

# Warm Heart or Sincere Mind? The Effect of Salespeople's Communication Styles and Customers' Self-concept Clarity

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## **Abstract**

This study examines how a salesperson's communication style and customers' self-concept clarity (SCC) jointly influence the persuasiveness of recommendations in purchase decisions. We hypothesized that the impact of a salesperson's task-oriented (vs. social-oriented) communication style on their persuasiveness is enhanced when customers have higher (vs. lower) self-concept clarity. Moreover, we further unravel the underlying mechanism by proposing a dual mediation model. Across two studies, a total of 440 UK participants (N = 240 in Study 1; N = 200 in Study 2) were recruited from Prolific to test our predictions. As expected, customers with lower SCC perceived greater warmth in salespeople who employ a social-oriented style, along with their persuasiveness. Conversely, customers with higher SCC are likely to attribute more sincerity to salespeople who use a task-oriented style than customers with low SCC customers, resulting in increased persuasiveness in sales interaction.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Services, Decision-Making, Retailing, Service Marketing*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour