



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Industrial Marketing Management



Examining the impact of job embeddedness on salesperson deviance: The moderating role of job satisfaction

Mahmoud A. Darrat Assistant Professor of Marketing^a,
 Douglas A. Amyx Burton Risinger Endowed Professor, Associate Professor of Marketing^{b,*},
 Rebecca J. Bennett Professor of Management^c

^a Department of Marketing, College of Business, Auburn University Montgomery, United States

^b Department of Marketing and Analysis, College of Business, Louisiana Tech University, United States

^c Management Department, College of Business Administration, University of Central Florida, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 October 2014

Received in revised form 26 August 2016

Accepted 9 September 2016

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Job embeddedness

Salesperson job satisfaction

Workplace deviance behaviors

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the dysfunctional outcomes of salesperson job embeddedness as moderated by job satisfaction. Our findings suggest that among salespeople with low job satisfaction, organizational job embeddedness is positively linked with organizational deviance, interpersonal deviance, and customer-directed deviance. However, among salespeople with high job satisfaction, job embeddedness is negatively linked with organizational deviance and not significantly linked with either interpersonal or customer-directed deviance. The managerial implications of this study suggest that sales managers should be proactive in mitigating salesperson deviance behaviors through a variety of methods that may enhance salesperson satisfaction, particularly among salespeople who are embedded. Such managerial methods may include the following: 1) more assertive communication of acceptable norms with salespeople, 2) proper mentoring, 3) developing coordinated monitor and control systems, and 4) setting appropriate expectations for new hire salespeople by providing realistic job previews.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“It may still not be true for all knowledge workers that the organization needs them more than they need the organization. But for most of them, it is a symbiotic relationship in which the two need each other in equal measure.” (Drucker, 2008, p. 202)

1. Introduction

Effective salespeople represent a valuable asset to organizations due to their extensive product knowledge and ability to convert that knowledge into profitable customer relationships. Therefore, it is not surprising that marketing managers are increasingly concerned with drivers of salesperson commitment (DeConinck, 2011; Richardson, 1999). One such phenomenon that taps into why salespeople remain with their organization is job embeddedness. Job embeddedness refers to an anti-withdrawal work state whereby employees become forcibly entangled in an occupational web that makes it undesirable for them to leave the organization (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001). Interestingly, research demonstrates that job embeddedness is a stronger predictor of behavioral outcomes than organizational

commitment (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006). Whereas commitment stems from a sense of obligation to the organization, job embeddedness describes a situational circumstance where the benefits of leaving are exceeded by the switching costs. These switching costs include: 1) professional/social bonds made within the organization or community 2) perceived congruence with work/non-work environments, and 3) perceived sacrifices that will be made upon leaving the organization. Given the relatively high turnover rate in the sales industry (Richardson, 1999), it is conceivable that some salespeople who remain on the job may do so because of constraints that render them unable to leave. If this is the case, what are the behavioral ramifications of being “stuck with a job?” That is, could there be a ‘dark side’ to salespeople being stuck on the job? For instance, production deviance, a form of organizational deviance whereby salespeople drain company resources by shirking or avoiding job duties and responsibilities is less detectable than sabotage or theft. Similarly, salespeople may report “working from home” but not do much work at all, neglect supervisor instructions, withhold effort on the job, or even infringe on a co-worker’s territory. Do salespeople who are embedded or “stuck” react by engaging in such behaviors whether those behaviors are directed at their organization, other co-workers, or their customers (or even all three entities)? Conversely, what prompts other embedded salespeople to respond more constructively to job embeddedness?

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: mdarrat@aum.edu (M.A. Darrat), damyx@latech.edu (D.A. Amyx), rebecca.bennett@ucf.edu (R.J. Bennett).

Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of occupational factors on salesperson deviance. So far, the effect of job embeddedness on deviant or counterproductive employee behavior has been mixed and unclear. One stream of research suggests that job embeddedness acts as a deterrent to workplace deviance (Avey, Keke, & Holley, 2015; Crossley, Bennett, Jex, & Burnfield, 2007; Holtom, Burton, & Crossley, 2012). That is, embedded employees feel a sense of obligation to their organizations (or in some cases fear of reprisal) and are less likely to violate organizational norms as a result.

On the other hand, conflicting research suggests that job embeddedness is not always beneficial and may actually increase the prevalence of counterproductive behaviors (Marasi, Cox, & Bennett, 2016). In view of this complexity, we assert that job satisfaction should be explored in the relationship. Specifically, we believe that one's job satisfaction may interact with or moderate the embeddedness-workplace deviance relationship. Put differently, the conversion of job embeddedness into workplace deviance should be regulated by how content salespeople are with their jobs. Whereas salespeople that are happily 'stuck' may be less likely to engage in behaviors that jeopardize their employment; their counterparts may be more likely to do so. As such, we offer a study that provides empirical, theoretical, and managerial implications to further illuminate the role of job satisfaction as further explanation to the influence of job embeddedness on employee deviant behaviors.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

2.1. Organizational job embeddedness

With the rising costs of turnover spreading rapidly across industries, a growing body of research has focused on the impact of job embeddedness in controlling voluntary turnover (Crossley et al., 2007; Holtom, Mitchell, & Lee, 2006; Lee, Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton, & Holtom, 2004). Voluntary turnover is strikingly higher in the sales industry with turnover rates consistently doubling the national average in comparable industries (Richardson, 1999). Job embeddedness consists of two dimensions: organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001). Organizational job embeddedness (OJE) refers to the accumulated affective and non-affective job related constraints (links, fit, and sacrifice) which enmesh employees in a specific job within a specific organization (Harris, Wheeler, & Kacmar, 2011). Community embeddedness represents the collective forces that are extrinsic to the organization and its affiliates that bind employees to the job (social ties in the community, relocation anxieties, and family pressures to remain). Previous research indicates, however, that OJE has a higher predictive ability as related to work attitudes and behaviors (Lee et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2001; Thau, Crossley, Bennett, & Sczesny, 2007). Accordingly, the scope of this research is focused on job embeddedness with respect to the organization. Embedded salespeople may feel compelled to remain on the job due to personal links with the organization and/or its members (managers, co-workers, customers), feelings of compatibility between skills and the particular sales job, or to protect resources/relationships which may be forfeited by leaving the job (established rapport with clients, sales perks and incentives, personal status and reputation within the organization). Hence, OJE may be one way to minimize the high rate of voluntary turnover among sales personnel.

Inductive reasoning would suggest that if salespeople are vulnerably attached to a job because of financial or social obligations, it would be in their best interest to avoid behaviors that may endanger their employment status. In support of this concept, research indicates that highly embedded employees report significantly less organizational deviance behaviors such as volitional absences (Lee et al., 2004). Other studies suggest that employees experiencing higher job embeddedness are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors at work even when confronted with organizational shocks (Holtom et al., 2012).

Similarly, Thau et al. (2007) propose that social bonds of attachment developed by employees with their organizations may act as a deterrent against harmful *anti-social* work behaviors. By the same token, those with weaker organizational bonds may be less restrained when it comes to breaking the rules. Hence the advantages of job embeddedness include the reduction in employee deviance behaviors as well as a reduction in voluntary turnover which is a substantial cost to organizations. On the other hand, there may also be disadvantages associated with employee job embeddedness. Namely, feeling "stuck" may result in reactance against the source of external control. Reactance theory (Brehm, 1966; Wortman & Brehm, 1975) suggests that individuals will react against the feeling of being controlled, be that by other individuals or by circumstances (e.g. inability to transfer one's pension/job skills to a new job). Individuals experiencing such feelings of control engage in greater amounts of reactionary behavior (Allen & Greenberger, 1980; Bennett, 1998; Lawrence & Robinson, 2007), in effect "acting out" against the perceived control. The target may be the perceived agent of control, or it may be displaced aggression such as Allen and Greenberger's observation of greater graffiti and sabotage among public housing residents who perceived that their choices to be largely controlled by others. Such behaviors may be especially harmful when "low risk" targets include co-workers and/or customers. According to displaced aggression theory, employees often take an indiscriminate retaliation approach when confronted with a negative work situation (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939). That is, aggressive behaviors are not always reciprocal and can be randomly displaced onto others who are not directly involved in the situation (e.g. coworkers, customers). For example, salespeople may redirect aggression onto co-workers since shared membership within the organization and a common workspace makes one's associates a convenient target. Moreover, overt organizational harm poses a substantially higher risk to job security than more inconspicuous anti-normative work behaviors such as harassing co-workers or taking advantage of customers (Thau et al., 2007).

2.2. Workplace deviance behaviors

In the current study, we examine how job embeddedness influences workplace deviance behaviors among salespeople. Within the marketing literature, deviance has been increasingly studied. Within recent years, a growing body of marketing research has examined the antecedents and consequences of salesperson deviance (Choi, Dixon, & Jung, 2004; Darrat, Amyx, & Bennett, 2010; Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006, 2010; Yoo & Frankwick, 2013). Salesperson deviance refers to voluntary frontline behaviors that violate organizational norms and are opportunistically directed at the organization, its members, or external constituents (Darrat et al., 2010). In contrast to traditional deviance measures, salesperson deviance captures frontline behaviors that are specific to the boundary spanning role. Counterproductive workplace behaviors such as stealing from work or sexual harassment of coworkers or customers are estimated to cost employers billions of dollars annually (Levinson, 2010; Taylor, 2007). Since sales work is often solitary, deviance may be more likely to occur. Specifically, industrial salespeople spend a considerable amount of time outside of the office generating leads, developing prospects, and managing client relationships, all of which may lead to more workplace deviance behavior opportunities.

Over the past several decades, the management literature investigating the precursors and outcomes of workplace deviance has grown (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Bolin & Heatherly, 2001; Breugh, 1981; Dalal, 2005; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). The heightened research concern is consistent with projections which estimate that deviant employee practices such as theft and fraud cost businesses around \$50 billion a year (Coffin, 2003). Workplace deviance refers to intentional employee behaviors which violate organizational norms and, in so doing, threaten the wellbeing of the organization or its members (Robinson & Bennett,

1995). The dysfunctional behaviors measured by scales of employee deviance or counter-productivity may be directed at either the organization itself (e.g., tangible/intangible company theft such as property or time) or at (other) organizational members (e.g., antagonizing co-workers). While customers are not considered to be targets in Robinson and Bennett's original conceptualization of employee deviance, harming customers is an indirect way to harm the organization (as doing so may result in damages to the organization's reputation and even in lawsuits). Surprisingly little research has been done related to customer-directed deviance (see [Jelinek & Ahearn, 2010](#)).

According to [Bennett and Robinson \(2003\)](#), three major deviance conceptualizations exist within the literature: a) deviance as a reaction to work experiences, b) deviance as a reflection of personality, and c) deviance as an adaptation to the social context at work. It is our contention that the first perspective (deviance as a reaction to work experiences) is most relevant to the dynamics of the sales environment. In some instances, salespeople may act inappropriately as a behavioral expression of their discontent with less than ideal conditions on the job (neglect, poor interpersonal work relationships, etc.). Research suggests that employees subjected to unfair treatment will likely express their resistance through violation of organizational norms ([Lawrence & Robinson, 2007](#)). In fact, a recurring theme in the deviance literature is that anti-normative behaviors are often implemented as a restorative measure against perceived inequities. For instance, [Jelinek and Ahearn \(2006\)](#) provide anecdotal evidence that salespeople suffering from role overload seek retribution through work avoidance and defiant behaviors that allow them to openly express their frustrations. Similarly, it has been suggested that overworked salespeople counteract excessive work hours through engagement in deceptive sales tactics and/or lashing out against customers ([Jelinek & Ahearn, 2010](#)).

The construct of salesperson deviance is comprised of three components: organizational, interpersonal, and customer-directed deviance ([Darrat et al., 2010](#)). Organizational deviance represents destructive behaviors that are in contrast with organizational norms and are directed at the organization itself. Such behaviors include withholding effort on the job, insubordination, or being late for sales meetings without permission. Interpersonal deviance reflects destructive salesperson behaviors that violate organizational norms and are directed at the internal members of the organization. Examples of interpersonal deviance include acting rudely toward co-workers, embarrassing others at work, or saying hurtful things to coworkers. The destructive effects of interpersonal deviance are not limited to intra-salesperson relationships since hostilities between salespeople often spill over into customer relationships. Customer-directed deviance refers to counterproductive frontline behaviors that violate organizational norms and are directed at customers. Examples include intentionally mistreating customers, ridiculing them, and/or "bad mouthing" them in their presence or absence.

2.3. Job satisfaction

In the current study, we consider the possible effect of salesperson job satisfaction as a moderator (i.e., having an interaction effect) within the job embeddedness-workplace deviance relationship. In our current study, we believe that job satisfaction may help to explain how job embeddedness may result in both positive and negative work outcomes.

We contend that job satisfaction may have a significant moderating effect on the workplace deviance outcomes of salesperson job embeddedness. In other words, if one is embedded in an organization due to job-specific skills or an attachment to coworkers, and is also satisfied with their work experience, they are likely to be productive good citizens. However, if they are embedded (i.e., "stuck") due to pension vesting or non-transferable, job-specific skills, and are dissatisfied for whatever reason, they are likely to experience reactance and to

engage in workplace deviance as a way to regain control. This reactionary behavior may be directed at the organization, coworkers or at the customer. Research suggests that employees who perceive high levels of trust in the organization share a deeper attachment to the organization and its members and as a result, are less likely to engage in dysfunctional behaviors ([Crossley et al., 2007](#)). Similarly, we contend that salespeople that are highly embedded and satisfied will be less likely to jeopardize their work conditions by engaging in workplace deviance. As such, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Among low job satisfied salespeople, organizational job embeddedness (OJE) will be positively related to (a) organizational deviance, (b) interpersonal deviance, and (c) customer-directed deviance.

Hypothesis 2. Among high job satisfied salespeople, organizational job embeddedness (OJE) will be negatively related to (a) organizational deviance (b) interpersonal deviance, and (c) customer-directed deviance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling procedure and data collection

The sample consists of 561 business to business salespeople. Surveys were collected electronically through a national consumer panel of pre-screened pre-qualified volunteers who participated by using services provided by a registered online survey platform. A random sample of 3050 salespeople from a diverse set of industries was invited to participate in the survey and received a corresponding web link.

Of the panel members invited, 950 members (31.14%) visited the online survey website. Among the panel members who visited the online survey website, 592 responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 62.31% (thus, a 19.41% response rate was obtained regarding the initial 3050 members who received an invitation to participate). Members of the panel who participated in the study received a small incentive with an approximate value of \$6.00 in redeemable points as a reward for responding to the online survey. Among the 592 survey respondents, 31 participants (5.24%) failed to complete the survey, yielding a total of 561 respondents. Respondent confidentiality was also ensured since the online survey company collected the electronic surveys and made the input data available to the researchers on a website without identifying individual participants.

Using online panel data has both advantages and disadvantages. Disadvantages include a higher dropout rate than among conventional methods ([Birnbaum, 2004](#)), and a restriction to users who have access to the internet which has become less of a concern as internet usage has become widespread. Advantages include access to a large national sample, clean data (entered directly by respondents without researcher coding errors), and access to a specialized group of respondents ([Birnbaum, 2004](#)), in this case industrial salespeople. Moreover, high quality business journals have steadily become more accepting of online panel data in empirical research (e.g. [Dreze & Zufryden, 2004](#); [Punj, 2006](#)). Despite the ongoing debate with regard to the effectiveness of online data collection techniques, research indicates that *both* online and traditional paper/pencil data collection techniques result in similar covariance structures ([Stanton, 1998](#)).

Common method bias among the respondents was checked by Harmon's One Factor Method ([Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003](#)). Variance explained by the first factor was 33.54%; and since <50% of the variance was explained by a single factor, common method bias was not considered a problem.

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Organizational deviance

Organizational deviance refers to those counter-normative behaviors aimed specifically at the organization itself ([Bennett &](#)

Robinson, 2000). The current measure of organizational deviance is a six-item scale used by Darrat et al. (2010) (previously adapted from Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

3.2.2. Interpersonal deviance

Interpersonal deviance is characterized as intentional, norm-violating behaviors directed at others in the workplace (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). The current measure for interpersonal deviance is an eight-item scale used by Darrat et al. (2010) (also adapted from Bennett and Robinson (2000)).

3.2.3. Customer-directed deviance

Customer-directed deviance occurs when a salesperson purposefully engages in norm violating behavior directed at consumers (Darrat et al., 2010). Customer-directed deviance is measured by a six-item scale originally developed by Darrat et al. (2010).

3.2.4. Organizational job embeddedness

OJE was measured with the job embeddedness scale developed by Crossley et al. (2007). OJE is a global, reflective measure utilizing a seven item scale designed to capture both organization and community factors that work in concert to embed individuals within their current job and organization. The scale has established reliability with Cronbach alpha reported as 0.88 (Crossley et al., 2007).

3.2.5. Salesperson job satisfaction

Salesperson satisfaction was compositely measured with the scale developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983). The scale uses three items (with one item reverse scored) to describe an employee's subjective response to working in his/her job and organization. The construct is a global indicator of employee satisfaction with a job and has extensively reported acceptable coefficient alpha values ranging between 0.67 and 0.95.

3.3. Construct validity

Next, the measurements were tested for construct validity. Construct validity can be assessed by examining the convergent validity (i.e., factor loadings, construct reliability, and variance-extracted), discriminant validity, and nomological validity.

3.3.1. Convergent validity

Results generally support the constructs' convergent validity. All factor loadings are highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating adequate scale convergence (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Construct reliability is another indication of convergent validity. Cronbach alphas for the constructs in the study range from 0.778 (organizational deviance) to 0.941 (organizational job embeddedness). Construct reliability estimates range from 0.786 (organizational deviance) to 0.942 (organizational job embeddedness). Thus, each of the scales meets the acceptable cutoff value of 0.70 reliability for exploratory research (Nunnally, 1978). Moreover, all but one (organizational deviance) of the variance-extracted estimates (AVEs) are above 50%. Cronbach alphas, construct reliability estimates, and AVEs for each of the measures in this study are provided in Table 1

3.3.2. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using conventional procedures (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). Results support discriminant validity where all variance-extracted estimates (see Table 1) are greater than the squared Φ correlation estimates between factors (see Table 2).

3.3.3. Nomological validity

An important aspect of construct validation is determining the meaningfulness of measurements that may relate to other phenomena

similar to those in the study. Given the importance of nomic necessity (Bagozzi, 1980), we sought to determine if the constructs exhibit a robust nomological connection. Nomological validity was assessed by examining correlations between the study's constructs and with correlations between other relevant factors that could be theoretically connected to the current study. All constructs were significantly correlated in the logical direction, suggesting a strong nomological connection. Overall, the results generally support the scales' psychometric properties. Therefore, the overall measurement model adequately represents the theorized constructs and is appropriate for use in testing the structural model.

4. Analysis and results

The proposed model was tested using the two-step analytical procedure recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). That is, the model constructs were analyzed first through CFA to assess the fit between the items and the data. The second step of the process was an evaluation of the model through SEM. AMOS 21.0 was used to assess CFA and SEM. The proposed model is composed of 5 constructs and a total of 29 items (see Table 1 for complete list of measurement items and corresponding constructs).

First, the data were assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). An initial CFA led to the deletion of 1 item from job embeddedness based on a low loading estimate below the desired cutoff-level (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). After removal of the item, the model provides an acceptable fit with χ^2 value of 1297.6 and 367 degrees of freedom ($p < 0.001$). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.903 approaches the recommend 0.92 per Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), while the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.067 (below the recommended 0.08 cutoff per Hair et al., 2010). Both the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) 0.861 and the Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) 0.787 appear acceptable (Mulaik et al., 1989). Table 1 illustrates the CFA results using the 29 items constrained congenerically. Overall, these statistics support the measurement model.

4.1. Model fit

Next, the structural model was analyzed using SEM. First, the overall model was analyzed ($n = 561$) with job embeddedness and job satisfaction having only direct effects on the three deviance behaviors (i.e., without any moderation). The overall model yielded the following fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 1613.4$, $df = 370$, CFI = 0.871, GFI = 0.831, and RMSEA = 0.077. All paths that were tested in the model were significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. Regarding the path analyses, job embeddedness was positively related to: interpersonal deviance (t-value = 6.408), organizational deviance (t-value = 3.809), and customer deviance (t-value = 4.946). Job satisfaction was negatively related to: interpersonal deviance (t-value = -7.085), organizational deviance (t-value = -6.027), and customer deviance (t-value = -6.040)

To further test the model as hypothesized in Fig. 1, the SEM model was analyzed with job satisfaction as a moderator (i.e. where the sample was split into a two group sample based on high and low job satisfaction). The sample was split approximately evenly with $n = 277$ in the low job satisfaction group and $n = 284$ in the high job satisfaction group. In the low job satisfaction model, results approach an adequate fit given the model parameters (Hair et al., 2010): $\chi^2 = 1041.7$, $df = 296$, CFI = 0.855, GFI = 0.782, and RMSEA = 0.096 (although RMSEA is above 0.08). In the high job satisfaction model, an adequate model fit is yielded with $\chi^2 = 765.9$, $df = 296$, CFI = 0.823, GFI = 0.827, and RMSEA = 0.075. A significant difference in chi-square between the measurement and structural model indicates a potential lack of fit. Thus, a difference between the CFA measurement (i.e. theorized model) and the structural model (SEM) chi-square

Table 1
Standardized Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) loading estimates.

Item	Item description	OJE	SAT	OD	ID	CD
OJE	I feel attached to this organization. ^a	–				
OJE	It would be difficult for me to leave this organization.	0.896				
OJE	I'm too caught up in this organization to leave.	0.893				
OJE	I feel tied to this organization.	0.796				
OJE	I simply could not leave the organization that I work for.	0.853				
OJE	It would not be easy for me to leave this organization.	0.764				
OJE	I am tightly connected to this organization.	0.918				
SAT	All in all, I am satisfied with my job.		0.904			
SAT	In general, I do not like my job. ^b		0.687			
SAT	In general, I like working at my company.		0.866			
OD	I have arrived late to work and/or sales meetings without permission.			0.612		
OD	I have neglected to follow my supervisor's instructions.			0.724		
OD	I have put little effort into my work.			–		
OD	I have spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming Instead of working.			0.640		
OD	I have refused to share relevant customer information with my organization.			0.579		
OD	I have "worked from home" but did not do much work at all.			0.604		
ID	I have said something hurtful to someone at work.				0.779	
ID	I have acted rudely toward someone at work.				0.777	
ID	I have publicly embarrassed someone at work.				0.806	
ID	I have made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark at work.				0.649	
ID	I have cursed someone at work.				0.657	
ID	I have played a mean prank on someone at work.				0.745	
ID	I have made a sale inside another coworker's territory – "territory grabbed."				0.657	
ID	I have deferred an undesirable customer to another coworker.				0.640	
CD	I have used deception to make a sale.					0.745
CD	I have intentionally delayed an order to punish a customer.					0.733
CD	I have used coercion on a customer to get an order.					0.761
CD	I have knowingly sold a defective product or service.					0.784
CD	I have provided poor service to a customer based on his/her inability to pay.					0.743
CD	I have made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark to a customer.					0.639
	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.731	0.679	0.382	0.514	0.541
	Construct reliability	0.942	0.863	0.786	0.893	0.876
	Cronbach alpha	0.941	0.852	0.778	0.886	0.872
	Mean	4.27	5.32	1.91	1.79	1.26
	Standard deviation	1.84	1.61	1.61	1.40	0.876

^a Item deleted from scale.

^b Reverse scored item; OJE = Organizational job embeddedness; SAT = Salesperson satisfaction; OD = Organizational deviance; ID = Interpersonal deviance; CD = Customer-directed deviance.

values suggests that the model paths are not completely conforming to what was hypothesized or theorized. (See Fig. 2 and Table 3.)

4.2. Structural coefficient estimates

The hypotheses were tested by analyzing the standardized structural parameter estimates. The first hypothesis posits that among low job satisfied salespeople, OJE will be positively related to: (a) organizational deviance; (b) interpersonal deviance and (c) customer-directed deviance. OJE was significantly and positively related to all three deviance measures. Thus, we found full support for H1a (t-value = 2.136; *p* < 0.033), H1b (t-value = 4.452; *p* < 0.001), and H1c (t-value = 2.990; *p* < 0.003). Further, there was partial support for Hypothesis 2, which predicted that among

high job satisfied salespeople, OJE would be negatively related to: (a) organizational deviance; (b) interpersonal deviance and (c) customer-directed deviance. OJE was significantly and negatively related to organizational deviance H2a (t-value = –1.989; *p* < 0.047). However, no significant relationship was found among highly satisfied salespeople between OJE and either interpersonal or customer-directed deviance.¹

5. Discussion

In response to previous research (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006), we examine job embeddedness as a contextual antecedent of salesperson

Table 2
Phi correlations among factors.

Factor	CD	OD	ID	OJE	SAT
CD	1.00				
OD	0.625**	1.00			
ID	0.536**	0.566**	1.00		
OJE	0.018	–0.077*	0.070*	1.00	
SAT	–0.136**	–0.220**	–0.143**	0.694**	1.00

CD = Customer-directed deviance.

OD = Organizational deviance.

ID = Interpersonal Deviance.

OJE = Organizational Job Embeddedness.

SAT = Salesperson Satisfaction.

* Correlation is significant at the *p* < 0.05 level.

** Correlation is significant at the *p* < 0.001 level.

¹ To further verify the moderation of job satisfaction in the proposed model, a post-hoc analysis using hierarchical regression was conducted. In this model, direct effects and interaction effects of both job satisfaction and job embeddedness on each of the three (3) deviances (organizational, interpersonal, and customer deviance) were tested through hierarchical regression. This analysis yielded the following results: a) Direct effects of embeddedness and satisfaction on organizational deviance are significant for R-Square change at the 0.05 level (*p* < 0.04) and significant for F-value change at the 0.001 level; Interaction effects of embeddedness and satisfaction on organizational deviance are significant for R-Square change at the 0.05 level (*p* < 0.02) and significant for F-value change at the 0.001 level; b) Direct effects on interpersonal deviance are significant for R-Square change at the 0.1 level (*p* < 0.06) and significant for F-value change at the 0.001 level; Interaction effects on interpersonal deviance are significant for R-Square change at the 0.05 level (*p* < 0.02) and significant for F-value change at the 0.001 level; and c) Direct effects on customer deviance are significant for R-Square change at the 0.05 level (*p* < 0.03) and significant for F-value change at the 0.001 level; Interaction effects on customer deviance are significant for R-Square Change at the 0.05 level (*p* < 0.03) and significant for F-value change at the 0.001 level. Finally, d) Overall, VIF values are relatively low (ranging from 1.1 to 1.7). In sum, these results of the hierarchical regression offer support and verification of the moderating effects of satisfaction in the overall model.

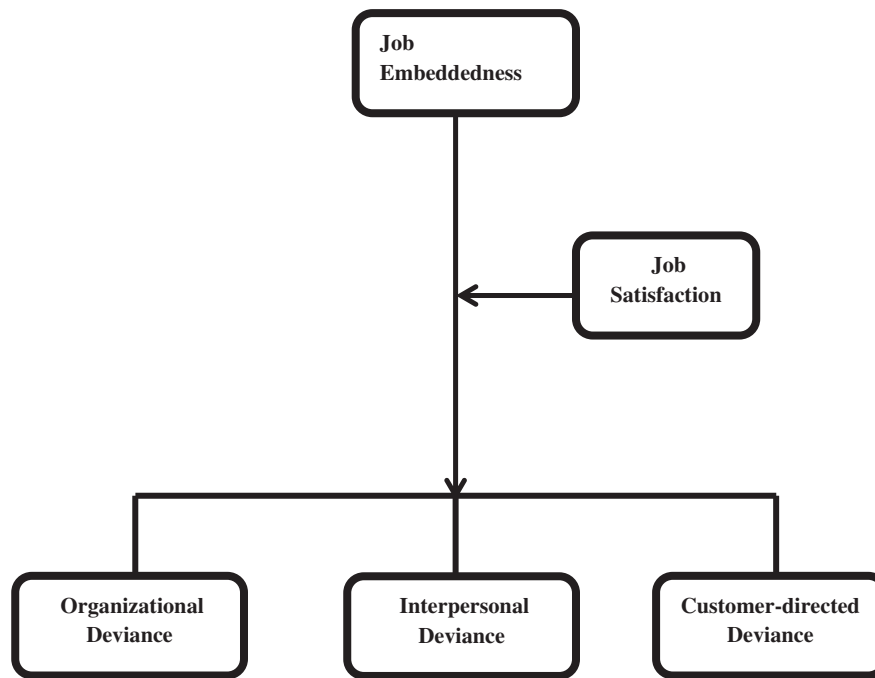


Fig. 1. Proposed job embeddedness model.

deviance. Specifically, we assess the central role of salesperson satisfaction as a moderating (i.e. interacting) influence on dysfunctional salesperson workplace behaviors. Furthermore, we examine these relationships using structural equation modeling and our results provide several academic and managerial contributions.

First, our results suggest that where low job satisfaction occurs, OJE is positively related to all three (3) forms of salesperson deviance. Research suggests that employees who are confined to a job tend to create their own rules about what behaviors are acceptable (Weick, 1993). At least in the case of dissatisfied salespeople, the current study suggests that embedded salespeople are more likely to violate a variety of work-related norms. By definition, embedded salespeople are firmly implanted in their organizations as a result of situational disincentives that preclude them from leaving. Some of the sales-related disincentives that may be incurred upon leaving include: the dissolution of workplace relationships, opportunity costs incurred for territory abandonment, and forfeited compatibilities or earned incentives with the organization. Our study offers empirical evidence that for embedded industrial salespeople, satisfaction appears to be a deterrent of dysfunctional behaviors. We argue, however, that dissatisfaction provokes a reactionary response from OJE salespeople.

In accordance with Crossley et al. (2007), we find that dissatisfied and embedded salespeople cathartically distance themselves from organizations that handcuff them by draining company resources, antagonizing other members of the organization, and acting inappropriately with customers. For the most part, the organizational deviance measure used in this study represents production deviance whereby salespeople shirk or avoid job duties and responsibilities. To illustrate, examples of item content include: arriving late for sales meetings without permission, neglecting supervisor instructions, and minimizing efforts put forth on the job. Although the deleterious impact of such offenses is less visibly apparent, organizational deviance is not a “victimless crime.” Salespeople are the facilitators of value in the exchange process, meaning that their productivity or intentional lack thereof has the potential to enhance or undermine customer relationships.

Second, we also empirically support that OJE is negatively linked with organizational deviance when job satisfaction is high. This finding is important because it suggests a reversal of the relationship between OJE and organizational deviance when job satisfaction shifts. Thus, harmful behavior directed at the organization is less likely among salespeople who are both embedded and satisfied with their jobs. It is logical that satisfied-embedded salespeople would have much to lose by harming the organization that provides them with a high level of job satisfaction. On the other hand, and in accordance with reactance theory, results suggest that dissatisfied-embedded salespeople are more likely to retaliate against the source of the discrepancy, i.e. the organization. Satisfied-embedded salespeople may be more ambivalent about behaving deviantly with customers or colleagues if their job satisfaction is less connected to workplace relationships or if they perceive the negative consequences of misbehavior with customers or coworkers to be less of a violation than organizational deviance.

Our finding is consistent with Lee et al. (2004) and Thau et al. (2007) who suggested that embedded employees tend to avoid misconduct or misbehavior in the workplace. Given that the prior literature appears mixed with its results on the job embeddedness-workplace deviance/counterproductive relationship our findings offer further insight and explanation. That is, job satisfaction appears to be interacting with the job embeddedness factor.

Also of interest in the current study was the result that among high job satisfied salespeople, no relationship was found between OJE and either interpersonal deviance or customer-directed deviance. This result was quite different from the findings among low job satisfied salespeople, where their OJE was positively related to interpersonal and customer-directed deviance. Thus, where dissatisfied and embedded salespeople may act out negatively toward all three major types of targets (i.e., the organization, co-workers, and customers), satisfied-embedded salespeople tend to respond more favorably only to their organization. Again, perhaps more satisfied-embedded salespeople seek to avoid behaving counterproductively toward their organization because they may view their situation as desirable and do not want to directly harm their relationship with their employer, particularly since they are more satisfied at work and view themselves as less mobile.

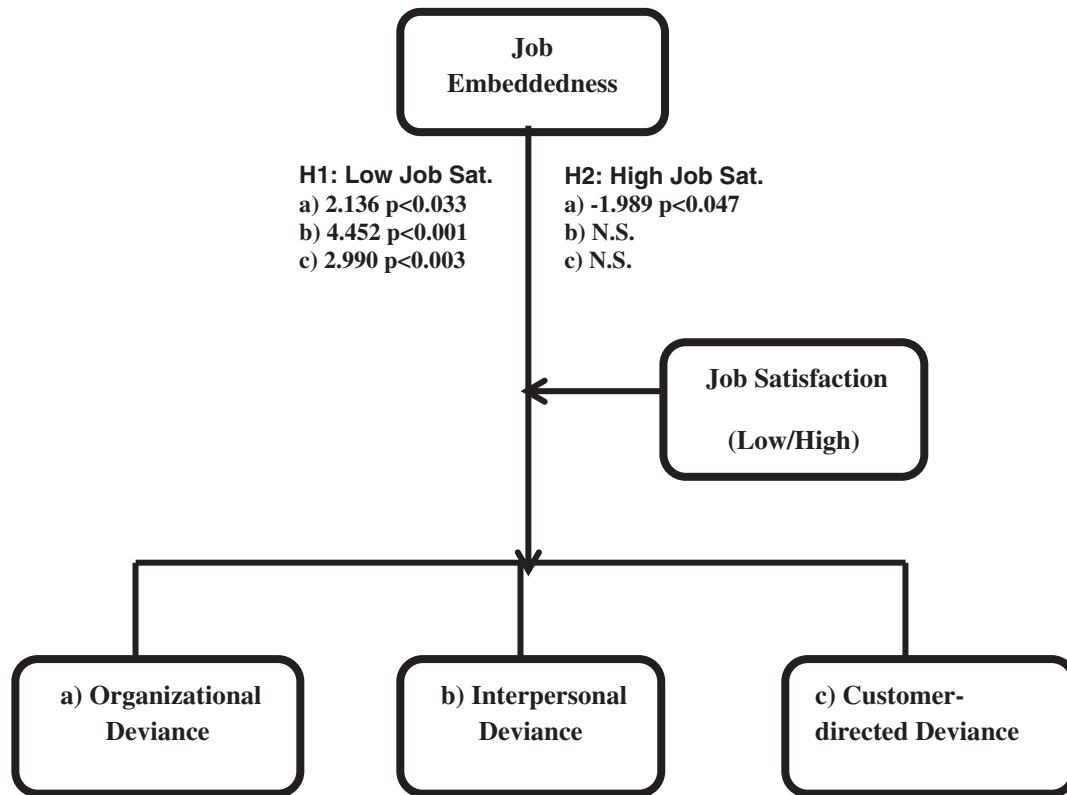


Fig. 2. Results of job embeddedness model.

Yet, satisfaction appears not to act as a deterrent for deviant reactions to embeddedness directed at co-workers or customers. In other words, satisfied ‘stuck’ employees are no more or less likely to engage in deviance toward peers or customers.

The major implication of this current study is that organizations that are not concerned with the satisfaction of their salespeople may be provoking multiple forms of salesperson deviance (organizational, interpersonal or customer-directed). If salespeople feel stuck, that alone is not a cause for alarm. However, when salespeople feel stuck and are dissatisfied in some way, such feelings may lead to workplace deviance. Therefore, the first order of business appears to be devising a way to keep salespeople more satisfied with their jobs, particularly if they feel that they do not have any other options for mobility. Alternatively, organizations may seek to reduce OJE among dissatisfied employees in order to minimize the effects of likely reactionary workplace deviance behaviors.

Salespeople differ in what impacts their satisfaction (e.g., expectancy theory) therefore managers need to be committed to identifying such factors. Soliciting feedback from salespeople through formal and informal mechanisms is one way to identify salesperson satisfiers.

Table 3
Standardized structural path estimates for the overall theoretical model.

Path to:	Low SAT path from OJE	High SAT path from OJE
Customer-directed deviance	0.109** (2.990)	-0.035 -1.191
Interpersonal deviance	0.229*** (4.452)	0.0060 0.117
Organizational Deviance	0.097* (2.136)	-0.090* -1.989

OJE = Organizational Job Embeddedness.
 SAT = Salesperson Satisfaction.
 * Is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
 ** Is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).
 *** Is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Formal and systemic methods should be utilized as a means for providing anonymous responses for salespeople at any time, not just during annual or semi-annual evaluations or reviews. Informal feedback should be obtained from salespeople by encouraging sales managers to be more proactive about receiving feedback from salespeople. Further, organizations need to elicit feedback from customers. Since customer-directed deviance is one of the forms of counterproductive behaviors identified in this study, sales managers need to communicate directly with some of the customers served and find out how relationships between salespeople and their clients are going. Customers who are very dissatisfied with their sales reps may not share their views with the salespeople but may be inclined to do so if approached by sales managers. While customer discontent or dissatisfaction does not necessarily imply that salesperson deviance has occurred, unhappy customers are likely to expose customer or organizational deviance that is occurring. Moreover, where salespeople work in selling teams, interpersonal deviance may become more of a concern. In such instances, anonymous and confidential feedback systems for salespeople are critical since there is close interaction among sales team members.

Another way of handling dissatisfied salespeople, especially if beyond the point of finding a way to increase their satisfaction, is to reduce their embeddedness. Lowering the cost of exit, for example, by reducing the time it takes to vest in pension programs and allowing bonuses to be pro-rated before the end of the year are ways to allow dissatisfied sales personnel to leave before they engage in reactive destructive behaviors toward the organization, their coworkers or customers.

6. Conclusion

In sum, creating an organizational culture where sales managers seek to understand salespeople’s motivation and satisfaction levels seems to be one way that workplace deviance can be managed. Sales managers should be rewarded for facilitating satisfaction-based

feedback with all of their salespeople. Thus, having effective systems in place to gather both direct and indirect information related to salesperson satisfaction is essential. Such systems should gather information (both formally and informally) from salespeople and their customers alike. While a happy/satisfied employee is not always necessarily a productive employee, the results of this study suggest that embedded employees who are satisfied are likely to be better behaved (i.e., less deviant). And unhappiness among embedded employees may create a fertile environment for the development of counterproductive salesperson behaviors.

As with any empirical research, this study is not without limitations. First, we utilize a single source of data (industrial salespeople) in capturing the constructs investigated in our model. It may be that the explored relationships between variables have been inflated due to common source variance. Although an empirical test for common method bias suggests there was no such problem here; salesperson deviance is comprised of objectionable behaviors in terms of the organization, and salespeople may disguise and/or deflate their deviance for fear of reprisal. While we recognize the potential for bias in single source data collection, the procedure has been widely used in workplace deviance research and provides reliable results when confidentiality is ensured (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). In the current study, respondents were anonymous to the researchers since the online survey platform was responsible for collecting, organizing, and distributing the data.

Another possible limitation was the similarity of the two major factors in this study: job embeddedness and job satisfaction. Both factors were relatively highly correlated and may have behaved similarly. While multicollinearity is a possible influence of similar factors, VIF results from a post-hoc hierarchical regression analysis suggested no concern there. Also, the post-hoc hierarchical regression yielded both direct and interaction effects of job embeddedness and job satisfaction, thus offering further support for the moderation of job satisfaction. In future research, other variables less similar to job embeddedness should be considered for inclusion in the model such as possibly organizational commitment or job autonomy.

Finally, this study represents a cross sectional research design and readers should exercise caution in drawing any causal inferences. Future research should employ experimental or longitudinal research methods to enhance the validity of results and draw more valid causal conclusions. However, this is not to say that the implications of this study are any less useful. Our results are based on responses from a diverse group of industrial salespeople employed in a wide variety of industries. We provide a potential explanation for relationships observed between salesperson traits, their work attitudes, and subsequent anti-normative behaviors. Finally, we hope that this manuscript propels further exploration into the antecedents and consequences of salesperson deviance.

References

- Allen, V. L., & Greenberger, D. B. (1980). Destruction and perceived control. In A. Baum, & J. E. Singer (Eds.), *Applications of personal control*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 411–423.
- Avey, J. B., Keke, W., & Holley, E. (2015). The influence of abusive supervision and job embeddedness on citizenship and deviance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 129(3), 721–731.
- Bagozzi, R. P. (1980). *Causal modeling in marketing*. New York: John Wiley.
- Bennett, R. J. (1998). Perceived powerlessness as a cause of employee deviance. In R. W. Griffin, A. O'Leary-Kelly, & J. M. Collins (Eds.), *Dysfunctional behavior in organizations: Violent and deviant behavior* (pp. 221–239). Elsevier Science/JAI Press.
- Bennett, R. J., & Robinson, S. L. (2000). Development of a measure of workplace deviance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(3), 349–360.
- Bennett, R. J., & Robinson, S. L. (2003). (2nd ed.). *Organizational behavior: The state of the science*, 25. (pp. 247–281). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 247–281.
- Berry, C. M., Ones, D. S., & Sackett, P. R. (2007). Interpersonal deviance, organizational deviance, and their common correlates: A review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(2), 410–424.
- Birnbaum, M. H. (2004). Human research and data collection via the internet. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 803–832.
- Bolin, A., & Heatherly, L. (2001). Predictors of employee deviance: The relationship between bad attitudes and bad behavior. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 15(3), 405–418.
- Breaugh, J. A. (1981). Predicting absenteeism from prior absenteeism and work attitudes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 66(5), 555–560.
- Brehm, J. W. (1966). *A theory of psychological reactance*. Oxford, England: Academic Press.
- Cammann, C., Fichman, M., Jenkins, D., & Klesh, J. (1983). Assessing the attitudes and perceptions of organizational members. In S. Seashore, E. Lawler, P. Mirvis, & C. Cammann (Eds.), *Assessing organizational change: A guide to methods, measures and practices*. New York: John Wiley.
- Choi, N. H., Dixon, A., & Jung, J. M. (2004). Dysfunctional behavior among sales representatives: The effect of supervisory trust, participation, and information controls. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 24(3), 181–198.
- Coffin, B. (2003). Breaking the silence on white collar crime. *Risk Management*, 50(9), 8.
- Crossley, C., Bennett, R., Jex, S. M., & Burnfield, J. (2007). Development of a global measure of job embeddedness and integration into a traditional model of voluntary turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(4), 1031–1042.
- Dalal, R. S. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1241–1255.
- Darrat, M., Amyx, A., & Bennett, R. (2010). An investigation into the effects of work-family conflict and job satisfaction on salesperson deviance. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 30(3), 239–251.
- DeConinck, J. B. (2011). The effects of leader-member exchange and organizational identification on performance and turnover among salespeople. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 31(1), 21–34.
- Dollard, J., Miller, N. E., Doob, L. W., Mowrer, O. H., & Sears, R. R. (1939). *Frustration and aggression*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dreze, X., & Zufryden, F. (2004). Measurement of online visibility and its impact on internet traffic. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(1), 20–37.
- Drucker, P. F. (2008). *Management*. revised ed. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equations models with unobserved variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18, 39–50.
- Gerbing, D. W., & Anderson, J. C. (1988). An updated paradigm for scale development incorporating unidimensionality and its assessment. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25, 186–192.
- Hair, J. F., Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Harris, L. C., & Ogbonna, E. (2002). Exploring service sabotage: The antecedents, types, and consequences of frontline, deviant, antiservice behaviors. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(3), 163–183.
- Harris, K. J., Wheeler, A. R., & Kacmar, K. M. (2011). The mediating role of organizational job embeddedness in the LMX-outcomes relationships. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(2), 271–281.
- Holtom, B. C., & Inderrieden, E. J. (2006). Integrating the unfolding model and job embeddedness model to better understand voluntary turnover. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 18(4), 435–452.
- Holtom, B. C., Mitchell, T. R., & Lee, T. W. (2006). Increasing human and social capital by applying job embeddedness theory. *Organizational Dynamics*, 35(4), 316–331.
- Holtom, B. C., Burton, J. P., & Crossley, C. D. (2012). How negative affectivity moderates the relationship between shocks, embeddedness and worker behaviors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(2), 434–443.
- Jelinek, R., & Ahearne, M. (2006). The ABCs of ACB: Unveiling a clear and present danger in the sales force. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 35(4), 457–467.
- Jelinek, R., & Ahearne, M. (2010). Be careful what you look for: The effect of trait competitiveness and long hours on salesperson deviance and whether meaningfulness of work matters. *The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 18(4), 303–321.
- Lawrence, T. B., & Robinson, S. L. (2007). Ain't misbehavin': Workplace deviance as organizational resistance. *Journal of Management*, 33(3), 378–394.
- Lee, T. W., Mitchell, T. R., Sablinski, C. J., Burton, J. P., & Holtom, B. C. (2004). The effects of job embeddedness on organizational citizenship, job performance, volitional absences, and voluntary turnover. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(5), 711–722.
- Levinson, A. (2010, March 8). NCAA tournament may cost employers \$1.8 billion in lost work. *Business Week* Retrieved July 20, 2014 from <http://www.ibj.com/ncaa-tournament-may-cost-employers-18b-in-lost-work/PARAMS/article/18557>
- Marasi, S., Cox, S. S., & Bennett, R. J. (2016). Job embeddedness: Is it always a good thing? *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 31(1), 141–153.
- Mitchell, T. R., Holtom, B. C., Lee, T. W., Sablinski, C. J., & Erez, M. (2001). Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(6), 1102–1121.
- Mulaik, S. A., James, L. R., Alstine, J. V., Bennett, N., Lind, S., & Stilwell, C. D. (1989). Evaluations of goodness-of-fit indices for structural equations models. *Psychological Bulletin*, 105, 430–445.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 879–903.
- Punj, G. (2006). Structural modeling in marketing: Some future possibilities. *Marketing Science*, 25(6), 622–624.
- Richardson, R. (1999). Measuring the impact of turnover on sales. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 19(4), 53–66.

- Robinson, S., & Bennett, R. J. (1995). A typology of deviant workplace behaviors: A multidimensional scaling study. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(2), 555–572.
- Robinson, S. L., & O'Leary-Kelly, A. M. (1998). Monkey see, monkey do: The influence of work groups on the antisocial behavior of employees. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(6), 658–672.
- Skarlicki, D. P., & Folger, R. (1997). Retaliation in the workplace: The roles of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(3), 434–443.
- Stanton, J. M. (1998). An empirical assessment of data collection using the internet. *Personnel Psychology*, 51(3), 709–725.
- Taylor, A. (2007). Gambling at work costs employers 300 m a year. *Financial Times*, 4.
- Thau, S., Crossley, C., Bennett, R. J., & Sczesny, S. (2007). The relationship between trust, attachment, and antisocial work behaviors. *Human Relations*, 60(8), 1155–1179.
- Weick, K. E. (1993). The collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The mann gulch disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 628–652.
- Wortman, C. B., & Brehm, J. W. (1975). Responses to uncontrollable outcomes: An integration of reactance theory and the learned helplessness model. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 8, 277–336.
- Yoo, J., & Frankwick, G. L. (2013). Exploring the impact of social undermining on salesperson deviance: An integrated model. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 33(1), 79–90.
- Mahmoud A. Darrat** is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Auburn University Montgomery. His current research interests are in selling and sales management, advertising and promotions, workplace deviance, and marketing ethics. He has previously published in the *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management* among others.
- Douglas A. Amyx** is an Associate Professor of Marketing and Burton R. Risinger Endowed Professor at Louisiana Tech University. His current research interests are in personal selling and sales deviance. He has published in *Psychology and Marketing*, *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *Information and Management*, and *Journal of Managerial Issues*, and others.
- Rebecca J. Bennett** is a Professor of Management at the University of Central Florida. She is known for her interest in the 'dark side' of organizations with her employee deviance research. She has published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, and *Human Relations*, among others.