
THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE research

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TITLE The Impact of Sales Managers' Transformational Leadership Behaviors on the Role Clarity, Self-Efficacy, and Job Satisfaction of Individual Salespeople

RESEARCHER Mary E. Shoemaker
College of Business and Administration
Drexel University (Philadelphia)
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OBJECTIVE To investigate whether transformational leadership behaviors are used by professional sales managers and whether these behaviors have any impact on key job outcomes (job satisfaction, role clarity, and self-efficacy).

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were sent to the home addresses of 277 salespeople across 87 sales locations for an electronic component manufacturer headquartered in the Northeast. The usable response rate was 58% (n=161). Respondents completed the LPI-Observer on their sales manager and completed standardized measures for themselves of role clarity (Singh & Rhoads, 1991a), self-efficacy (Kohli, 1989), and job satisfaction (Churchill, Ford & Walker, 1974). The sample was predominantly white, 94% male, and 96% college educated. The mean years of sales experience was over 14 years.

To deal with multicollinearity the author used factor analysis and found a five-factor solution conceptually equivalent to the Kouzes and Posner framework; and dropped the two lowest factor score items from each leadership practice. Using this solution, further psychometric analyses were performed: None of the tolerances approached .01 (Affifi & Clark, 1984); the variance inflation factor (Fox, 1991) was also negligible; double cross-validation (Green, Tull & Albaum, 1988) of the data showed the independent variable predictors from the regression equations were not affected; regressing each independent on the other independents (Lewis-Beck, 1980) proved nonproblematic as did running regressions dropping each of the variables (Berry & Feldman, 1985). Cronbach's Alpha for the four-item scales were .83 Challenging, .86 Inspiring, .80 Enabling, .78 Modeling, and .92 Encouraging.

KEY FINDINGS

The five leadership practices together accounted for approximately 33% of the variance in the salespeople's' role clarity and over 60% for job satisfaction. Modeling had the greatest impact on role clarity, with Enabling also having some impact. Both Enabling and Encouraging had significant impacts on job satisfaction. The outcomes were not significant for self-efficacy; which may be due to very high self-confidence already required for success as a salesperson; for example, "understanding customer concerns" was rated 4 or 5 (highest) by over 90% of the respondents. WABA (within and between analysis) was used to prescreen data to determine if there is single source bias. This analysis supported the assumption of the independent nature of salespeople: "It appear that salespeople within a group agree somewhat as to what the sales manager's behaviors are, but the impact of those behaviors varies with individuals" (p.94).