An empirical test of trust-building processes and outcomes in sales manager-salesperson relationships

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Abstract:

This study examines three trust-building processes and outcomes in sales manager-salesperson relationships. This study, based on a sample of more than 400 business-to-business salespeoples from a variety of industries, shows two trust-building processes (predictive and identification) to be significantly related to salesperson trust in the sales manager. Interpersonal trust was found to be most strongly related to shared values and respect. Trust was directly related to job satisfaction and relationalism, and indirectly related to organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Keywords: trust | sales | relationships | satisfaction

Article:

The development and maintenance of marketing relationships has been the focus of extensive conceptual and empirical work, and trust has been established as a key component in the development of buyer-seller relationships. While the domain of trust and relationship marketing pertains to internal and external relationships (Morgan and Hunt 1994), most research has focused on external relationships. Noticeably, less research has studied internal relationships such as that between a sales manager and a salesperson. This internal relationship is important because it affects various salesperson work attitudes and outcomes such as role ambiguity and job satisfaction (Lagace 1991), internal cooperation (Yilmaz and Hunt 2001), and turnover (Hay Group 1999). An employee's trust in the manager and organization has been linked to leadership behavior (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter 1990), climate (Strutton, Pelton, and Lumpkin 1993), levels of personal contact (McNeilly and Lawson 1999), and role modeling (Rich 1997).

In a nonsales context, Wells and Kipnis (2001) examined the impact of different influence tactics and interaction on subordinate trust in their managers. Distrust was found to be associated with the use of strong methods of influence, less interaction, and fewer attempts to influence. The reasons for distrust were related to personality/character defects such as the manager being seen as "cold" and "secretive." Cunningham and MacGregor (2000) examined the impact of employee trust in their supervisor on such outcome variables as satisfaction, intention to quit, and performance. They did not, however, investigate the antecedents of trust. In a sales context, Strntton et al. (1993), McNeilly and Lawson (1999), and Rich (1997) examined the sales manager's role in trust development. Research findings generally indicate that trust is a key component in maintaining individual and organizational effectiveness (McAllister 1995; Rich 1997).

The purpose of this article is to extend the study of relationship marketing by developing and testing a theoretical model of interpersonal trust in the salesperson-sales manager context. It also provides a more detailed look at managerial behaviors that may affect trust by examining three key trust-building elements--opportunism, shared values, and respect. These behaviors are representative of three trust-building processes--calculative, predictive, and identification. We also evaluate a proposed hierarchy of trust-building processes in sales manager-salesperson (interpersonal) relationships. In addition, the study contributes to the literature by testing direct and indirect relationships between trust and work-related attitudes, including turnover intention, satisfaction, relationalism, and commitment.

A MODEL OF INTERPERSONAL TRUST

Trust has been conceptualized in many ways. Podsakoff et al. (1990) noted the lack of a "clear consensus" as to the most appropriate conceptualization or measurement. Previous unidimensional conceptualizations include conceptualizations of trust as reliability (Garbarino and Johnson 1999), competence (Cook and Wall 1980), benevolence (Anderson and Weitz 1989), and integrity or honesty (Jap 1999). Other marketing researchers have adopted a multidimensional conceptualization (Doney and Cannon 1997). Smith and Barclay (1997) included various behaviors to assess trustworthiness, whereas Ganesan (1994) focused on two key dimensions: benevolence and credibility. Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp (1995) included benevolence but have a restricted view of credibility. Benevolence is the trustor's expectation that a trustee's actions will be in the best interest of a trustor (Kumar et al. 1995). It is based on qualities, intentions, and characteristics of the trustee, not specific behavior (Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna 1985).

Credibility may be viewed from two perspectives—competence-based credibility and honesty-based credibility. Competence arises from the trustor's confidence in the trustee's knowledge and skill related to a specific task, the trustee's ability, and the expectation that the trustee is capable of performing and will perform as expected (Cook and Wall 1980). This element is important in an exchange where a partner is relied on to perform specific tasks.

Honesty (or integrity) is the ability to rely on another's word (Linksold 1978), the keeping of one's word, and fulfilling obligations (Kumar et al. 1995). The honesty view of credibility is more applicable in an interpersonal context involving deep dependence or unequal power as in the case of "authority relations" (e.g., manager-subordinate) (Sheppard and Sherman 1998). In such situations as where the "boss determines an employee's salary, job assignment or promotion" (p. 425), integrity, concern, and benevolence are key qualities of trust. Recently, Jap (1999) captured interpersonal trustworthiness with elements of reliability and honesty, but excluded elements of competence. Ramaswami (1996) indicated that a sales manager or supervisor with low knowledge or competence would be difficult to trust, thus competence may be a necessary condition for trust. Cunningham and MacGregor (2000) defined competence as a component of leader-member exchange quality, a construct that they consider separate from trust. Madhavan and Grover (1998), in a study of group effectiveness, included both an interpersonal component-resulting from relationship conditions such as rich interpersonal interaction—and information. Consistent with the conceptualization used in both marketing and management, we define trust in the interpersonal context of salesperson-sales manager relationships as the salesperson's degree of confidence that his or her manager is both benevolent and honest. When reviewing the findings of this study, the fact that competence is not included as a dimension of trust should be considered.

The theoretical model shown in Figure 1 contains some possible influences on, and consequences of, salesperson trust in his or her manager. We first draw on a multidisciplinary literature base to develop antecedents based on various processes of trust development. Next, we present various possible sales force outcomes. We reexamine several of the hypothesized links that have been examined previously for two reasons. Research replications have value by confirming or calling into question previous work, and these linkages help form a nomological network around the constructs of interest (Cook and Campbell 1979).

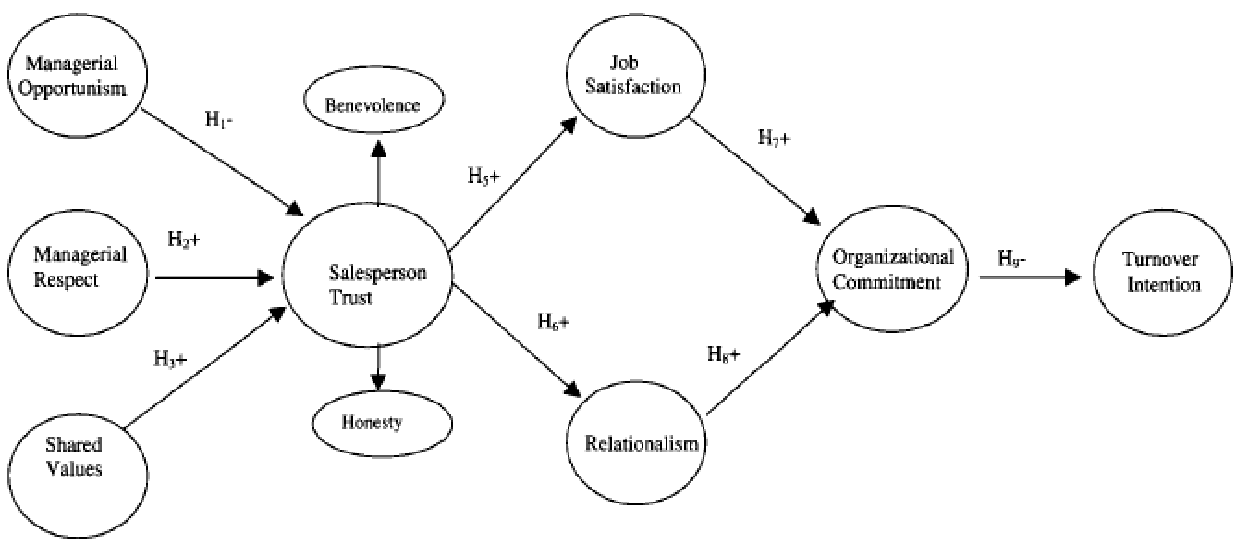

Figure 1. Antecedents and Consequences of Trust in Salesperson-Sales Managers Relationships

TRUST-BUILDING PROCESSES

Three trust-building processes have developed in the literature: calculative processes, predictive processes, and identification processes (Lewicki and Bunker 1995). The calculative perspective of trust was developed in economics (Williamson 1993) and sociology (Coleman 1990). It focuses on a process where costs and benefits of behavior are rationally compared. Trust emerges when a salesperson (trustor) perceives that a sales manager's (trustee's) costs of cheating or engaging in opportunistic behavior are greater than the benefits of such actions (Doney and Cannon 1997). In the context of this study, managerial opportunism is defined as behavior that is deceit oriented and violates expectations about appropriate sales manager role behaviors (John

1984; Morgan and Hunt 1994). Recent research suggests that opportunism is inversely related to trust—where opportunistic behavior reduces the level of trust (Yilmaz and Hunt 2001). Managers who place their interests above those of employees run the risk of being perceived as opportunistic and less reliable than is expected for the role they fill in the organization. Thus, we predict the following:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Perceived managerial opportunism will be related negatively to salesperson trust.

The predictive basis of trust development involves the ability of individuals to predict the actions of others (Deutsch 1960). This ability to predict behavior comes from interaction with, and observation of, the other party (Lewicki and Bunker 1995). For example, McNeilly and Lawson (1999) found that the number of joint sales calls was significantly related to a salesperson's trust in his or her manager. This form of sales manager-salesperson interaction allows the salesperson to observe the sales manager over time and provides a basis for predicting future behavior. The findings of Strutton et al. (1993), related to the influence of psychological climate on trust development, support this concept. The influence of interaction on trust development tends to be based on relational factors that develop from interactions where respect and concern are clearly demonstrated (Whitner, Brodt, Korsgaard, and Werner 1998). Podsakoff et al. (1990) reported that individualized support or "behavior on the part of the leader indicating that he or she respects followers and is concerned about their personal feelings and needs" (p. 112) is a significant predictor of trust.

Tyler (1989) found that three key factors are positively related to the perceptions of fairness in interactions with authorities. One of these factors, "standing," forms the basis for what we term *managerial respect,* which refers to "the treatment accorded to people by group authorities... issues of politeness, respect for rights and treatment with dignity" (Tyler 1994:853). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 2:* Perceptions of managerial respect will be related positively to salesperson trust.

Trust emerges in those relationships where one party identifies with the other party's desires and intentions. Lewicki and Stevenson (1997) cited three factors related to the development of identification-based trust: (1) similar interests, (2) similar goals or objectives, and (3) common values and/or principles. Similarity of values is a good way to assess the fit or cultural blending of alliance partners (Das and Teng 1998), while value congruence is a central concern in gaining a successful fit between individuals and organizations (Chatman 1991).

Morgan and Hunt (1994) found that shared ethical values are positively related to trust in marketing relationships. Yilmaz and Hunt (2001) also found that in sales force peer relationships, shared values are positively related to trust. In an alternative operationalization, dissimilarity of values and goals has been found to have a negative effect on trust development (Anderson and Weitz 1989) and trustworthiness (Smith and Barclay 1997). These findings indicate that shared values, reflecting the degree that a salesperson's values are similar to those of the sales manager (Netemeyer, Boles, McKee, and McMurrian 1997), are related to trust as described in the identification process. We hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 3:* Shared values will be related positively to salesperson trust.

The different contexts (interpersonal versus interfirm) involve different types of activities and distinct levels of interactions that may make certain bases of trust less applicable (Hagen and Choe 1998). Different contexts, interactions, and relational forms have different types of risk and require distinct mechanisms to reduce risk (Sheppard and Sherman 1998). We propose that bases of trust will have differing effects specific to the context or form of relationship under inquiry. Extant literature distinguishes between various bases for trust (calculative, predictive, and identification), which occur from different types of interaction (Lewicki and Stevenson 1997). With regard to distinct contexts, Koehn (1997) suggested that calculative trust development processes should be the main sources of trust in commercial exchanges. In channel relationships, opportunism may be the most important predictor of trust (Morgan and Hunt 1994).

Koehn (1997) indicated that predictive bases of trust involve more familiarity among the parties and can be tied to the development of interpersonal relationships. The findings of Mackenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich (2001) observing leader behavior over time suggest that such behavior influences the development of trust. Likewise, the identification basis of trust appears to be more applicable to individuals and is "most proper" to study in interpersonal relationships. Morgan and Hunt (1994) found that communications (predictive) and shared values (identification) were significant predictors of trust but accounted for less than 10 percent of the variance. Doney and Cannon (1997) found that the strongest predictor of trust in a firm-salesperson context was salesperson influence (transference) and that the predictive base of trust (influence) accounted for the second largest portion of variance. They reported that calculative and identification bases, respectively, were also significant in the firm-salesperson context. On the basis of theory, previous findings, and the specific interpersonal context of this study, we hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 4:* In an interpersonal context, the process related most strongly to trust will be the identification process (shared values), followed by the predictive process (managerial respect) and then the calculative process (managerial opportunism).

TRUST AND SALESPERSON ATTITUDES

Job Satisfaction

Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1974) conceptualized job satisfaction as those characteristics pertaining to the job and work environment "which salespeople find rewarding, fulfilling, and satisfying, or frustrating and unsatisfying" (p. 255). In this study, job satisfaction represents an overall global state pertaining to the personal selling position (Netemeyer et al. 1997). A sales manager is a salesperson's key link to the organization and a major influence on a salesperson's job perceptions (Ingram and Bellenger 1983; Kohli 1989). Supervisor behaviors such as consideration (Teas 1983), role clarification (Johnston, Parasuraman, Futrell, and Black 1990), closeness of supervisor, and communication (Churchill et al. 1974) are related to job satisfaction.

Meta-analytic results confirm the strength of these positive relationships, with corrected correlations of .45 between closeness of supervision and job satisfaction (Brown and Peterson 1993).

Links between trust and satisfaction have typically been tested in marketing contexts other than sales. Anderson and Narus (1990) found that trust in one's exchange partner reduces negative conflict and increases exchange satisfaction. High levels of trustworthiness and trusting behaviors are positively related to the degree of mutual trust in selling partnerships (Smith and Barclay 1997). In a sales management context, trust in the sales manager appears to be related to salesperson job satisfaction (Lagace 1991; Rich 1997). This has also been supported in a nonsales context (Cunningham and MacGregor 2000). We hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 5: Salesperson trust will be related positively to job satisfaction.

Relationalism

Relationalism refers to the expectations that exchange partners or individuals have, such as long-term interaction, a sharing of benefits, and an expectation that the relationship is more important than any one encounter or exchange. Relationalism (social norms of exchange) has been studied primarily in interfirm contexts, but frameworks used to explore relational exchanges are based on interpersonal relationships (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987). Trust is a primary component or basis for the development of norms of exchange (Macneil 1980) and thus relationalism. As such, trust is essential for the development of relationalism. We hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 6: Salesperson trust will be related positively to relationalism.

Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to an individual's attachment to, or identification with, an organization and willingness to exert additional effort to maintain organizational goals and values (Porter, Steer, Mowday, and Boulian 1974). The nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and commitment has been debated (Brown and Peterson 1993). Consistent with the majority of findings, we have modeled satisfaction as an antecedent to commitment (Brown and Peterson 1993; Johnston et al. 1990). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 7: Job satisfaction will be related positively to organizational commitment.

Relationalism and Organizational Commitment

The nature of relationalism is that of an enduring and ongoing relationship where the parties maintain high levels of interaction and consistency in behavior. Gundlach, Achrol, and Mentzer (1995) found that the existence of social norms (relationalism) increases commitment. Managerial actions such as leadership behaviors are also positively related to organizational commitment (Johnston et al. 1990). We hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 8: Relationalism will be related positively to organizational commitment.

Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intention

Turnover or turnover intention, which involves an individual's intention to leave the firm (Netemeyer et al. 1996), is commonly modeled as an ultimate outcome in studies of human behavior in organizations (e.g., Chandrashekaran, McNeilly, Russ, and Marinova 2000). The relationship between organizational commitment and turnover has previously been explored in sales force settings (Johnston et al. 1990). Previous research confirms the negative relationship of organizational commitment with turnover intention and turnover (Brown and Peterson 1993). Findings indicate that commitment mediates the job satisfaction-turnover intention/turnover relationship (Johnston et al. 1990). Consistent with these findings, commitment is modeled as a mediator of the relationship between satisfaction and turnover intention. We hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 9:* Organizational commitment will be related negatively to turnover intention.

METHOD

Sample

The sample in this study consisted of 402 business-to-business salespeople in the northeastern United States. A list of salespeople was generated through the use of the Internet and industry directories. Respondents came from a wide range of industries and sold approximately 50 different types of products. Through phone contact, we qualified salespeople for the study, and they were required to be full-time salespeople working in business-to-business markets, with a minimum of 6 months tenure working with an identifiable manager. Surveys were distributed to 621 salespeople who were qualified and agreed to participate. During an 8-week period, 408 surveys were received, and 6 surveys were eliminated due to missing data.

The mean age of the respondents was 37 years. Sixty-four percent were married, and 78 percent were male. Sixty-eight percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. The average number of years of sales experience with their present company was 7.2 (SD = 6.52), and they had an average of 11.92 years (SD = 8.93) of total sales experience. To test for nonresponse bias, early and late respondents were compared according to Armstrong and Overton (1977), with no differences found with regard to age, gender, income, years with company, time with manager, or the constructs of interest. Additional tests indicate no differences between early or late respondents with regard to type of product or service, consumer or industrial, or in the 24 different product or service categories. Also, to avoid any confound based on length of employment or length of the sales manager-sales person relationship, we ran simple regressions using these two "time" variables as predictors of the key constructs. There were no significant effects.

Measures and Analysis

The constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from the literature. A complete list of the items, their sources, psychometric properties, factor loadings, and z scores are presented in the appendix. For each measure, respondents were asked to state their agreement or disagreement on a 7-point scale anchored by *strongly disagree* (coded 1) and *strongly agree* (coded 7). Unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measures were assessed according to procedures suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988).

Following the multifaceted definition of *trust,* we modeled the construct as a second-order factor with two first-order factors of benevolence and honesty. The second-order measurement is consistent with previous work in multifaceted constructs (Singh and Rhoads 1991). Items for the two facets are based on scales by Kumar et al. (1995). The two dimensions, benevolence and honesty, were assessed with two four-item scales.

The measurement and structural models were tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling with LISREL 8.30 (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1993). The measurement model tested all constructs simultaneously, including the second-order trust construct, due to the identification issues related to trust. The two first-order constructs representing trust were overidentified, but the second-order construct would be underidentified unless combined with other constructs in the measurement model. The benevolence and honesty factors were uncorrelated with the other constructs, which allows all covariance to flow through the higher order trust.

Study results indicate convergent and discriminant validity. All items loaded on their specified construct with loadings 17 to 23 times higher than their standard errors. Discriminant validity was found for all pairs of constructs by comparing the average variance extracted for each construct to the square of the correlation (Φ) between each pair of constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The chi-square fit statistic for the measurement model was 1,908 with 830 degrees of freedom ($p < .001$). Table 1 provides descriptive statistics and the correlations among constructs. Although the chi-square fit statistic is significant, it has been noted that this statistic is sensitive to small discrepancies in model fit with large samples (Bentler and Bonett 1980). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) were both above recommended levels at .93, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was acceptable at .06. Overall, the measurement model evidenced acceptable fit. Structural model results presented in Table 2 indicate adequate fit. The chi-square was 2,039 with 847 degrees of freedom ($p < .001$). The CFI and TLI were both .92. The RMSEA was within the acceptable range at .06.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Constructs[a]

Measure	α	ρ	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Benevolence	.93	.91	.71	1									
2. Honesty	.90	.88	.65	.72	1								
3. Job Satisfaction	.90	.87	.71	.60	.60	1							
4. Relationalism	.93	.93	.66	.66	.66	.60	1						
5. Organizational Commitment	.92	.95	.72	.60	.59	.74	.77	1					
6. Turnover	.91	.92	.74	–.46	–.46	–.59	–.60	–.69	1				
7. Managerial Opportunism	.92	.89	.66	–.54	–.54	–.38	–.52	–.42	.48	1			
8. Shared Values	.94	.94	.79	.72	.72	.56	.81	.70	–.53	–.60	1		
9. Managerial Respect	.91	.92	.69	.70	.70	.52	.76	.64	–.50	–.56	.78	1	
10. Salesperson Trust		.92	.84	.92	.91	.66	.72	.65	–.50	–.57	.79	.76	1

NOTE: AVE = average variance extracted. a. All correlations are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 2. Structural Model Coefficients

Structural Path	Sign	Theoretical Model			Controlling for Common Methods Model		
		SMC	Estimate[a]	*t*-Value	SMC	Estimate	*t*-Value
Salesperson Trust → Benevolence	+	.72	.85	8.82	.69	.83	7.92
Salesperson Trust → Honesty	+	.72	.85	8.60	.68	.82	7.93
Managerial Opportunism → Salesperson Trust	–		–.07	–1.70		–.02	–0.47
Shared Values → Salesperson Trust	+		.55	7.30		.52	6.67
Managerial Respect → Salesperson Trust	+	.84	.37	5.85	.85	.44	5.99
Salesperson Trust → Job Satisfaction	+	.46	.68	8.99	.41	.64	7.90
Salesperson Trust → Relationalism	+	.73	.85	8.97	.73	.85	7.80
Job Satisfaction → Organizational Commitment	+		.44	9.26		.46	9.38
Relationalism → Organizational Commitment	+	.73	.52	9.76	.73	.51	9.53
Organizational Commitment → Turnover Intention	–	.49	–.70	–11.84	.47	–.69	–11.62
Fit indexes							
Structural model: χ^2 (*df*) = 2,039 (847), $p < .001$; CFI = .92, TLI = .92, and RMSEA = .06							
Method model: χ^2 (*df*) = 1,738 (804), $p < .001$; CFI = .94, TLI = .94, and RMSEA = .05							

NOTE: SMC = squared multiple correlation; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. a. Completely standardized estimates.

To evaluate the effects of a common methods bias, we included a method factor following the procedures described by Podsakoff et al. (1990). The results find that a common source factor is evident with a significant change in the overall model fit, χ^2 (dfs) = 303 (44), but the existence of the factor does not affect the magnitude or significance of the findings.

FINDINGS

Findings indicate that seven of the eight hypothesized paths were significant ($p < .05$). The path from opportunism to trust (Hypothesis 1) was not significant ($\gamma_{11} = –.07$, $t = –1.70$). Respect was positively related to trust, supporting Hypothesis 2 ($\gamma_{13} = .37$, $t = 5.85$). The relationship between trust and shared values (Hypothesis 3) also received support ($\gamma_{12} = .55$, $t = 7.32$). When managers and salespeople hold similar values, trust is more likely to develop.

Hypotheses for the proposed consequences of trust are presented in Table 2. Trust was positively related to job satisfaction, as predicted in Hypothesis 5 ($\beta_{21} = .68$, $t = 8.99$). Hypothesis 6 examined the influence of trust on relationalism. This path was significant ($\beta_{31} = .85$, $t = 8.97$). Job satisfaction ($\beta_{42} = .44$, $t = 9.26$) and relationalism ($\beta_{43} = .52$, $t = 9.76$) were both positively related to commitment, supporting Hypotheses 7 and 8. Hypothesis 9, predicting a negative relationship between commitment and turnover intention, was supported ($\beta_{54} = –.70$, t = –1.84).

The ability of the model to explain the endogenous variables was reasonably strong. The squared multiple correlations (SMCs) for the endogenous variables were .46 for job satisfaction and .84 for trust. The SMCs for relationalism and organizational commitment were .73 and .49 for turnover intention. Honesty and benevolence each had an SMC of .72.

Comparison of Predictors

To test Hypothesis 4, a series of five models were compared, with each of the models being nested with regard to the theoretical model including the methods factor. The first comparison equates the variance of the three predictors to allow a comparison of the completely standardized loadings. The chi-square of this model is unchanged from the original model, and the path coefficients are equivalent to the original findings, with the path from shared values to trust being the strongest ($\gamma_{12} = –.53$), followed by respect ($\gamma_{13} = –.43$) and finally opportunism ($\gamma_{11} = –.05$). This test supports Hypothesis 4. In addition, four other models were tested, beginning with a model specifying that all path coefficients are equal. This model shows a deterioration of fit, with a $\Delta\chi^2$ (dfs) = 50 (2). This reflects that the paths are not all equal.

Three additional models alternated the pattern of equivalent paths by setting only two of the three to be equal at a time. These models show that when equating the path leading from opportunism with the paths from shared values, $\Delta\chi^2$ (dfs) = 303 (44) or respect, $\Delta\chi^2$ (dfs) = 303 (44), the fit of the model deteriorates. When the shared-values and respect paths are equated, the model does not deteriorate but marginally improves, $\Delta\chi^2$ (dfs) = –1 (1), although not significantly. We conclude that there are differential effects from our three predictors, as shared values and respect are better predictors than opportunism. Shared values has a larger path estimate to trust than respect, but the nested-models comparison finds no statistically significant difference.

DISCUSSION

The identification process, which is based on shared values, was the most important trust-building process in our model. This is not consistent with the findings of Morgan and Hunt (1994), who found that opportunism had the strongest relationship (negative) with trust. The difference is both interesting and telling regarding the relationship between trust-developing processes and the context of trust relationships. The primary distinction lies in the contexts of the studies. Morgan and Hunt (1994) examined interfirm relationships in a channel-of-distribution context, while the current study examined specific interpersonal relationships between salespeople and sales managers. Differences in findings may reflect context-specific trust-building processes. Note also that given the interpersonal context of this study, we chose not to include competence as a dimension of trust. This fact should be considered when comparing our results with those of other studies.

The predictive basis of trust building, as tested through the perception of respect, was also significantly related to perceptions of trust. This supports the contention that it is not necessarily the amount of interaction but the quality of that interaction that is important. The calculative process involving opportunism was not significantly related to higher order trust. Although a relationship was predicted, the nonsignificant finding lends support to the hypothesis regarding the relative effect of opportunism in interpersonal relationships. In addition, opportunism has the lowest correlation of the three antecedents with the first-order trust elements of honesty and benevolence. One likely explanation may be found in the length of the relationship between the managers and salespeople. Opportunism or calculative trust tends to be more important in early relationships (Lewicki and Bunker 1995), and the salesperson-sales manager relationships we examined had been in place at least 6 months.

In the trust literature, there appears to be an emerging hierarchy of bases of trust (Sheppard and Sherman 1998). Calculative-based trust is the least stable form, followed by predictive-based trust and then identification-based trust (Lewicki and Bunker 1995; Sheppard and Sherman 1998). In the current study, interpersonal trust was based more on the higher bases of prediction and identification, suggesting that interpersonal trust between salespeople and sales managers is more representative of interdependence and shared values.

Trust was significantly related to salesperson job satisfaction. Salespeople who trust their managers are more satisfied with their jobs. Also, as this study and many previous studies have shown, job satisfaction acts as a mediator between many characteristics of the job and other work-related attitudes such as organizational commitment. Trust, operating through satisfaction, is indirectly related to organizational commitment. We also found a significant link between trust and relationalism. This finding is important since it indicates that trust is a key element in developing behavioral norms between individuals (Macneil 1980).

Managerial Implications

This research found that shared values is the strongest factor in building trust between salespeople and their managers. Thus, the selection process may be the first, and possibly most important step, in ensuring that salespeople are satisfied and committed to the organization. Newly hired employees come to the organization with a set of personal values. When recruiting, firms should seek out individuals whose values reflect those of the organization. For example, a sales force organized to grow revenue from a stable customer base may not be the best organization for a salesperson who does not like spending a great deal of time with any one account. The question of organizational fit is central to this selection process. Does the potential hire have similar values to those espoused by the company and sales managers? If not, then he or she may find it difficult to develop trust in the manager since they will not share the same values.

Hiring salespeople whose values are congruent to those of the organization may be a much simpler and effective approach to having a satisfied sales force than trying to indoctrinate employees who do not hold similar values into a firm's culture (Dubinsky, Howell, Ingram, and Bellenger 1986). Salespeople with values congruent with those of the organization also may be more likely to have a higher internal work motivation because they place high value on the same things that their company and manager value highly. This assures that the company and manager will reward the things they value most, whether that is service, growth, teamwork, or some other factor. In addition, the lack of congruence between a manager and salesperson could be interpreted by the salesperson as a lack of respect. Showing concern about their personal feelings and needs implies that the manager understands and perhaps acknowledges the salesperson's value system. Our results relating to trust indicate that the Dubinsky et al. (1986) suggestion that "sales recruits with personal needs and skills that are compatible with the sales job should be hired" (p. 203) remains a good hiring rule.

Sales managers must be rewarded for behaviors that are consistent with the firm's values, including their work in hiring and training new salespeople. The selection and training processes also need to emphasize the values of the firm and the importance of those values in operating a successful business. Including these issues in the hiring and training procedures may be an important first step in the development of trust between new salespeople and their sales managers.

Future Research and Limitations

The findings of this study suggest other areas of research concerning the study of interpersonal trust in sales management. One area of future research involves refining measurement scales. This is not a simple task given the variety of definitions and forms of trust that are being studied. Lewicki and Stevenson (1997) presented items for measuring calculative, knowledge (predictive), and identification-based trust. Measure refinement appears to be a key area for future research. A second area for further research concerns the processes or bases of trust development. We used three processes found in the literature, but other bases of trust also are of interest. In the comparison of our results with other work, we found that there may be differences in the bases of trust across contexts. This suggests that future research should attempt to determine a priori the appropriate bases of trust to investigate by evaluating the levels of risk and dependence or interdependence among the actors (Sheppard and Sherman 1998). There may be various personal traits that "predispose" a salesperson to trust. These traits could include an individual's trust in humanity, propensity for risk, and cultural factors. The saliency of such traits in the development of salesperson-sales manager trust should be examined.

In the area of sales management, control is an important issue (Cravens, Ingram, Laforge, and Young 1993). Control has negative connotations or a negative perception among those on whom the control mechanisms are applied (Ramaswami 1996). However, trust is a form of social control (Shapiro 1987) and is effective since it allows one to "forestall monitoring" (Das and Teng 1998). The use of trust in combination with other forms of control may provide a more palatable and effective overall governance system. Research into the efficacy of governance systems combining trust and traditional controls merits being studied.

Future research may be conducted with limitations of this study in mind. First, it was conducted with salespeople from a variety of companies. Although our preliminary analysis found no differences between firms, there is no clear direction in the literature regarding the use of a single sales force versus multiple sales forces with diverse products (Cravens et al. 1993; Dubinsky et al. 1986). The results must be viewed in light of the fact that we limited the sample to business-to-business salespeople.

A second limitation is the problem of testing a causal model with cross-sectional data. Models based on such data are limited in their ability to show causation. Although we found no evidence that length of time with the manager significantly affected the key constructs, we limited our sample to salespeople with a minimum of 6 months of service with their manager, and this lower boundary may restrict the range of variance. The influence of interpersonal trust development early in salesperson-sales manager relationships should be investigated. Third, we employed a conceptualization and measure of trust that omitted competence. This is consistent with other interpersonal trust research that involves unequal power balance; however, other broader conceptualizations of trust should be examined, and an overall stronger measurement system for trust would enhance research in the area. Finally, our model is limited to single constructs to represent the three trust-building processes, and given the existing literature, our model may be limited by potential model misspecification. Likewise, as seen in various meta-analyses, there is an extensive list of predictors or covariates of satisfaction (Brown and Peterson 1993) and commitment (Mathieu and Zajac 1990) that were not included in the theoretical model. We also used a global measure of job satisfaction. Some facets of job satisfaction may be more related to trust than others. These constructs were not included because they were not the central focus of this study and also due to the complexities in testing large structural models (Bollen 1989).

CONCLUSION

This research extends the study of relationship marketing by developing and testing a model of trust development in a salesperson-sales manager context. Shared values and managerial respect were positively related to the level of trust, with shared values having the strongest influence on trust. The implication is that shared values should be a key focus of trust building in this context. Opportunism was not significantly related to trust. In addition, hypotheses were supported regarding the relationships between trust, job satisfaction, and relationalism. Trust was positively related to both constructs. Trust was also indirectly related to organizational commitment (positively) and turnover intention (negatively). This study emphasizes the role trust plays in the salesperson-sales manager relationship.

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APPENDIX

Measurement Items and Properties

		$\lambda_{i,j}$	**z Value**
Managerial Opportunism (John 1984; Morgan and Hunt 1994)—α = .92, ρ = .89, AVE = .66			
To accomplish his or her own objectives, sometimes my manager			
Alters the facts slightly in order to get what he or she wants.	OPP1	.80	18.72
May hold back information that is important to me.	OPP2	.86	[a]
Exaggerates needs to get what he or she desires.	OPP3	.81	19.16
Breaches formal or informal agreements for his or her benefit.	OPP4	.78	18.12
Shared Values (Netemeyer, Boles, McKee, and McMurrian 1997)—α = .94, ρ = .94, AVE = .79			
I feel that my personal values are a good fit with those of my manager.	VAL1	.88	24.72
My manager has the same values as I have with regard to fairness.	VAL2	.88	24.98
My manager has the same values as I have with regard to career advancement.	VAL3	.88	[a]
In general, my values and the values held by my manager are very similar.	VAL4	.91	27.00
Managerial Respect (Tyler 1994)—α = .91, ρ = .92, AVE = .69			
My manager			
Treats me with respect.	RES1	.92	18.75
Is polite and well mannered in our interactions.	RES2	.87	17.61
Is concerned with my rights.	RES3	.86	17.39
Takes time to acknowledge me.	RES3	.76	15.35
Avoids any discourteous behaviors.	RES5	.73	[a]
Benevolence (Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp 1995)—α = .93, ρ = .91, AVE = .71			
Although circumstances change, I believe that my manager will be ready and willing to offer me assistance and support.	BEN1	.83	[a]
When making important decisions, my manager is concerned about my welfare.	BEN2	.86	20.89
In the future, I can count on my manager to consider how his or her decisions and actions will affect me.	BEN3	.83	19.74
When I share my problems with my manager, I know that he or she will respond with understanding.	BEN4	.85	20.57
Honesty (Kumar et al. 1995)—α = .90, ρ = .88, AVE = .65			
My manager is honest.	HON1	.84	[a]
My manager usually keeps the promises he or she makes to me.	HON2	.79	17.94
Whenever my manager gives me advice on my sales activities, I know he or she is sharing his or her best judgment.	HON3	.78	17.68
Even when my manager gives me a rather unlikely explanation, I am confident that he or she is telling the truth.	HON4	.83	19.21
Second-order trust loadings			
Salesperson Trust → Benevolence		.92	17.44
Salesperson Trust → Honesty		.91	17.66

		$\lambda_{i,j}$	*z* Value
Relationalism (Gundlach, Achrol, and Mentzer 1995)—α = .93, ρ = .93, AVE = .66			
Maintaining our relationship in the face of adversity or challenge is very important.	REL1	.73	[a]
Our relationship is flexible in accommodating one another if special problems or needs arise.	REL2	.85	17.37
Our relationship extends across many complex responsibilities and multiple tasks.	REL3	.78	15.85
When disagreements arise in the relationship, all facts are reassessed to try to reach a mutually satisfactory compromise.	REL4	.83	16.80
Problems that arise in our relationship are treated as joint rather than individual responsibilities.	REL5	.80	16.10
We are both committed to improvements that may benefit our relationship as a whole, and not as individuals.	REL6	.86	17.43
Our relationship is best described as long-term.	REL7	.82	16.67
Job Satisfaction (Brown and Peterson 1994)—α = .90, ρ = .87, AVE = .71			
This job is worse than most. (R)	SAT1	.91	[a]
My job is very worthwhile.	SAT2	.87	24.69
My job is better than most.	SAT3	.74	18.37
I sometimes feel this job is a waste of time. (R)	SAT4	.83	22.47
Organizational Commitment (Mowday, Steers, and Porter 1990)—α = .92, ρ = .95, AVE = .72			
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	CO1	.72	[a]
I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	CO2	.88	17.74
I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	CO3	.82	16.38
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	CO4	.92	18.54
This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	CO5	.88	17.67
I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for, over others I was considering at the time I joined.	CO6	.88	17.59
For me, this is the best of all possible organizations to work for.	CO7	.83	16.55
Turnover Intention (Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian 1996)—α = .91, ρ = .92, AVE = .74			
I often think about quitting my present job.	TO1	.88	27.20
I intend to quit my present job.	TO2	.93	[a]
During the next 12 months, I intend to search for an alternative role (another job, full-time student, etc.) to my present job.	TO3	.87	26.79
I have searched for a new job.	TO4	.76	20.02

NOTE: AVE = average variance extracted. (R) indicates a reverse-scored item. Measurement fit: χ^2 (dfs) = 1,908 (830), $p < .001$; Comparative Fit Index = .93; Tucker-Lewis Index = .93; root mean square error of approximation = .06. a. Initial loading fixed to 1 to set the scale of the construct.