, the model research should consist of measurement model analysis and structural model analysis. In first step, quality and adequacy of measurement model was examined through Confirmatory Factors Analysis (CFA) to ensure reliability, convergent and discriminate validity.

Agarwal and Prasad, (1997) suggest using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for assessing construct validity. Exploratory factor analysis was done by employing Principal Components Extraction with Varimax rotation on items consisting of extended usage and exploratory usage. Hair et al. (1998) suggested that factor loadings should be above 0.50. All of the factor loadings were above the recommended value except for twenty one items (MO2, MO5,DI4, EV1, EV4, RE3, RE4, RE5,CO3, ATT4, ATT6, ATT7, ATT8, ATT9, ATT10,ATT11, ATT12, RC4, RC6, RC8, MOT1) were eliminated, due to lower standardised outer loading recommendation.

A confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.3 was conducted to test the measurement model. In first stage, quality and adequacy of measurement model was examined through CFA to ensure reliability, convergent and discriminate validity. Reliability and convergent validity of the factors were estimated by Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (see Table 2). Composite reliability for all the factors in our measurement model was above 0.80 for all the constructs, and Alpha Cronbach a was higher than the 0.7, which was still in acceptable range. The Average Extracted Variances were all above the recommended 0.50 level (Hair et al., 1992), which meant that more than half of the variances observed in the items were accounted for by their hypothesized factors. Convergent validity can also be evaluated by examining the factor loadings (see Table 2). Following Hair et al., (1992) recommendation, factor loadings greater than 0.50 were considered to be very significant. All of the factor loadings of the items in the research model were greater than 0.50, with most of them above 0.90. Thus, all factors in the measurement model had adequate reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2. Results of rotated factor loading and composite reliability

Constructs and items	Standardized loading	Composite reliability	AVE
Monitoring (MO)			
Spend time with salespeople in the field. (MO1)	.851		
Regularly renew call reports from salespeople. (MO2)	.883	.923	.903
Monitor the day-to-day activities of salespeople. (MO3)	.905		
Directing (DI)			
Encourage salespeople to increase their sales results by rewarding them for their achievements. (DI1)	.706		
Actively participate in training salespeople on the job. (DI2)	.726	.905	.866
Regularly spend time coaching salespeople. (DI3)	.816		
Help salespeople develop their potential. (DI4)	.882		
Evaluating (EV)			
Evaluate the profit contribution achieved by salespeople. (EV1)	.733		
Evaluate the sales results of each salesperson. (EV2)	.830	.940	.956
Evaluate the quality of sales presentations made by salespeople. (EV3)	.926		
Rewarding (RE)			
Providing performance feedback to salespeople on a regular basis. (RE1)	.918		
Compensate salespeople based on the quality of their sales activities. (RE2)	.851	.937	.876
Use non-financial incentives to reward salespeople for their achievements. (RE3)	.920		
Compensate salespeople based on the quantity of their sales activities?. (RE4)	.688		

Organizational commitment (CO)

I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful. (CO1)	.893		
This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance. (CO2)	.768		
I really care about the future of this organization. (CO3)	.880		
I talk up my organization to my friends as a great place to work. (CO4)	.918		
My values and the organization's values are very similar. (CO5)	.840	.952	.767
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization. (CO6)	.762		
I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined. (CO7)	.820		
This is the best of all possible organizations for which to work. (CO8)	.914		

Attitude toward CI (ATT)

I must monitor for Marketing and Sales Managers all facts and behaviors that concern competitors. (ATT1)	.805		
When I am on the field, I must find out any factors that could threaten the competitive position of my company. (ATT2)	.815	.789	.867
When we are asked to look for specific information about competitors or customers, we must consider it as a top priority. (ATT3)	.775		
Marketing and Sales Managers don't need to be constantly informed on what's going on in the field.*. (ATT4)	.883		

(Continued)

Table 2. Results of rotated factor loading and composite reliability

Constructs and items	Standardized loading	Composite reliability	AVE
Intention (INT)			
When I am on the field I try to systematically provoke situations or find pretexts which will allow me to gather and transmit reliable information about competitors. (INT1)	.970		
When I am on the field, I always assign myself objectives to obtain information about competitors or about customers in order to transmit them very often to the headquarters. (INT2)	.909	.941	.912
When I am on the field, I give the best of myself to be one of those who really transmit a lot information from the field. (INT3)	.852		
Intrinsic motivation (MOT)			
I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job well. (MOT1)	.702		
		.840	
When I perform my job well it contributes to my personal growth and development. (MOT2)	.810		.875
My job increases my feeling of self esteem (MOT3)	.810		
Role conflict (RC)			
I receive an assignment without adequate resources. (RC1)	.943		
I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently. (RC2)	.676		
I work on unnecessary things. (RC3)	.862	.939	.789
I receive conflicting requests from two or more people. (RC4)	.951		
I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others. (RC4)	.621		
Role ambiguity (RA)			
I feel certain about how much authority I have. (AM1)	.964		
Clear, planned goals and objectives for my job. (AM2)	.997		
I know that I have divided my time properly. (AM3)	.964	.960	.789

I know what my responsibilities are. (AM4)	.811
I know exactly what is expected of me. (AM5)	.926
Explanation is clear of what has to be done. (AM6)	.902
I feel threatened when others watch me work. (SE8)	.950

To ensure that the measurement model possesses a sufficiently good model fit, nine common model-fit measures were used to assess the model’s overall goodness of fit: the ratio of the χ^2/df (nor med chi-square) to degrees-of-freedom (df), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normalized fit index (NFI), non-normalized fit index (NNFI), comparative fit index (CFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). As shown in Table 3 and Table 4, all the model-fit indices exceeded their respective common acceptance levels suggested by previous research, thus demonstrating that the measurement model exhibited a fairly good fit with the data collected.

Structural model

A similar set of model-fit indices of the measurement model was used to examine the structural model. The goodness-of-fit indices are summarized in Table 3, and demonstrated a good overall fit of the structural model to the data. Therefore, it is proceeded to examine the path coefficients of the structural model (see Figure 2).

This study finds that the attitude has an important and positive impact on the behavioural intention, consistent with the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The results of the study indicate also that the salespersons’ attitude towards competitive intelligence is a mediating factor of the relation between motivation and effort intention towards competitive intention. The findings of this study strongly support the previous research by Le Bon and Merunka, (1998) wherein the researchers discovered that the salespersons’ attitude towards competitive intelligence is a mediating factor of the relation between motivation and effort intention towards competitive intelligence.

The effect of the intrinsic motivation towards competitive intelligence on effort intention towards competitive intelligence shrinks upon the addition of the salespersons’ attitude towards competitive intelligence. As a consequence, the results confirm H1, H1a, H1b and H1c. In addition, based on the standardized path coefficients (β), it is observed that the most significant factor influencing attitude toward competitive intelligence is monitoring ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$), which is followed other significant factors in order of its influence: directing ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$), and organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.01$) respectively. The path coefficient from rewarding ($\beta = 0.06, p < 0.05$) and evaluating ($\beta = 0.02, p < 0.01$) was not significant. However, the findings of the present study are in partial agreement with the results of Baldauf et al, (2005) which founded that behavior controls (monitoring and directing) had a positive influence on

salespersons' attitudes toward competitive intelligence is monitoring. As a consequence, the results confirm H2 and H3, whereas H4 and H5 are not supported.

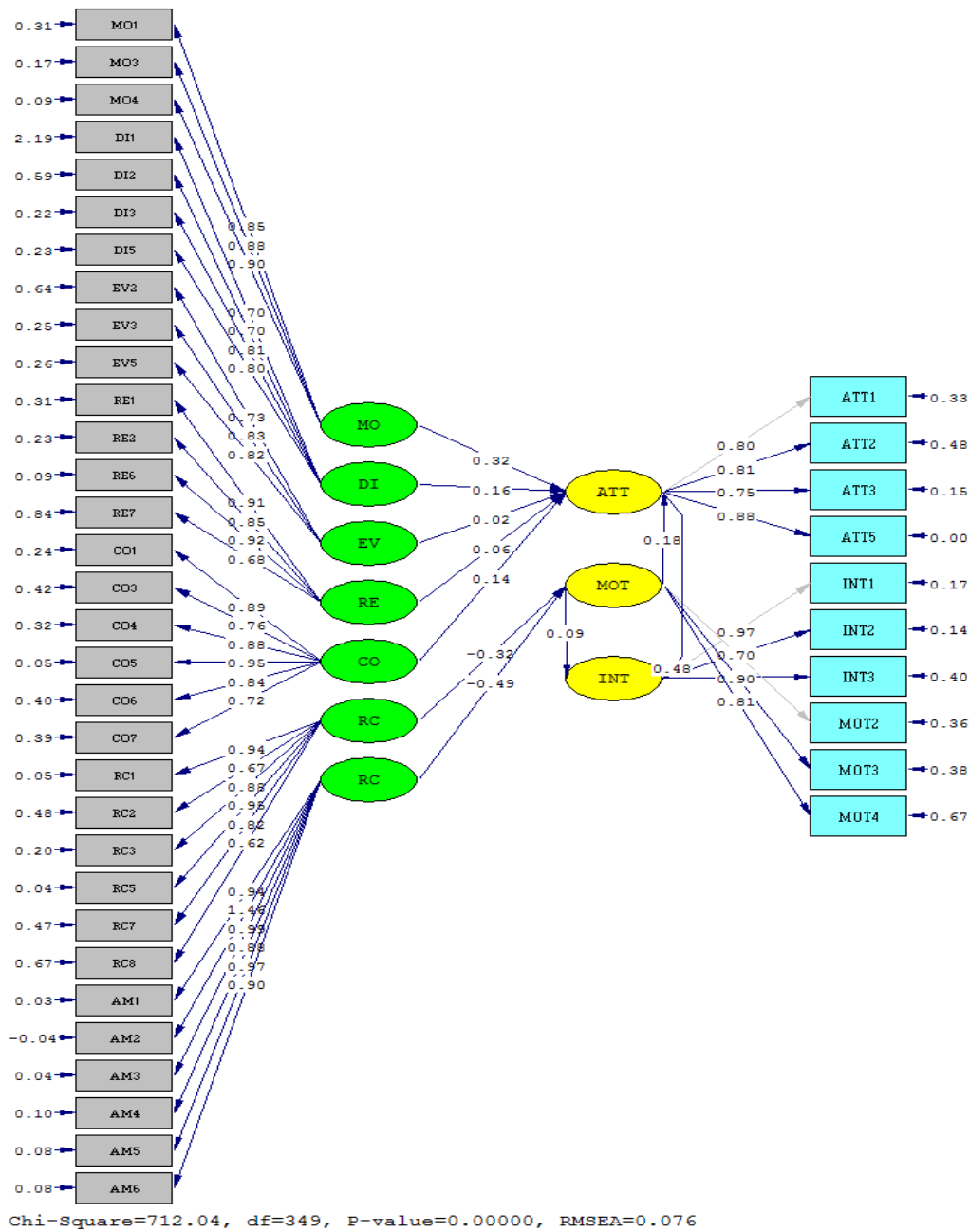
A moderate positive relationship ($\beta = 0.14$) was found between organizational commitment and attitude towards competitive intelligence. This finding seems to be consistent with some of the previous studies (Lin, 2007). As a consequence, the results confirm H6. Finally, intrinsic motivation was predicted by role ambiguity ($\beta = - 0.49$, $p < 0.05$) and role conflict ($\beta = - 0.32$, $p < 0.01$). This is consistent to several prior studies that have revealed the negative impact of role ambiguity and role conflict on the salesperson's intrinsic motivation to wards job satisfaction (Walsh, 2011; Karatepe et al., 2006), job performance (Babin and Boles, 1996) and competitive intelligence (Le Bon and Merunka, 1998). As a consequence, the results confirm H7 and H8.

Table 3. Fit indices for measurement model.

Fit indices	Recommended value	Measurement model
Chi squared of freedom	≤ 3.00	2.04
Normalized Fit Index (NFI)	≥ 0.90	0.92
Non- Normalized Fit Index (NNFI)	≥ 0.90	0.95
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ 0.60	0.95
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	≥ 0.90	0.89
Adjusted goodness of Fit (AGFI)	≥ 0.80	0.84
Root mean square residual (RMR)	≤ 0.10	0.065
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08	0.065

Table 4. Fit indices for structural model.

Fit indices	Recommended value	Structural model
Chi squared of freedom	≤ 3.00	1.93
Normalized Fit Index (NFI)	≥ 0.90	0.93
Non- Normalized Fit Index (NNFI)	≥ 0.90	0.92
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ 0.60	0.93
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	≥ 0.90	0.92
Adjusted goodness of Fit (AGFI)	≥ 0.80	0.93
Root mean square residual (RMR)	≤ 0.10	0.068
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08	0.076



Significance at $p < 0.05$

Figure 2. Structural model with path coefficients

Mediation role of salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence

The mediation effect of attitude between motivation and salesperson’s effort intention towards competitive intelligence (MOT and INT) were tested according to Baron and Kenny, (1986). The procedures involved a series of three steps, namely:

Step-1: the independent variable significantly affects the mediator (MOT/ATT)

Step-2: the independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable in the absence of the mediator (MOT/INT)

Step-3: the effect of the independent variable (MOT) on the dependent variable (INT) shrinks upon the addition of the mediator to the model (ATT).

Perfect mediation holds if the independent variable has no effect on the dependent variable, when the mediator is controlled. That is complete mediation or full mediation exists if the independent variable exerts its total influence through the mediating variable. Partial mediation is given if the independent variable exerts some of its influence on the dependent variable through the mediating variable, and it also exerts some of its influence directly on the dependent variable and not through mediating variable. In order to demonstrate whether ATT mediates the effects of the MOT on INT, the standardized β value for MOT and INT in step-2 needs to be substantially larger than the same variable in step 3.

Table 4 illustrates the three steps involved when assessing the mediation effect of ATT. The results of Table 4I indicate that, after the addition of ATT to the model the β in step 3 has become less than step-2, however, this path is still meaningful. However, the results of Table 5 show that after adding ATT, the β in step-3 becomes less than account a meaningful path between MOT and INT. Thus, in this case, ATT fully mediates the relationship between MOT and INT.

Table 5. Path coefficients

Paths	β	t-statistics
MOT → ATT	.24	4.86
MOT → INT	.09	3.02
Addition ATT		
MOT → INT	.07	2.96

Conclusion, implications, limitations and future research

The purpose in this study was to investigate the factors that affect salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence in Tunisia. The overarching theoretical framework for this research is the Theory of Reasoned Action by integrating sales management control (behavior based control), organizational commitment, intrinsic motivation, role conflict, role ambiguity and self efficacy constructs. This study found that the most important factor influencing salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence is salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence. The results of the study revealed that attitude as a mediator between intrinsic motivation and salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence. The findings suggested that salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence is largely characterized by monitoring, directing and organizational commitment. Furthermore, our results indicate that role ambiguity and role conflict negatively contribute to the salesperson's intrinsic motivation towards competitive intelligence. This study provides some managerial implications for developing competitive intelligence activities. The strong relationship found between the extent of behaviour-based management control and salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence suggests that sales managers who want to improve salesperson contribution in competitive intelligences activities may need to consider increasing their activities in monitoring and directing salespeople. The significant positive effect of organizational commitment to salesperson's attitude towards competitive intelligence. Managers become a good example in implementing the organization's values and rules, and always encouragesalepersons to achieve more organizational goals. This study suggests also that role ambiguity may affect negatively salesperson's intrinsic motivation towards competitive intelligence. Thus, employee training and personnel development should emphasize tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty in order to reduce role ambiguity. It is recommended that the practices or policies to be included aim to improve clarity of roles, definitions of responsibilities, and the objectives of the position of controller. Implementation of strategies to measure the susceptibility of executives in perceiving role conflict and ambiguity before assuming the position is also advised. Companies may need to devote relatively more attention (and by implication more resources) to salesperson and sales manager training (Piercy et al., 1996).

This study, like all studies, has limitations. One limitation is that the sample is confined to a limited number of salesperson's, which might in turn limit the generalizability of its findings and conclusions. These limitations should be addressed in future works with larger samples. Moreover, this study empirically examined seven factors that may influence salesperson's effort intention towards competitive intelligence. However, there may be some other factors that can impact on salesperson's effort intention but were not identified in this study. Further research is required to identify other factors that may impact on salesperson's effort intention to wards competitive intelligence.

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