The relationship of facets of salesperson job satisfaction with affective organizational commitment

By: James S. Boles, Ramana Madupalli, Brian Rutherford, and John Andy Wood

Abstract:

Purpose: This paper aims to examines the relationships between various facets of salesperson job satisfaction as assessed by the INDSALES measure and salesperson organizational commitment. The paper also seeks to explore salesperson gender as a moderator of the relationship between facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. **Design/methodology/approach:** This study uses survey research of one firm's business-to-business salespeople to examine the relationships between facets of salesperson job satisfaction and salesperson organizational commitment. **Findings:** Study results indicate that various facets of job satisfaction are more strongly related to organizational commitment. Findings also indicate that these relationships are not the same for male and female salespeople. **Practical implications:** Findings demonstrate to sales managers that not all types of satisfaction are related to organizational commitment, which has been strongly linked to a salesperson's propensity to leave an organization. Further, various facets of satisfaction such as pay and promotion are more important to men than to women. Women find that satisfaction with co-workers is more closely related to organizational commitment than it is for men. These findings have significant relevance to sales managers. **Originality/value:** The relationship between facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment has not been extensively researched. This is true even though these are two very important issues when dealing with sales force management. Likewise, the issue of men and women valuing different types of satisfaction to varying degrees has not been thoroughly examined in the business-to-business sales force literature.

Keywords: sales force | job satisfaction | gender

Article:

Introduction

Salesperson organizational commitment and its antecedents have received considerable attention due to the importance that sales managers place on retaining sales personnel (Johnston *et al.*, 1990; Mathieu *et al.*, 2000). In the current economic environment, well-trained salespeople,

knowledgeable about their customers and industries represent a valuable resource for business-to-business firms. Yet due to the current economic environment, these individuals may not be as committed to their employer as were salespeople in earlier times. The issue of organizational commitment takes on increased importance due to its link with propensity to leave and turnover (Brown and Peterson, 1993).

While there have been many proposed antecedents to organizational commitment, job satisfaction has, perhaps, received more attention than other precursors of salesperson organizational commitment (e.g. Babakus *et al.*, 1999). Consistently, across studies, job satisfaction has shown a strong positive relationship with organizational commitment in the sales force (Brown and Peterson, 1993). Previous sales-related research examining the job satisfaction → organizational commitment relationship has typically used a global construct to measure job satisfaction (i.e. Johnston *et al.*, 1987). There is substantial evidence, however, that job satisfaction is a multi-faceted construct (Churchill *et al.*, 1974; Comer *et al.*, 1989; Lagace *et al.*, 1993). Thus, while we know a great deal about the relationship between global job satisfaction and organizational commitment, questions remain as to the relationship between various facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Some evidence from sales research indicates that various facets of job satisfaction may exhibit different relationships with other constructs when compared to a single measure of global job satisfaction (Boles *et al.*, 2003). There are significant managerial and theoretical implications from finding different relationships between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Since the 1970s, numerous researchers have investigated gender differences in job attitudes of sales personnel (Siguaw and Honeycutt, 1995). The results from the earlier research findings have been both supportive and non supportive (Schul and Wren, 1992; Siguaw and Honeycutt Jr, 1995; Moncrief *et al.*, 2000) of gender differences in job attitudes – in particular for job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Although a substantial amount of research has been done investigating gender differences in salespeople attitudes (see Moncrief *et al.*, 2000), very few studies have investigated the effect of gender differences on the job satisfaction – organizational commitment relationship (e.g. Russ and McNeilly, 1995).

The purpose of this research is to measure the effects of different facets of job satisfaction on affective organizational commitment among members of an outside business-to-business sales force. Another important purpose of this research is to investigate possible gender differences in the relationship of different job satisfaction facets on organizational commitment. First, a brief review of the relevant literature will be presented. After the literature review has concluded, research hypotheses will be provided and the data collection and analysis process will be described. Following this, study results will be reported along with a discussion of the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings. The paper will conclude with directions for future research.

Conceptual background

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment reflects positive feelings towards the organization and its values. In essence, measuring organizational commitment is an assessment of the congruence between an individual's own values and beliefs and those of the organization (Swailes, 2002). Organizational commitment is defined as an "individual's belief in and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization, and a strong desire to remain in an organization" (Porter et al., 1974). Increased organizational commitment has been positively associated with valuable organizational outcomes, including job performance ratings, decreased intent to search for new jobs and reduced turnover (Bergmann et al., 2000; Johnston et al., 1987).

Organizational commitment is characterized as employees' willingness to contribute to organizational goals. It is influenced differentially by the nature of their commitment – those wanting to belong being more likely to exert effort to perform than those obligated to belong (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Identification with organizational goals as evidenced by a person's affective reactions to one's organization influences the level of effort exerted in activities supporting those goals. Indications of organizational commitment are concerned with feelings of attachment to the goals and values of the organization, one's role in relation to this, and attachment to the organization for its own sake rather than for strictly instrumental values (Cook and Wall, 1980).

Organizational commitment has received a great deal of attention from organizational behaviorists (e.g. Allen and Meyer, 1990; Mowday, 1998). In sales and marketing it is considered an important central construct in understanding salesperson behavior (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Singh et al., 1996). By understanding commitment, practitioners will be in a better position to anticipate the impact of a particular policy or practice on the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Bergmann et al., 2000).

Commitment can be classified in three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative. However, affective commitment, which refers to feelings and belongingness and sense of attachment to the organization, is considered to be a more effective measure of organizational commitment than the other two types of commitment – continuance and normative (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Research also provides evidence that, employees with higher levels of affective commitment to their work, their job and their career exhibit higher levels of continuance and normative commitments (Cohen, 1996). While the three dimensions of organizational commitment are important, this research focuses on affective organizational commitment since it appears to directly influence effort as well as indirectly influence the other forms of commitment.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as an attitude that individuals have about their jobs. It is an extent to which one feels positively or negatively about the intrinsic and/or extrinsic aspects of one's job (Bhuian and Menguc, 2002; Hunt et al., 1985). Job satisfaction has been an interesting construct for researchers in understanding employee behaviors and attitudes. It is an important work-related attitude in sales force research for several reasons (Boles et al., 2003). First, satisfaction with the job is directly related to organizational commitment (Brown and Peterson, 1993). Second, job satisfaction is either directly (Netemeyer et al., 1990) or indirectly (Brown

and Peterson, 1994) related to a salesperson's turnover intentions. Turnover intentions are perhaps the best indicator of future turnover (Futrell and Parasuraman, 1984). Thus job satisfaction can influence a variety of important attitudes, intentions and behaviors in a sales force.

Many studies investigating job satisfaction have looked primarily into a single job satisfaction construct. Not many have considered different facets of job satisfaction (Boles *et al.*, 2003). To accurately measure "job satisfaction", a number of characteristics of the job may need to be evaluated if one hopes to obtain a broad measure of employee beliefs and attitudes about the job (Churchill *et al.*, 1974). These characteristics or facets may not be of equal importance to every individual. For example, a salesperson may indicate that she is very satisfied with her supervisor, salary and company policies, but is dissatisfied with other aspects of work, such as the actual work itself. Organizational research indicates that employees develop attitudes toward such job facets as work, pay, promotion, co-workers, company policies, supervisors and customers (Johnson and Johnson, 2000; Taber and Alliger, 1995). Thus, it is possible that job satisfaction facets are not equally related to other constructs such as organizational commitment.

Global job satisfaction, which is widely used for measuring job satisfaction, can be assessed either by using a single measurement index or an algebraically combined measure with specific job satisfaction facets. The composite measurement by combining responses to individual facet satisfactions is not equivalent to assessing global job satisfaction directly (Johnson and Johnson, 2000). Global measures of job satisfaction may not provide accurate assessment of satisfaction with different aspects of job and also may overestimate the degree of job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction and affective commitment – hypothesis development

The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment is one of the most commonly investigated relationships in sales management literature (see Figure 1). The positive relationship between job satisfaction with organizational commitment is widely recognized in sales and marketing literature (Johnston *et al.*, 1990; Brown and Peterson, 1993; Singh *et al.*, 1996; Bhuian and Menguc, 2002). Though there has been some disagreement over the causal ordering of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Sager and Johnston, 1989), most research support the aforementioned direction of the relationship – job satisfaction as an antecedent to organizational commitment (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Curry *et al.*, 1986; Vandenberg and Lance, 1992).

Job satisfaction facets and affective organizational commitment

The primary mechanism that influences organizational commitment is the exchange process (Stevens *et al.*, 1978). In other words, through the evaluation of costs and benefits, individual needs and desires are satisfied and results in a positive affective state towards the organization, work and work environment. Organizational commitment results from this association. Thus, we expect a positive relationship with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Various facets of a job may have different exchange processes or evaluations. If this is true, it would indicate a need to look at the job satisfaction – organizational commitment relationship from a more detailed perspective of job satisfaction facets rather than global or overall job satisfaction.

There are various components or facets of the job that are of vital importance for satisfaction. A number of work related constructs have been linked to satisfaction. Some of these behaviors include work content, control of work and actual performed tasks, direct supervision, promotion opportunities, financial rewards, co-workers and working conditions (Churchill *et al.*, 1974; Ronan, 1970; Futrell, 1979) Taking these into account the job satisfaction facets we investigate are customer, promotion, pay, company policy, supervisor, co-worker and the work itself. While all of these facets are important since they influence the way a person feels about her/his job, each of the facets may affect the job satisfaction outcomes differently. For example, a salesperson could be highly satisfied with pay, but not satisfied with the actual job. In such a case, we can intuitively infer that the salesperson would leave the firm, if he/she gets a better job at similar pay. Thus, different facets of job satisfaction affect organizational commitment differently.

> *H1.* All facets of job satisfaction are positively related to organizational commitment: satisfaction with customer; promotion; pay; company policy; job/work; supervisor; co-worker

Employee differences based on gender

With increasing numbers of women entering the sales force, gender differences and similarities are of interest in sales and marketing settings (Babin and Boles, 1998; Moncrief *et al.*, 2000). Sales research into organizational commitment has reported some gender differences in non-marketing settings (Hartmann, 2000) due to job attributes, family ties, career variables (Marsden *et al.*, 1993), and job attribute preferences (e.g. Mason, 1995; Wiersma, 1990). These studies indicate that men and women have different levels of organizational commitment for varied reasons.

A possible explanation for this involves the varied sociological roles and societal expectations differentially affecting job and family roles for men and women in the workforce (Boles *et al.*, 2003; Babin and Boles, 1998). Indeed research indicates that women place greater importance on social relationships than men (Russ and McNeilly, 1995; McNeilly and Goldsmith, 1991). Due to different sociological roles of men and women we can infer that co-worker, supervisor and company policy' facets of job satisfaction may tend to demonstrate differential and more powerful effects on an employee's organizational commitment for women than for men. Similarly, satisfaction with the actual job and the pay associated with the job will be expected to have a greater effect on organizational commitment of men than women since the job may be more central to the male salesperson's view of his societal role as bread winner.

Strategies for managing relationships are based on the notion that women and men react differently to every day situations (Babin *et al.*, 2001). Gender researchers suggested that women's emotions can be tied more closely to their approach-avoidance behavior (Babin *et al.*, 2001) and men are less expressive and react less emotionally to different situations than do women (Gross and John, 1998). Also, available evidence suggests that women elaborate less provocation and men display a tendency to use a simpler information processing style in reacting to information than women (Meyers-Levy and Sternthal, 1991). Although there are clear

differences between men and women in the way they react to different situations, the results from various studies suggest that the differences are complicated and context dependent (Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1993).

It is a persistent belief that females are more relationship oriented and consider social relationships of greater importance than males (McNeilly and Goldsmith 1991; Babin *et al.*, 2001). Evidence for this belief is prevalent for years in organizational psychology literature (Mason, 1995). Socialization theory and social role theory suggests that gender differences exist in job attitudes and behaviors. The basis for such a view is that women are socialized into values, attitudes and behaviors that are communal in nature. Male socialization reflects a more agentic approach where men are more likely to act alone or without approval. Given their different sociological patterns, it is expected that male and female salespeople will react to their job situations and outcomes in line with their role in the society and their early socialization (Eagly, 1987; Mason, 1995).

Of the few studies that looked at the gender differences in job satisfaction and organizational commitment, very few have investigated employees in sales and marketing settings (e.g. Russ and McNeilly, 1995; Babin and Boles, 1998). These studies, though limited in number, provide us with a deeper understanding of the differences between men and women. Women tend to report higher attachment to their peers and generally women reported higher levels of organizational commitment than men. Researchers argue that the reason for such a behavior is the higher sunk costs of women and fewer opportunities should they leave their job (Babin *et al.*, 2001).

Although there is a fair bit of evidence about gender differences in the job satisfaction facets – affective commitment relationship, there is very little evidence that supports gender differences in the job satisfaction facets – affective organizational commitment relationships. Further, there is some evidence that suggests there are no differences in the relationships between individual job satisfaction facets and organizational commitment. Russ and McNeilly (1995) indicate that there are no gender differences in between social aspects of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, their findings are not consistent with results reported by other organizational researchers. (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990).

Overall, these mixed findings suggest that there are structural differences between men and women and the relationships between work-related variables and job outcomes and are not necessarily linear (Jackson and Schuler, 1989; Singh, 1998; Bhuian and Menguc, 2002). Thus, we hypothesize that job satisfaction with social aspects of the job: customer and co-worker and supervisor, and company policy have a greater positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in females than males. Similarly, job satisfaction with promotion, pay and work will exhibit a stronger positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in males than females.

> *H2a.* Job Satisfaction with customer has a higher positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in females than males.

H2b. Job Satisfaction with promotion has a higher positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in males than females.

H2c. Job Satisfaction with pay has a higher positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in males than females.

H2d. Job Satisfaction with company policy has a higher positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in females than males.

H2e. Job Satisfaction with job/work has a higher positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in males than females.

H2f. Job Satisfaction with supervisor has a higher positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in females than males.

H2g. Job Satisfaction with co-worker has a higher positive relationship with affective organizational commitment in females than males.

Methodology

Sample

The data analyzed in this study represents a census from a regional promotions firm. Within the firm surveys were distributed to 152 sales people employed. Of the surveys distributed and returned, a usable sample size of 138 responses was obtained. The effective response rate was 90.7 percent. The high response rate is partly due to the firm endorsing the study and aiding in distributing the surveys directly to sales people. The completed survey questionnaires were returned directly to authors in postage paid envelopes. Anonymity of the respondents was ensured by reporting the aggregate results to the sponsoring firm.

Of the respondents, approximately 70 percent were males and 30 percent were females with both groups having an average age of 32 years. Over half of the respondents had a minimum of a college education and most of those without a college degree had attained college at some point of time. The average respondent had just over eight-and-a-half years of work experience prior to entering the firm and has been employed by this firm for approximately three years.

Measures

The study measures were generated from well established measurement scales for affective organizational commitment and different facets of job satisfaction.

Affective organizational commitment

Affective organizational commitment was measured using the reduced nine item organizational commitment questionnaire (Porter *et al.*, 1974; Mowday *et al.*, 1979). The nine item scale was developed following the growing concerns about the multi-dimensionality of organizational

commitment construct during 1980s and the validity of original 15-item OCQ scale in measuring the same. This scale contains nine items focusing on: "… the extent to which an individual identifies her self and involves in a particular organization and … a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization" (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). The reliability and validity of the measure has been established in several studies (Porter *et al.*, 1974; Mowday *et al.*, 1979; Johnston *et al.*, 1990; Mathieu *et al.*, 2000; Agarwal and Ramaswami, 1993; Michaels *et al.*, 1988).

Job satisfaction facets

The various facets of job satisfaction were measured using a reduced version of the INDSALES scale (Comer *et al.*, 1989; Lagace *et al.*, 1993). The scale assesses satisfaction with customer, promotion, pay, company policy, work, supervisor and co-worker (see the Appendix, Tables AI and AII). Salesperson responses were given on a 1-7 point scales where smaller numbers indicates less satisfaction. Reliability for these scales is 0.68, 0.80, 0.72, 0.73, 0.68, 0.85 and 0.82 respectively. The reduced version of INDSALES scales with 28 items was used, following the concerns of earlier sales and marketing researchers about the length of the original 95 item INDSALES scales (Churchill *et al.*, 1974). A reduced version of the INDSALES scales was developed by Comer *et al.* (1989) and again examined later by Lagace *et al.* (1993).

Method

The relationship between different facets of job satisfaction with the dependent variable – affective organizational commitment was assessed using linear regression. To determine if gender suggests a specific moderated structural difference, two subgroups were formed by splitting the sample by males and females. Once the two groups were formed, each gender had the same regression analysis ran for each facet of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Subgroup analysis indicates statistically significant differences in the correlations of female and male samples indicating further analysis should be performed using Fisher Z transformations (Cohen and Cohen, 1983).

Results

Table I shows the correlations between the variables, reliabilities of each of the variables, and if the correlations between variables are significant at the 0.05 level. Results from Table II present correlations for both males and females and if the correlations between the variables specifically relating to males or females are significant at the 0.05 level. Table III summarizes the regression results of the combined sample.

The results of *H1a* indicate that satisfaction with customer is not related to affective organizational commitment ($p > 0.05$). In addition, the results from a Fisher Z test indicate no significant differences between males (z value = 0.0802) and females (z value = 0.0400, critical z = 0.2065, $p > 0.05$). The results fail to provide support for *H1a* and *H2a*.

Table I. Pearson correlations between organizational commitment and different job satisfaction facets (Cronbach's alpha on the diagonal)

	Organizational commitment	Satisfaction with customer	Satisfaction with promotion	Satisfaction with pay	Satisfaction with company policy	Satisfaction with job/work	Satisfaction with supervisor	Supervisor with coworkers
Organizational commitment	0.83							
Satisfaction with customer	0.13	0.68						
Satisfaction with promotion	0.41*	0.02	0.80					
Satisfaction with pay	0.39*	0.03*	0.36*	0.73				
Satisfaction with company policy	0.54*	0.22*	0.46*	0.36*	0.68			
Satisfaction with job	0.55*	0.21*	0.38*	0.17*	0.35*	0.85		
Satisfaction with supervisor	0.30*	0.24*	0.31*	0.15	0.35*	0.26/	0.82	
Satisfaction with co-workers	0.32*	0.29*	0.24*	0.13	0.44*	0.49*	0.48*	0.75

Notes: $n = 135$; *$p < 0.05$ (one-tailed test)

Table II. Pearson correlations between organizational commitment and different job satisfaction facets by gender (males are below the diagonal and females are above the diagonal)

	Organizational commitment	Satisfaction with customer	Satisfaction with promotion	Satisfaction with pay	Satisfaction with company policy	Satisfaction with job/work	Satisfaction with supervisor	Supervisor with coworkers
Organizational commitment	—	0.04	0.21	0.07	0.56*	0.49*	0.36*	0.505*
Satisfaction with customer	0.08	—	0.05	–0.05	0.30*	0.33*	0.18	0.303*
Satisfaction with promotion	0.56*	0.06	—	0.19	0.37*	0.23	0.33*	0.19
Satisfaction with pay	0.45*	0.01	0.46*	—	0.01	–0.02	–0.14	–0.10
Satisfaction with company policy	0.54*	0.18*	0.52*	0.45*	—	0.32*	0.32*	0.58
Satisfaction with job	0.56*	0.08	0.53*	0.22*	0.36*	—	0.38*	0.63
Satisfaction with supervisor	0.26*	0.25*	0.31*	0.23*	0.36*	0.18*	—	0.55
Satisfaction with co-workers	0.22*	0.26*	0.29*	0.19*	0.38*	0.39*	0.44*	—

Notes: $n = 95$ for males and $n = 40$ for females; *$p < 0.05$ (one-tailed test)

Table III. Results of linear regressions

	Organizational commitment Combined
Mean	5.430
R-square	0.494
Satisfaction with customer	–0.039
Satisfaction with promotion	0.017
Satisfaction with pay	0.187*
Satisfaction with company policy	0.338*
Satisfaction with job/work	0.433*
Satisfaction with supervisor	0.100
Satisfaction with co-workers	–0.108

The results of *H1b* indicate that satisfaction with promotion was also found to be non-significant in terms of its relationship to affective organizational commitment ($p > 0.05$). The results of *H2b* provide support that males (z value = 0.6328) are more concerned with satisfaction with promotion than females (z value = 0.2132, $z = 2.1554$, $p < 0.05$). Overall the results fail to provide support for *H1b*, but provide support for *H2b*.

The results of *H1c* indicate that satisfaction with pay is related to affective organizational commitment ($p < 0.05$). When examining males and females separately, satisfaction with pay is strong and positively related to commitment in males (z value = 0.4847), while satisfaction with pay is positive but non-significant for females (z value = 0.0701, $z=2.1297$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that, as hypothesized, males are more concerned with pay then females. The results yielded support for both *H1c* and *H2c*.

The results of *H1d* and *H1e* indicate that satisfaction with company policy ($p < 0.05$) and work ($p < 0.05$) are significantly related to affective organizational commitment. When analyzing males and females separately, the results do not indicate that males (z value = 0.6042) were different than females (z value = 0.6328, $z = -0.1469$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, *H2d* is not supported.

When analyzing *H2e*, results indicate that there is no difference between male (z value = 0.6328) female salespeople (z value = 0.5361, $z = 0.4967$, $p > 0.05$). The overall result indicates that an organization's policies are important in making sure that all (both males and females) sales personnel develop affective commitment toward the organization. The positive results support *H1e* and suggest that the actual work is also important for a salesperson irrespective of gender. It appears that individuals, who chose to go into sales, whether male or female, value the nature of the work equally in terms of developing organizational commitment to the firm. Results also indicate that satisfaction with work was the strongest predictor of affective organization commitment when looking at the overall model.

Satisfaction with supervisor (*H1f*) was not significantly related to affective organizational commitment ($p > 0.05$). The results of *H2f* also fail to provide support for the hypothesized differences between male and female salespeople (z value for males = 0.2661, z value for females = 0.3769, $z = -0.5691$, $p > 0.05$). Overall the results do not support *H1f* or *H2f*.

Satisfaction with co-workers (*H1g*) was found to be a non-significant predictor of affective organizational commitment ($p > 0.05$). However, when analyzing male and female salespeople separately, the results indicate that male salespeople place less value on satisfaction with co-workers than do female salespeople (z value for males = 0.2237, z value for females = 0.5560, z value = -1.7069, $p < 0.05$). The results fail to provide support for *H1g*, but provide support for *H2g*.

Discussion

Research implications

The study indicates that the relationship between job satisfaction facets and organizational commitment is more complex than it has been depicted in previous research. In earlier studies,

job satisfaction was considered to be positively related to organizational commitment. Following the growing concerns about the multi-dimensionality of job satisfaction constructs this relationship has become more complex than suggested by much of the previous sales force research. The current study found that different facets of job satisfaction have varying relationships with a salesperson's affective commitment towards the organization. Examining the relationship between different facets of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment can be useful for organization in understanding their salespeople and how different aspects of the job may have a disproportionate influence on affective organizational commitment.

Understanding and identifying a salesperson's satisfaction with various facets of job satisfaction can help organizations devise a better behavioral forecast than what they currently have in relation to outcomes that are related, either directly or indirectly, to job satisfaction such as organizational commitment, intention to quit, and actual turnover. The current study found several significant differences between male and female salespeople regarding the relationship between job satisfaction facets and affective organizational commitment.

Our findings build on earlier sales and marketing research that indicated there are different relationships between various facets of job satisfaction and certain antecedent constructs (Boles *et al.*, 2003). That study also indicates that there are differences in these relationships based on gender. Other research suggests that work-related outcomes may differ based on an employee's gender (Babin and Boles, 1998).

Managerial implications

When considering affective commitment, our results indicate that of all the job satisfaction domains, satisfaction with company policy and work tasks are important to all salespeople regardless of gender and will significantly influence a salesperson's affective commitment toward the organization. We suggest that organizations must consider how their policies and structure of the work itself can be altered to increase salesperson satisfaction in these areas. These domains are particularly relevant as they are managerially malleable and directly influence affective commitment. Beyond increasing current effort these aspects of job satisfaction will influence future outcomes as commitment has long been viewed as a key construct in sales force research due to its relationship with propensity to leave and actual sales force turnover (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Johnston *et al.*, 1990).

When investigating gender differences, as indicated earlier in this paper, researchers found mixed responses. When looked at the facet level of job satisfaction, Russ and McNeilly (1995) found no support for the gender differences between social facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment relationship. Our findings indicate that of the seven facets of job satisfaction, there are differences between male and female salespeople for three of the facets. These are satisfaction with promotion, satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with co-workers. These indications of differences is increasingly important for sales managers as their sales forces become less male dominated and more gender balanced.

Results from the current study indicate that satisfaction with promotion is more closely related to affective organizational commitment in male salespeople. This emphasizes the view that

satisfaction with promotion is associated with the "status asserting" or instrumental goals of achievement. Since males generally tend to seek these goals more than females, it is not surprising that promotion is more closely linked to commitment for male salespeople. Firms should consider the importance of status and the role of promotion in determining an individual's status to those both inside and outside the selling organization. In particular, for young, high performing male salespeople that a firm wants to retain, it may be very important to have some avenue of promotion that does not require an effective salesperson to immediately move into sales management.

Satisfaction with pay is an intriguing construct and also has managerial implications when considering gender differences (Boles *et al.*, 2003). Our findings indicate that pay as a tool can strengthen the affective commitment of male salespeople to a greater degree than for female members of the sales force. Once again, male salespeople may be, on average, more competitive with other members of the sales force and see pay as one measure of success. This finding may indicate that sales managers used pay to gain organizational commitment in this historically male dominate field of employment. Our results do not suggest that women should be paid less even if that were possible. Instead, results of this research indicate that pay is relatively more important to male salespeople – not that it is unimportant to female salespeople. The results do suggest that while pay may lead to increased commitment among males salespeople, that other factors such as co-workers – part of the work environment may be even more important for the female members of the sales force.

This possibility is even more likely when valence of pay status is viewed as extending beyond a male member of the sales force comparing his pay with other members of the same sales force. In our society, the "value" or success level of an individual is often assessed based on how much money that person made. For this reason, as well as others, satisfaction with pay may be more highly valued by the instrumental mindset of the male salesperson relative to the typical female salesperson. Of course individual differences exist such that a specific female salesperson may well value high pay more than many of her male counterparts. On the whole, however, it appears that the affective commitment of the male members of the sales force is more closely linked to their pay than is true for female members of the same sales force.

With regards to satisfaction with co-workers, as expected, its effect on affective organizational commitment is higher in females that males. This finding reiterated that females are more relationship oriented than men. While satisfaction with co-workers was not an overall significant predictor of sales force affective organizational commitment, the fact that it is of more value to female salespeople suggests that firms may need to consider the value of co-workers in the socialization process (Pullins *et al.*, 1996). It is possible that by providing a supportive network of co-workers that female job satisfaction is enhanced and that, all things being equal, those salespeople may, in the long-term be more committed to the organization and less likely to leave it for another similar position that might pay a little more.

On the whole, our findings indicate that looking at gender differences would provide organizations and management with a deeper understanding of sales person behavior than the case where they are not considered.

Future research and limitations

Future research implications from this research are three-fold. First, future sales researchers should examine the facets of job satisfaction rather than only at a global level. This is important because it helps organizations and researchers develop a more detailed perspective regarding the relationship between salesperson job satisfaction and the development of individual attitudes, intentions and behaviors.

Second, this research investigates only the affective dimension of organizational commitment. While affective commitment appears to be a critical link in the development of normative and continuance commitment, it may be important to test the relationship between the various facets of job satisfaction and the other two dimensions or organizational commitment. It is possible that different facets of satisfaction that were not strongly related to affective commitment may be more strongly linked to continuance or normative commitment. Only a direct examination of these linkages can resolve this question.

This study is limited by its sample. A larger study might have provided a more balanced test between the interrelationships of the constructs. Though the sample represents a census of all sales people a firm, results from this type of sales setting may not be relevant to other types of sales positions. In addition, considering only the affective dimension of organizational commitment might have had an impact on our findings. While affective commitment appears to be the central aspect of commitment, further investigation into all the dimensions of organizational commitment with Allen and Meyer's scale is an important next step since it may generate additional insights.

The current research also only examined gender as a moderator of the relationship between facets of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment. While gender had some moderating effect on those relationships, there may be other moderators such as job involvement or the work environment that can provide greater insight into relationship between the different facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. On the whole this paper opens a new dimension of the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment as well as an interesting new avenue for sales and marketing researchers.

References

Agarwal, S. and Ramaswami, S.N. (1993), "*Affective organizational commitment of salespeople: an expanded model*", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 49-70.

Allen, N.J. and Meyer, J.P. (1990), "*The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization*", *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, Vol. 63, pp. 1-18.

Babakus, E., Cravens, D.W., Johnston, M. and Moncrief, W.C. (1999), "*The role of emotional exhaustion in sales force attitude and behavior relationships*", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 58-70.

Babin, B.J. and Boles, J.S. (1998), "*Employee behavior in a service environment: a model and test of potential differences between men and women*", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 77-91.

Babin, B.J., Griffin, M. and Boles, J.S. (2001), "*Emotions, value and relationships: does sex matter?*", unpublished paper.

Bergmann, T.J., Lester, S.W., De Meuse, K.P. and Grahn, J.L. (2000), "*Integrating the three domains of employee commitment: an exploratory study*", *Journal of Applied Business Research*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 15-26.

Bhuian, S.N. and Menguc, B. (2002), "*An extension and evaluation of job characteristics, organizational commitment and job satisfaction in an expatriate, guest worker, sales setting*", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 1-11.

Boles, J.S., Wood, J.A. and Johnson, J. (2003), "*Interrelationships of role conflict, role ambiguity and work family conflict with different facets of job satisfaction and the moderating effects of gender*", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 99-113.

Brown, S.P. and Peterson, R.A. (1993), "*Antecedents and consequences of salesperson job satisfaction: meta-analysis and assessment of causal effects*", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 63-77.

Brown, S.P. and Peterson, R.A. (1994), "*The effect of effort on sales performance and job satisfaction*", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 70-80.

Churchill, G.A. Jr, Ford, N.M. and Walker, O.C. Jr (1974), "*Measuring the job satisfaction of industrial salesmen*", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 254-60.

Cohen, A. (1996), "*On the discriminant validity of the Meyer and Allen measure of organizational commitment: how does it fit with the work commitment construct*", *Educational & Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 56 No. 3, pp. 494-593.

Cohen, J. and Cohen, P. (1983), *Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for Behavioral Sciences*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY.

Comer, J.M., Machleit, K.A. and Lagace, R.R. (1989), "*Psychometric assessment of a reduced version of INDSALES*", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 291-302.

Cook, J. and Wall, T. (1980), "*New work attitude measures of trust, organizational commitment and personal need non-fulfillment*", *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, Vol. 53, pp. 39-52.

Curry, J.P., Wakefield, D.S., Price, J.L. and Mueller, C.W. (1986), "*On the causal ordering of job satisfaction and organizational commitment*", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 847-58.

Eagly, A.H. (1987), *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.

Futrell, C.M. (1979), "*Measurement of salespeople's job satisfaction: convergent and discriminant validity of corresponding INDSALES and job descriptive index scales*", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 594-8.

Futrell, C.M. and Parasuraman, A. (1984), "*The relationship of satisfaction and performance to sales force turnover*", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 48 No. 4, pp. 33-40.

Gross, J.J. and John, O.P. (1998), "*Mapping the domain of expressivity: multi-method evidence for a hierarchical model*", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 74 No. 1, pp. 170-91.

Hartmann, L.C. (2000), "*Organizational commitment: a multi-method scale analysis and test of effects*", *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 89-108.

Hunt, S.D., Chonko, L.B. and Wood, V.R. (1985), "*Organizational commitment and marketing*", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 49 No. 1, pp. 112-26.

Iacobucci, D. and Ostrom, A. (1993), "*Gender differences in the impact of core and relational aspects of services on the evaluation of service encounters*", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 257-86.

Jackson, S.E. and Schuler, R.S. (1989), "*A meta-analysis and conceptual critique of research on role ambiguity and role conflict in work settings*", *Organ. Behavior Human Decision Process*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 16-78.

Johnson, G.J. and Johnson, W.R. (2000), "*Perceived overqualification and dimensions of job satisfaction: a longitudinal analysis*", *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 134 No. 5, pp. 537-55.

Johnston, M.W., Parasuraman, A., Futrell, C.M. and Black, W.C. (1990), "*A longitudinal assessment of the impact of selected organizational influences on salespeople's organizational commitment during early employment*", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 27, August, pp. 333-44.

Johnston, M.W., Varadarajan, P., Futrell, C.M. and Sager, J. (1987), "*The relationship between organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover among new salespeople*", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 29-38.

Lagace, R.R., Goolsby, J.R. and Gassenheimer, J.B. (1993), "*Scaling and measurement: a quasi-replicative assessment of revised version of INDSALES*", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 65-72.

Marsden, P.V., Kalleberg, A.L. and Cook, C.R. (1993), "*Gender differences in organizational commitment: Influences of work positions and family roles*", *Work and Occupations*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 368-90.

Mason, E.S. (1995), "*Gender differences in job satisfaction*", *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 135 No. 2, pp. 143-51.

Mathieu, A., Bruvold, N.T. and Ritchey, P.N. (2000), "*Subcultural research on organizational commitment with the 15 OCQ invariant instrument*", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 129-38.

Mathieu, J.E. and Zajac, D.M. (1990), "*A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organizational commitment*", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 108 No. 2, pp. 171-94.

McNeilly, K.M. and Goldsmith, R.E. (1991), "*The moderating effects of gender and performance on job satisfaction and intentions to leave in the sales force*", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 219-32.

Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. (1991), "*A three component conceptualization of organizational commitment*", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 1, pp. 61-89.

Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. (1997), *Commitment in the Workplace*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Meyers-Levy, J. and Sternthal, B. (1991), "*Gender differences in the use of message cues and judgments*", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 84-96.

Michaels, R.E., Cron, W.L., Dubinsky, A.J. and Joachimsthaler, E.A. (1988), "*Influence of formalization on the organizational commitment and work alienation of salespeople and industrial buyers*", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 376-83.

Moncrief, W.C., Babakus, E., Cravens, D.W. and Johnston, M.W. (2000), "*Examining gender differences in field sales organizations*", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 49 No. 3, pp. 245-57.

Mowday, R.T. (1998), "*Reflections on the study and relevance of organizational commitment*", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 387-401.

Mowday, R.T., Richard, M.S. and Porter, L.W. (1979), "*The measure of organizational commitment*", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 224-47.

Netemeyer, R.G., Johnston, M.W. and Burton, S. (1990), "*Analysis of role conflict and role ambiguity in a structural equations framework*", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 75 No. 2, pp. 148-57.

Porter, L.W., Steers, R.M., Mowday, R.T. and Boulian, P.V. (1974), "*Organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover among psychiatric technicians*", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 59 No. 5, pp. 603-9.

Pullins, E.B., Fine, L.M. and Warren, W.L. (1996), "*Identifying peer mentors in the sales force: an exploratory investigation of willingness and ability*", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 125-36.

Ronan, W. (1970), "*Individual and situational variables relating to job satisfaction*", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 1-31.

Russ, F.A. and McNeilly, K.M. (1995), "*Links among satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions: the moderating effect of experience, gender, and performance*", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 57-65.

Sager, J.K. and Johnston, M.W. (1989), "*Antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment: a study of salespeople*", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 30-41.

Schul, P.L. and Wren, B.M. (1992), "*The emerging role of women in industrial selling: a decade of change*", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 56 No. 3, pp. 38-54.

Siguaw, J.A. and Honeycutt, E.D. Jr (1995), "*An examination of gender differences in selling behaviors and job attitudes*", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 45-52.

Singh, J. (1998), "*Striking a balance in boundary-spanning positions: An investigation of some unconventional influences of role stressors and job characteristics on job outcomes of sales people*", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 62 No. 3, pp. 69-86.

Singh, J., Verbeke, W. and Rhoads, G.K. (1996), "*Do organizational practices matter in role stress processes? A study of direct and moderating effects for market-oriented boundary spanners*", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 60 No. 3, pp. 69-76.

Stevens, J.M., Beyer, J.M. and Trice, H.M. (1978), "*Assessing personal, role and organizational predictors of managerial commitment*", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 380-6.

Swailes, S. (2002), "*Organizational commitment: a critique of the construct and measures*", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 155-78.

Taber, T.D. and Alliger, G.M. (1995), "*A task-level assessment of job satisfaction*", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 101-21.

Vandenberg, R.J. and Lance, C.E. (1992), "*Examining the causal order of job satisfaction and organizational commitment*", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 153-67.

Wiersma, U.J. (1990), "*Gender differences in job attribute preferences: work-home role conflict and job level as mediating variables*", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 63, pp. 231-44.

Appendix. Scale items and factor loadings

Table AI. Job satisfaction facets

Satisfaction with supervisor (Cronbach alpha: 0.82)		
1	My Sales Manager really tries to get our ideas about things	0.83
2	My Sales Manager has always been fair in dealings with me	0.80
3	My Sales Manager gives us credit and praise for work well done	0.73
4	My Sales Manager lives up to his/her promises	0.86
Satisfaction with job (Cronbach alpha: 0.85)		
1	My job gives me a sense of accomplishment	0.83
2	My job is exciting	0.82
3	My job is satisfying	0.86
4	I am really doing something worthwhile in my job	0.82
Satisfaction with company policy (Cronbach alpha: 0.68)		
1	Management is progressive	0.77
2	Top management really knows its job	0.80
3	The company operates efficiently and smoothly	0.73
4	Salespersons in company receive good support from the home office	0.55
Satisfaction with promotion (Cronbach alpha: 0.80)		
1	The company has an unfair promotion policy	0.70
2	My opportunities for advancement are limited	0.86
3	There are plenty of good jobs here for those who want to get ahead	0.78
4	I have a good chance of promotion	0.82
Satisfaction with pay (Cronbach alpha: 0.73)		
1	My pay is low in comparison with what others get for similar work in other companies	0.76
2	In my opinion, the pay here is lower than in other companies	0.83
3	I am paid fairly compared with other employees in this company	0.75
4	My income is adequate for normal expenses	0.59
Satisfaction with coworkers (Cronbach alpha: 0.75)		
1	My fellow workers are selfish	0.69
2	My fellow workers are pleasant	0.73
3	The people I work with are very friendly	0.85
4	The people I work with help each other out when someone falls behind or gets in a tight spot	0.81
Satisfaction with customers (Cronbach alpha: 0.68)		
1	My customer live up to their promises	0.68
2	My customers are trustworthy	0.78
3	My customers are loyal	0.68
4	My customers are understanding	0.73

Table AII. Affective organizational commitment (Cronbach alpha: 0.83)

1	Am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that expected in order to help this organization be successful	0.52
2	Talk up my organization to my friends as a great organization to work for	0.73
3	Would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization	0.52
4	Find that my values and the organization's values are very similar	0.76
5	Am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization	0.77
6	Feel this organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance	0.71
7	Am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined	0.70
8	Really care about the fate of this organization	0.50
9	Feel, for me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work	0.74