

Role Stressors and its Effect on Sales Performance

Nicholas Paparoidamis and Fawaz Baddar ALHussan
Université Catholique de Lille

Introduction

In today's highly competitive markets and turbulent environment, salespeople face increasing product-price-technological competition, and heavy pressure to meet firm goals and customer continuous changing demands. The changes in the customer purchasing pattern, contract types, customer expectations and electronic customer interfaces demand sales representatives (reps) to organise and effectively respond to information coming from different directions. This environment can be extremely challenging for the salespeople. Facing such complexity may overwhelm the individual salesperson and, hence, may entail the joint efforts of sales teams with multiple perspectives and skills set (Brown et al. 2005; Dixon et al, 2002). In addition, in such fierce competitive environment, firms depend more on salespeople to develop customer relationships, exceed expectations, and manage growth. Salesforce duties expanded to include participating in a wide array of activities. This expansion of job responsibilities can increase role stress and consequently, negatively affect salesforce outcomes such as turnover and intention to leave (Fournier et al. 2013).

In the sales context, job stress has been defined as psychological process where in a salesperson perceives personal resources as taxed, resulting in an unknown potential for negative outcomes (Ingmar et al., 2006; Sagar & Wilson, 1995). According to the American Institute of Stress, job stress is a major cause to health damage demonstrated in increased heart attacks, hypertension and other disorders. Job stress costs the US industry around \$300 billion annually as result of accidents, absenteeism, employee turnover, direct medical, insurance and legal costs (www.stress.org). Salespeople in many organizations also experience stress because of the different forms of work overload. Salespeople adopt the role of the boundary spanner, and have to manage an internal and an external network of relationships (internal network refers to managing relationships with the various departments inside the seller organization) and external network relationships (external network refers to managing the relationship with the buyer organizations). All these tasks and demands can cause work overload, role conflict and role ambiguity for the salesperson which in turn can affect the overall performance of the seller firm (Singh, 1998). Although, the literature on role stress and sales person satisfaction has been addressed extensively, studies on role stress and sales performance has been under-researched (Onemeyah, 2008; Jones et al, 2007). Moreover, the trust construct appeared as a principal construct in many organisational studies including the ones focusing on performance (Lewicki et al., 2005; Colquitt et al. 2007). However, the studies of trust and its effect on sales performance have been inconsistent (Lau & Cobb, 2010; Athuahene-Gima & Li, 2008). To our knowledge this is the first time trust is explored as intervening construct between role stressors and sales performance. Therefore our aim in the paper is three fold:

1. to examine the effect of role stressors (role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload) on the sales-manager / salesperson trust and sales performance.
2. to explore the intervening effect of trust (represented by the trust in the salesmanager-salesperson on performance).
3. to examine the moderating effects of competitive intensity and market dynamism on sales performance.

The paper is divided into seven sections. First, a brief literature review and conceptual framework. Second, an overview of the constructs. Third are the methods used in the study. Fourth, reporting the key finds on the study. Fifth, discussion of the findings, and the last section is the conclusion section and managerial implications of the study.

Literature review and conceptual framework

Role theory

Role theory is not one single theory, it is a set of concepts and interrelated theories that are at the foundation of social science. Solomon et al. (1985) argue that role theory is based on “dramaturgical” metaphor because individuals are embedded in a cluster of social cues that dictate and guide their behaviour in a given setting. Role theory attempts to explain the interactions between individuals in organizations by focusing on the roles they play (Gilbert et al. 2014; Kahn et al. 1964). Role behaviour is influenced by role expectations for appropriate behaviours in that position, and changes in role behaviour occur through an iterative process of role sending and role receiving (Thompson, 2001). In addition, role theory focuses on the incompatible, inconsistent, or unclear expectations resulting from role dynamics in the work environment. Often, employees are faced with ambiguous information about role expectations or incongruity of the different role expectations (Gilbert et al., 2014). In such situations this can create role ambiguity and role conflict. The salesperson will respond to these so called “role-stressors” with negative attitudes and behaviour, and consequently lead to poor performance (Van Sell et al., 1981; Lagace, 1991). There are three important role stressor constructs that have been highlighted in the literature that have an interrelated relationship, namely: role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload (Liu et al., 2014; Verbeke et al., 2011; Singh, 1999). These are discussed below in the following sections.

Conceptual framework

There are many frameworks that have been used to study organisational stress in the literature (Glazer & Beehr, 2005). The framework in the current study represents the stressors which stimulate a behavioural reaction and affect organisational performance, such as the sales performance. As shown in figure 1 below, role stressors are linked to trust in the sales manager, which in turn is linked to sales performance. These are moderated by two constructs market dynamism and competitive intensity. Trust in the sales manager is operationalised as a state of behaviour (e.g. supporting requests, positive interaction with the customer, achieving goals). Organisational consequence of trust in the sales manager is better sales performance. Low trust in the sales manager is expected to result in poor sales performance.

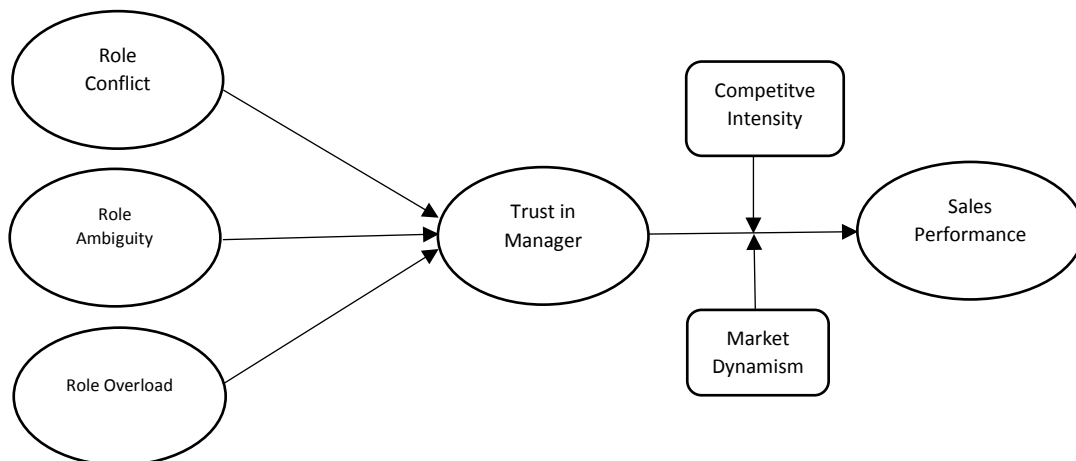


Figure 1: The conceptual model

Construct overview

Role ambiguity

According to Miao and Evans (2013) salesperson's role ambiguity is defined as the "perceived lack of information a salesperson needs to perform his/her role adequately and his/her uncertainty about the expectations of different role members" (p. 77). Salespeople who are exposed to role ambiguity have tendency to perform at lower levels (Knight et al. 2007; Bhuian et al., 2005) than other salespeople who have a clear understanding of job requirements and what is expected of them (Liu et al., 2014).

In our study role ambiguity is linked to trust in the sales manager which in turn linked to sales performance. Role ambiguity is a factor of role stress that management is most likely to be able to positively impact. Walker (1975) note that the right organizational structure and management styles can help salespeople reduce role ambiguity. Hence, if the sales manager who acts as the role sender to the salesperson (role receiver) and communicates insufficient and inaccurate information to the salesperson this can lead to role ambiguity and in turn decrease the trust in the sales manager. In addition, Knight et al., (2007) and Wetzels et al. (2000), suggest that salespeople who experience role ambiguity related to authority, job responsibilities or any manner in which their job will be evaluated can affect their customer-oriented behaviour negatively, leading to a diminished sales performance.

We propose the following the hypothesis:

H1: Role ambiguity negatively affects the trust.

H2: Role ambiguity negatively affects performance.

Role conflict

Role conflict occurs when the employee believes that the job requires meeting incompatible demands and expectations (e.g. the demands of the managers and customers) (Jaramillo et al., 2011). From a sales point of view, role conflict occurs when the salesperson cannot satisfy or is incompatible with the group demands and expectations (Fournier et al., 2013). According to Knight et al. (2007), a significant outcome of role conflict is its effect on performance. In a similar vein, salespeople who might face role conflict tend to experience psychological withdrawal from the job leading to reduced performance (Bettencourt & Brown, 2003).

The extant literature on role conflict and its effect on performance has been inconsistent. One stream of studies (Liu et al., 2014; Onemayah, 2008; Bhuian et al., 2005) found that role conflict had negative effect on performance. However, others like (Babin & Boles, 1996; Dubinsky et al., 1992) indicated that role conflict had a positive or no effect on performance. In fact, Knight et al., (2007), Onemayah (2008) and Singh (1998) have stated that moderate level of role conflict can act as a stimulus for better performance. However, some scholars in the field agree that extreme levels of role conflict can be detrimental to performance (Singh et al. 1994). In addition, from the literature survey conducted other than the study done by Lagacy (1991) we could not find studies that have examined the effect of role conflict on trust. We propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Role conflict will affect performance negatively

H4: Role conflict will negatively affect the trust of the sales manager.

Role overload

Role overload tends to be subsumed by role stressors, such as role conflict and role ambiguity and refers to the incompatibility that can happen between the specified tasks and given time (Gilbert et al., 2014). Bacharach et al. (1990) define role overload "...being unable to complete all assigned tasks effectively due to time limitations". Role overload is considered to be an endemic of the fast-track organisational environments and can upset the performance cycle fuelled by self-efficacy and goal

setting (Brown et al., 2005). Jones et al. (2007) argue that role overload is conceptually distinct from role conflict and role ambiguity. In addition, the authors state that role overload is conceptually distinct from emotional exhaustion- which is an outcome linked with a person's inability to handle continuous work demands and contributes to diminished feelings of personal achievement (Singh et al, 1994; Babakus et al., 1999). However, Demerouti et al (2001); and Lewin and Sager (2008) found that role overload is a critical predictor to emotional exhaustion. Research evidence suggest that there are several reasons why salespeople experience work overload. First, salespeople work in a highly competitive environment and have to handle constantly the ever-changing customer demands. Second, besides managing the demands of the customers they have to manage many administrative tasks, e.g. attending & organising meetings, reply to emails, and provide extensive reports. Third, no doubt juggling roles as employees, spouses, parents etc. became the greater challenge for the workforce. The greater work demands led the employees to use their personal time to accommodate work demands (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001). Brown et al (2005) and Jones et al. (2007) highlights the fact that the relationship between role stressors and performance is under researched. Since role overload is part of the role stressors family this warrants further examination of the role overload – performance relationships. In addition, in the literature as far as we know we could not find studies that have examined role stressors - trust (role overload – trust) relationship. We propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Higher levels of role overload tend to lower sales performance.

H6: Role overload will negatively affect the trust in the sales manager.

Trust in the sales manager

There is general consensus that trust is the key element in the development of buyer-seller relationships and the main ingredient of successful inter-firm relationships and collaboration that leads to long-term business relationships (Wang et al., 2008; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Marshall, 2003; Brashear et al., 2003). The importance of this variable stems from its contribution to the strength of interpersonal relationships, intra-organisational relationships and inter-organizational relationships (Svensson, 2001; Ojukwu & Georgiadou, 2007). In Particular, some of the advantages of trust are its contribution to the decrease in the level of anxiety and transaction uncertainty and negotiation costs because it enhances the confidence between partners (Wang et al., 2008). In addition, according to McKnight & Chervany (2001) it is considered that trust is mandatory in every interpersonal and commercial relationship, and it is seen as the glue that holds dyadic buyer-seller relationships and the essence of co-operation (Pressey & Mathews, 2004; Ashnai et al., 2009).

In the marketing literature, trust is defined as 'the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence' (Moorman et al., 1993, p. 82). Hence, trust exists when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 23). Consequently, trust is conceptualised to have two important elements: 'credibility' which is based on the supplier's effectiveness and reliability in performing the job; and 'benevolence' which is based on the belief that the supplier will act in the best interest of the exchange partner (Ganesan, 1994). Scholars who work in the interpersonal field (e.g. manager-subordinate / salesmanager – salesperson relationship) define trust as the employee's attachment or bond with the manager and his/her belief in the manager's benevolence. Hence, salesperson's trust in the sales manager is bound to the degree to which the salesperson perceives the sales manager as benevolent and believes the supervisor is genuinely concerned with salesperson's welfare (Agnihorti & Krush, 2015; Athuahane-Gima & Li, 2002). In addition, Schetzle & Delpechitre (2013) have indicated certain characteristics in the sales manager that are mandatory for the salesperson to be trusted, namely a) dependability – degree sales managers are consistent and predictable in their interactions with their salespeople (DelVecchio, 1998); b) consideration – the degree that sales managers are concerned with the personal needs of their salespeople (Johnston et al, 1990); and c) competence – the degree to which sales managers are able to apply their knowledge and skills to the job (Brashear et al, 2003). Lastly, the studies on trust-performance and trust in the salesmanager - performance are inconsistent. One stream of the research has supported the effect of trust on performance (Lau & Cobb, 2010; Rich, 1997; Brashear et al.,

2003). On the other hand, there are some studies that did not find significant effect of trust on performance (Athuahane-Gima & Li, 2002; Crosby et al. 1990; Doney & Cannon, 1997). Hence, we hypothesize the following:

H7: Trust in the sales manager enhances sales performance.

H8: Trust in the sales manager does not enhance sales performance.

Moderating role of market dynamism

Market dynamism is referred to the ongoing and frequent changes in the industry in response to the external environment, competition, market structure, customer demand and technology (Cui et al. 2006; Jap, 1999; Achrol & Stern, 1988). The continuous change brings with it many uncertainties which makes it difficult for precise planning, cost reductions and forecasting (Sheth & Parvitiyar, 1992). Apparently market dynamism brings with it shorter product life-cycles, stemming from faster changing customers tastes and fiercer competition (Dreyer & Gronhaug, 2004). With the influx in the market environment, firms need to make rapid changes in their production plans and invest more in their technological capabilities (to decrease cost) and adjust product designs to suit the new market demand (Ciu et al, 2006).

On one hand, an increased market dynamism and associated risks of uncertainty render decision making difficult and constitute serious drawbacks for business performances in virtually all industries. On the other hand, it is argued that increased market dynamism may contribute positively to the competitive performance of firms (Alpkan et al. 2007). We, assume that market dynamism will have an effect on sales performance. Therefore, we, examine the moderating effects of market dynamism on sales performance. We propose the following hypothesis:

H9: Market dynamism can improve sales performance.

H10: Market dynamism does not improve sales performance.

Moderating role of competitive intensity

Cui et al (2006) define competitive intensity as “degree of competition a firm faces in the market” (p. 102). The level of competitive intensity is related to the competitive activities of firms in the market, including price competition, promotion competition, product competition (Grewal & Tansihaj, 2001; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). In the literature it has been stated that competitive intensity is the major contributor to environmental hostility (Chan et al. 2012). Scholars in the marketing field argue that in the case of low competition companies may not suffer from low performance even if they did not attend completely to the customer needs. This is because customers have to stick to the firm’s offerings as there are no alternatives. However, in highly competitive markets customers have more market power (Appiah-Adu & Singh 1998). Hence, the customer’s expectation is to have higher demands in a competitive markets, such as better quality products and services. Moreover, customers have more suppliers to choose from their products/services and the supplier who satisfies its customers better than the other competitors is likely to boost its sales performance (Chan et al., 2012).

A point worth to note, is that in highly competitive markets the quality of the products and services of the diverse suppliers happens to be similar, which decreases the differentiation element. Consequently, in highly competitive environment salespeople are forced to be the means of differentiation, and as such, for example, the relationship itself that they have with the customer may be the main value-add and the differentiation factor (Homburg et al. 2011; Yim et al. 2008). Therefore we hypothesize the following:

H:11 The higher the competitive intensity the higher the sales performance.

H:12 The lower the competitive intensity the higher the sales performance.

Sales performance

The literature on performance in sales management discipline is mainly described in terms sales people behaviour which has been evaluated from the perspective of their contribution to the firm goals (Ingram et al. 1989). In sales management, job performance may be accepted as the main indicator of performance (Jaramillo et al. 2005), which provides information on the managerial decisions such as compensation, training and improving performance (Jones, et al, 2007). The literature on the relationship between role stress and sales rep satisfaction has been extensively studied. However, its relationship to sales performance is under researched (Kilic et al, 2010; Jones et al, 2007; Berhman & Perreault, 1984). One possible reason for the lack of attention paid to this construct may be due to the difficulties of defining and measuring overall salesperson effectiveness in Business-to-Business selling – where it is not only important to meet established sales objectives but also to develop effective sales presentations, generate new accounts, find new leads and generally in the long run to be a team member (Ingram et al. 2006)

Methods

Data collection

To test our hypotheses, a cross-sectional survey was conducted in a sample of firms located in north France, and more precisely at the Ile-de-France (Paris) and Nord Pas de Calais (Lille) regions. The sampling frame was composed from the Kompass directory of french firms, and following a systematic random selection procedure, a total number of 780 sales people were selected and contacted, 610 of which agreed to participate in the study. Following similar methodologies in the sales and organisational behaviour literature, sales personnel were selected as respondents (Lagace, 1991; Dyne, Jehn and Cummings, 2002; Moideenkutty, Blau, Kumar and Nalakath, 2006). A preliminary test of the questionnaire was run by means of 15 personal interviews with field sales representatives. All items were checked in terms of readability, clarity, and face validity. Eliminating questionnaires with missing data, left us with 238 completed questionnaires (39% response rate).

In order to assess non-response bias, a comparison of early respondents and late respondents was made on all variables of interest (Amstrong & Overton, 1977). No significant difference was found, thus suggesting that generalisation of the results may be possible. Box's M-test for homogeneity of variances between the two groups, the multivariate Wilk's lambda test and the test of between-subjects effects for all constructs was nonsignificant. In addition, Levene's test of equality of error variances for all variables was also nonsignificant.

Measures

All constructs were adapted from the literature and utilized multiple items. Fifteen items relating to the three role stressors (five items each), role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, were taken from previous research (Onemeyah, 2008; Boles et al., 1997; Jaramillo et al., 2005). For trust in the sales supervisor construct, we adapted our items from (Agnihotri & Krush 2015; Schwepker & Good, 2010). Lastly, for sales performance we utilized from items from Fournier et al., 2013; Agnihotri & Krush, 2015).

Findings

The above stated hypotheses were tested following a two-step approach (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). As a first step, unidimensionality and reliability of the measurement instrument were established, and as a second step, the hypothesized structural relationships between constructs were tested.

Confirmatory factor analysis

First, we established the measurement properties (i.e., reliability, discriminant and convergent validity, as well as common method bias) for all constructs via confirmatory factor analyses (Table 1). Results suggest that the model (CFI=0.96; GFI=0.96; RMSEA=0.043; χ^2/df (395.29/301) = 1.313) provides a good overall fit.

All factor loadings were statistically significant and above the cut-off value of 0.5. More importantly, all measures show high reliability and convergent validity, with composite reliabilities and average variances extracted (AVE) exceeding the recommended standard of 0.7 and 0.5 for all constructs respectively (Bagozzi & Yi 2012). Results also support the discriminant validity of the measures. First, confidence intervals around the correlation estimates between any two constructs were all significantly different from one (Gerbing & Anderson 1988). Second, the average variance extracted exceeded the squared correlation between all pairs of latent constructs (Fornell & Larcker 1981). The maximum shared variances (MSV) and average shared variances (ASV) are also smaller than the average variance extracted for each construct, providing additional evidence for the discriminant validity of the measures in the model. We also inspected our findings for multicollinearity; however, because the highest variance inflation factor in our models was 1.43 (Role Conflict), multicollinearity did not appear to be a problem for our analyses (Hair, Anderson et al. 1995). Finally, we tested for common method bias with the one-factor model showing significantly inferior fit statistics in comparison to our initial measurement model. These results suggest that the likelihood of common method bias is low.

Hypothesized relationships

Having established the unidimensionality and reliability of the model, in a next step we estimated the hypothesized relationships between the focal constructs of this study. Overall, the findings presented in Figure 2 suggest that the hypothesized structural model (χ^2/df (145.10/127) = 1.143; CFI=0.98; GFI=0.98; RMSEA=0.029) fits the data well. Furthermore, the results support the general pattern of hypothesized linkages between constructs in the model.

Moderating effects

The results show a significant positive moderating effect of competitive intensity on the relationship between trust in managers and sales performance ($\beta=.210$, $p=.005$). Similar support is provided for the moderating effect of market dynamism on the relationship between trust in managers and sales performance ($\beta=.250$, $p=.006$). Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the significant interaction effects.

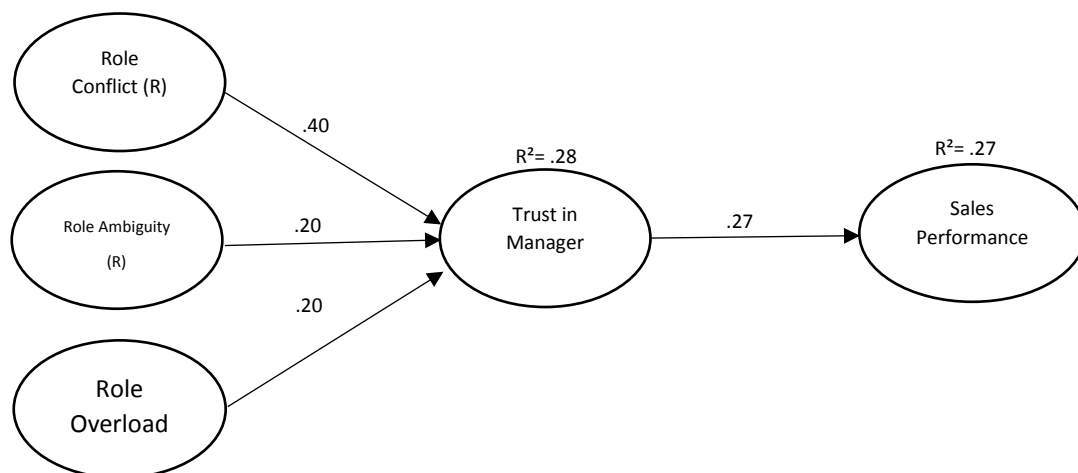


Figure 2 : The structural model

Table 1: Confirmatory factor analysis

	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>MSV</i>	<i>ASV</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Sales Performance ($\alpha = .801$)</i>	0.802	0.575	0.096	0.038	0.759						
<i>Competitive Intensity ($\alpha = .916$)</i>	0.918	0.739	0.149	0.065	0.112	0.860					
<i>Market Dynamism ($\alpha = .855$)</i>	0.845	0.525	0.076	0.044	0.215	0.211	0.724				
<i>Role Conflict ($\alpha = .855$)</i>	0.844	0.522	0.188	0.077	0.310	0.221	0.276	0.722			
<i>Role Ambiguity ($\alpha = .876$)</i>	0.882	0.654	0.049	0.016	0.081	0.159	0.005	0.006	0.808		
<i>Role Overload ($\alpha = .817$)</i>	0.822	0.609	0.108	0.055	0.065	0.329	0.216	0.235	0.122	0.780	
<i>Trust ($\alpha = .795$)</i>	0.811	0.590	0.188	0.101	0.254	0.386	0.226	0.434	0.222	0.318	0.768

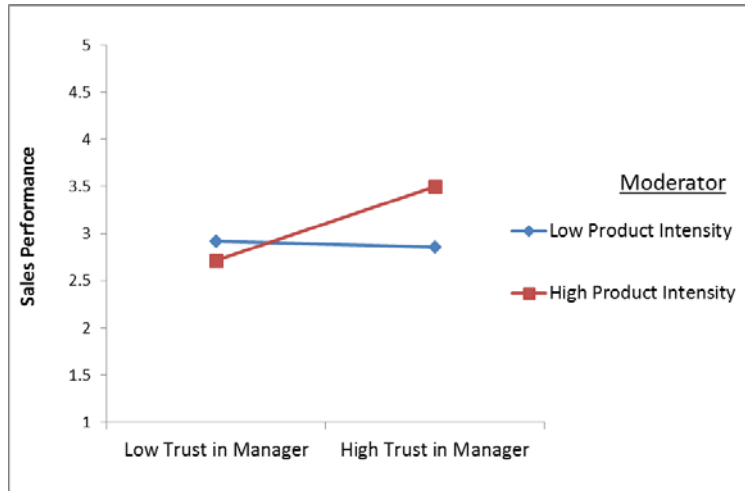


Figure 3: Market dynamism - moderated effect of trust in manager on sales performance

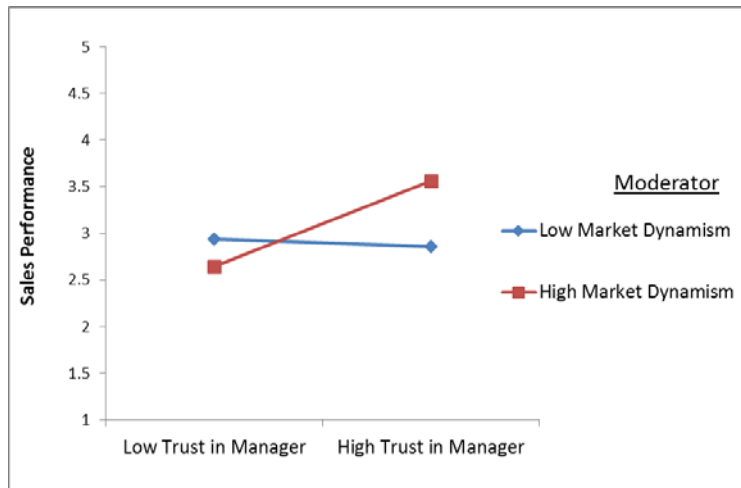


Figure 4: Competitive intensity - moderated effect of trust in manager on sales performance

Discussion and managerial implications

The present study is an effort to shed light on the impact of role stressors on salespeople’s trust on their manager and its impact on sales performance. It is evident from the results that role stressors affect negatively salespeople’s trust in their supervisor. The less the salesperson’s role conflict, ambiguity and overload the higher the trust those salespeople posit for their managers.

Moreover the impact of trust in the sales manager on salesperson’s performance has also been shown to be significant and positive. In line with existing literature the more salespeople trust their line manager, the better their sales performance.

Furthermore, the results indicate a moderating role for two environmental variables that have been explored: market dynamism and product intensity. Both those environmental factors seem to boost the positive effect of trust in the manager on salespeople’s performance. This means that the more intense is a market perceived by the salespeople, the stronger the impact of those with high levels of trust on their manager will be on their sales performance. The same applies for market dynamism, where in highly dynamic markets, salespeople need high levels of trust to achieve higher levels of performance.

Those two findings are of particular importance, as they demonstrate clearly the power of trust in the supervisor related to sales performance in tense and dynamic business environments. At the same time, it is evident that salespeople, in order to overcome difficulties associated with tough competition or market dynamism rely on their immediate managers, with those salespeople showing high levels of trust in their managers performing better.

The present study is a first effort to unveil the link between role related managerial efforts, trust and sales performance. The findings hold fruitful conclusions for sales managers in their effort to motivate their salesforce in a turbulent and continuously demanding business era.

References

- Achrol, R. & Stern, L. (1988). "Environmental determinants of decisional making Uncertainty in marketing channels," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25 (1), 36–50.
- Agnihotri, R. & Krush, M.T. (2015). "Salesperson empathy, ethical behaviors, and sales performance: The moderating role of trust in one's manager," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 35 (2), 164-174.
- Alpkan, L., Yilmaz, C. & Kaya, N. (2007). "Marketin orientation and planning flexibility in SMEs," *International Small Business Journal*, 25 (2), 152-172.
- Ambrose, S.C, Rutherford, B.N., Sheperd, C.D. & Taschian, A. (2014), "Boundary spanner multi-faceted role ambiguity and burnout," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43, 1070-1078.
- Appiah-Adu, K. & Sing, S. (1998). "Customer Orientation and Performance: A Study of SMEs," *Management Decision*, 36 (6), 385–94.
- Ashnai, B., Smirnova, M., Kouchtch, S., Yu, Q., Barnes, B. & Naudé, P. (2009). "Assessing relationship quality in four business-to-business markets," *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 27 (1) pp. 86-102.
- Athuahene-Gima, K. & Li, H. (2002), "When does trust matter? Antecedents and contingent effects of Supervisee trust on performance in selling new products in China and the United States," *Journal of Marketing*, 66 (July), 61-81.
- Babakus, E., Cravens, D.W., Johnston, M. & Moncrief, W.C. (1999). "The role of emotional exhaustion in sales force attitude and behaviour relationships," *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 27 (Winter), 58-70.
- Babin, B.J. & Boles, J.S. (1996). "The efforts of perceived co-worker involvement and supervisor support on service provider role stress, performance and job satisfaction," *Journal of Retailing*, 72 (1), 57-75.
- Bacharach,S., Bamberger,P. & Conley, S. (1990). "Work processes, role conflict, and role overload," *Work and Occupations*, 17, 199-228.
- Behrman, N.D. & Perreault, W.D. (1984), "A role stress model of the performance and satisfaction of industrial salespersons," *Journal of Marketing*, 48 (Fall), 9-21.
- Bettencourt, L.A. & Brown, S.W. (2003), "Role stressors and customer-oriented boundary-spanning behaviors in service organizations," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31 (4), 394-408.
- Bhuiyan, S.N., Menguc, B. & Borshom, R. (2005), "Stressors and job outcomes in sales: a triphasic model versus a linear-quadratic-interactive model," *Journal of Business Research*, 58, 141-50.

Brashear, T.G., Boles, J.S., Bellenger, D.N. & Brooks, C.M. (2003). "An empirical test of trust-building processes and outcomes in sales manager-salesperson relationships," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31 (2), 189-200.

Brown, S.P., Jones, E. & Leigh, T.W. (2005). "The attenuating effect of role overload on relationships linking self-efficacy and goal level to work perform," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90 (5), 972-979.

Chan, R.Y.K., Hongwei, H., Chan, H.K. & Wang, W.W.Y.C (2012). "Environmental orientation and corporate performance: The mediation mechanism of green supply chain management and moderating effect of competitive intensity," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41, 621-630.

Colquitt, J.A., Scott, B.A. & LePine, J.A. (2007). "Trust, trustworthiness, and trust propensity: A meta analytic test of their unique relationships with risk taking and job performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 909-927.

Crosby, L.A., Evan, K.R., Cowles, D. (1990). "Relationship quality in services selling: An interpersonal influence perspective," *Journal of Marketing*,

Cui, A.S., Griffith, D.A., Cavusgil, T.S. & Dabic, M. (2006). "The influence of market and cultural environmental factors on technology transfer between foreign MNCs and local subsidiaries: A Croatia illustration," *Journal of World Business*, 41, 100-111.

DelVecchio, S.K. (1998). "The quality of salesperson-manager relationship: The effect of latitude, loyalty and competence," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 18 (Winter), 31-47.

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B., Nachreiner, F. & Schaufeli, W.B. (2001). "The job demands-resources model of burnout," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86 (3), 499-512.

Dixon, A.I., Gassenheimer, J.B. & Barr T.F. (2002), "Bridging the distance between us: How initial responses to sales team conflict help shape core selling team outcomes," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, XXII (4), 247-257.

Doney, P. & Canon, J.P. (1997). "An examination of the nature of trust in buyer-seller relationships," *Journal of Marketing*, 61 (April), 35-51.

Dreyer, B. & Gronhaug, K. (2004). "Uncertainty, Flexibility, and Sustained Competitive Advantage," *Journal of Business Research*, 57 (5), 484-94.

Dubinsky, A.J., Michaels, R.E., Kotabe, M., Lim, C.U. & Moon, H.C. (1992), "Influence of role stress on industrial salespeople's work outcomes in the United States, Japan, and Korea," *Journal of International Business Studies*, 23 (1), 77-99.

Duxbury, L. & Higgins, C. (2001). Work life in the new millennium: where are we? Where do we need to go?. Discussion Paper, No. W12. Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Flaherty, T.B., Dahlstrom, R. & Skinner, S.J. (1999), "Organizational values and role stress as determinants of customer-oriented selling performance," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, XIX (2), 1-18.

Fournier, C., Weeks, W.A., Blocker, C.P., & Chonko, L.B. (2013), "Polychronicity and scheduling's role in reducing role stress and enhancing sales performance," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, XXXIII (2), 197-209.

- Homburg, C., Muller, C. & Klarmann M. (2011). "When should the customer really be king? On the optimum level of salesperson customer orientation in sales encounters," *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (March), 55-74.
- Ganesan, S. (1994). "Determinants of long-term orientation in buyer-seller relationships," *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (April), 1-19.
- Gilbert, C., De Winne, S. & Sels, L. (2014), "Antecedents of front-line managers perceptions of HR role stressors," *Personal Review*, 40 (5), 549-569.
- Glazer, S. & Beehr, T.A. (2005), "Consistency of implications of three role stressors across four countries," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26 (5), 467-487.
- Grewal, R., & Tansihaj, P. (2001). "Building organizational capabilities for managing economic crisis: The role of market orientation and strategic flexibility," *Journal of Marketing*, 65 (2), 67-80.
- Jap, S. (1999). "Pie-Expansion efforts: Collaboration processes in buyer-seller relationships," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36 (4), 461-475.
- Jaramillo, F., Mulki, J.P. & Boles, J.S. (2011), "Workplace stressors, job attitude, and job behaviors: Is interpersonal conflict the missing link?," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, XXXI (3), 339-356.
- Jaramillo, F., Mulki, J.P. & Marshall, G. W. (2005). "A meta-analysis of the relationship between organizational commitment and salesperson job performance: 25 years of research," *Journal of Business Research*, 58 (4), 351-365.
- Jaworski, B. & Kohli, A. (1993). "Market orientation: Antecedents and consequences," *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (3), 53-70.
- Jones, E., Chonko, L., Rangarajan, D. & Roberts, J. (2007), "The role of overload on job attitudes, turnover intentions, and salesperson performance," *Journal of Business Research*, 60, 663-671.
- Johnston, M.W., Parasuraman, A., Futrell, C.M. & Black, W.C. (1990). "A longitudinal assessment of the impact of selected organizational influences on the salespeople's organizational commitment during early employment," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 27 (August), 333-344.
- Ingmar, T.N., Laforge, R.W. Schwegler, C.H.Jr (2006). Addressing job stress in the sales force. D.W.Cravens, K. Le Meunier-Fitzhugh & N.F. Piercy (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of strategic sales and sales management* (pp. 253-276). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ingram, T.N., Lee, K.S. & Skinner, S.J. (1989). "An empirical assessment of salesperson motivation, commitment and job outcomes," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 9, 25-33.
- Kahn, R.L., Wolfe, D.M., Quinn, R.P., Snoek, D.J. & Rosenthal, R.A. (1964). *Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Kilic, K.C., Keles, C. & Gelibolu, L. (2010), The relationship between Person-Organization congruence, Person-Role conflict and job outcomes of salesperson: A study in the international medicine company in Turkey. 2nd International Symposium on Sustainable Development, Sarajevo.
- Knight, D.K., Kim, H.-J. & Crutsinger, C. (2007), "Examining the effects of role stress on customer orientation and job performance of retail salespeople," *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 35 (5), 381-392.

- Lagace, R.R. (1991), "An exploratory study of reciprocal trust between sales managers and salespersons," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, XI (2), 49-58.
- Lau, R.S. & Cobb, A.T. (2010), "Understanding the connections between relationship conflict and performance," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31 (6), 898-917.
- Lewicki, R.J., Wiethoff, C. & Tomlinson, E.C. (2005). What is the role of trust in organizational justice? J. Greenberg & J.A. Colquitt (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational justice* (pp. 247-270). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Lewin, J.E. & Sager, K.W. (2008). "Salesperson burnout: A test of the coping-mediational model of social support," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 28 (3), 233-246.
- Liu, A.H., Gould, A.N., Rollins, M. & Gao, H. (2014), "Role conflict and ambiguity confronting transnational business networkers: Contrasting social stigma and relational risks for Chinese and Western boundary spanners," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43, 911-919.
- Marshall, R.S. (2003). "Building trust early: The influence of first and second order expectations on trust in international channels of distribution," *International Business Review*, 12 (4), 421-443.
- McKnight, D.H. & Chervany, N.L. (2001). "What trust means in E-commerce customer relationships: An interdisciplinary conceptual typology," *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 6, (2), 33-57.
- Miao, F. & Evans, K.R. (2013), "The interactive effects of sales control systems on salesperson performance: a job demands-resources perspective," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41, 73-90.
- Moorman, C., Deshpande, R. & Zaltman, G. (1993). "Factors affecting trust in market research relationships," *Journal of Marketing*, 57 (January), 81-101.
- Morgan, R.M. & Hunt S.D. (1994). "The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing," *Journal of Marketing*, 58 (July), 20-38.
- Mulki, J.P., Jaramillo, F., Goad, E.A. & Pesquera, M.R. (2015), "Regulation of emotions, interpersonal conflict, and job performance for salespeople," *Journal Business Research*, 68, 623-630.
- Nygaard, A. & Dahlstrom, R. (2002), "Role stress and effectiveness in horizontal alliances," *Journal of Marketing*, 66 (April), 61-82.
- Ojukwu, D., & Georgiadou, E. (2007). Towards improving inter-organisational trust amongst SMEs: A case-study from developing countries', in: 9th International Conference on Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries.
- Onyemah, V. (2008), "Role ambiguity, role conflict, and performance: Empirical evidence of an inverted-U relationship," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, XXVIII (3), 299-313.
- Pressey, A.D. & Mathews, B.P. (2004). "Patterns of trust in buyer-seller relationships: motives for formation, drivers and outcomes," *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 3 (1), 81-100.
- Rich, G.A. (1997). "The sales manager as role model: Effects on trust, job satisfaction, and performance of salespeople," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25 (4), 319-328.
- Sager, J.K. & Wilson, P.H. (1995). "Clarification of the meaning of job stress in the context of sales force research," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 15 (3), 51-64.

Schetzslle, S. & Delpechitre, D. (2013). "The impact of sales manager characteristics on salesperson's trust and commitment to the relationship," *Marketing Management Journal*, 23 (1), 102-119.

Schwepker, C.H. & Good, D.J. (2010). "Transformational leadership and its impact on sales force moral judgement," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, XXX (4), 299-317.

Sheth, J., & Parvatiyar, A. (1992). "Towards a theory of business alliance formation," *Scandinavian International Business Review*, 1 (3), 71-87.

Singh, J. (1998). "Striking a balance n Boundary-Spanning positions: An investigation of some unconventional influences of role stressors and job characteristics on job outcomes of salespeople," *Journal of Marketing*, 62 (July), 69-86.

Singh, J., Goolsby, J.R. & Rhoads, G.K. (1994). "Behavioral and psychological consequences of boundary spanning for customer service representatives," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 32 (4), 558-569.

Solomon, M.R., Suprenant, C., Czepiel, J.A. & Gutman, E.G. (1985). "A Role Theory perspective on dyadic interactions: The service encounter," *Journal of Marketing*, 49 (Winter), 99-111.

Svensson, G. (2001). "Extending trust and mutual trust in business relationships towards a synchronised trust chain in marketing channels," *Marketing Decision*, 39 (6), 431-440.

The American Institute of Stress (2016), "Workplace Stress," (accessed, 10 February), [available at <http://www.stress.org/workplace-stress/>]

Van Sell, M., Brief, A.P. & Schuler, R.S. (1981). "Role conflict and role ambiguity: Integration of the literature and directions for future research," *Human Relations*, 34, 43-71.

Verbeke, W., Dietz, B. & Verwaal, E. (2011), "Drivers of sales performance: a contemporary meta-analysis. Have salespeople become knowledge brokers?," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39, 407-428.

Walker, O.C.,Jr., Churchill, G.A., Jr. & Ford, N.M. (1975). "Organizational determinants of the industrial salesman's role conflict and ambiguity," *Journal of Marketing*, 32-39.

Wang, C.C.W., Siu, N.Y.M. & Barnes, B.R. (2008). "The significance of trust and Renqing in the long-term orientation of Chinese Business-to-Business relationships," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 37 (7), 819-824.

Wetzels, M., de Ruyter, K. & Bloemer, J. (2000). "Antecedents and consequences of role stress of retail sales persons," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 7, 65-75.

Yim, C.K., Tse, D.K. & Chan, K.W. (2008). "Strengthening customer loyalty through intimacy and Passion: Roles of Customer-Firm affection and Customer-Staff relationships in services," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45 (December), 741-56.