

Understanding effects of salesperson locus of control

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of external locus of control on different job characteristic variables – i.e. role conflict, role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion, in addition to the outcome variable, job satisfaction – in a business-to-business sales setting. **Design/methodology/approach:** Data from B2B salespeople were used to test the proposed model using structural equation modeling. **Findings:** The results indicate that a more external locus of control will be: positively related to role stress factors; indirectly and positively related to emotional exhaustion; and negatively related to job satisfaction. **Originality/value:** This study provides a managerially actionable foundation for influencing locus of control to increase a salesperson's satisfaction with his/her position.

Keywords: job satisfaction | structural equation modelling | emotional exhaustion | locus of control | role stress | sales force

Article:

1. Introduction

While the linkage between role stress and job satisfaction among salespeople has been studied widely, less attention has been paid to the effect of a salesperson's external locus of control, both directly on job satisfaction and indirectly on turnover through its influence on job satisfaction. Knowing how much control a salesperson feels they have over the events that occur in their life and work could play a significant role in predicting satisfaction with his/her work setting. It also could determine how a salesperson will attribute the causes of negative outcomes, which research has shown occur frequently in sales (Roberts *et al.*, 1997). Will the salesperson feel as if he/she has control over things that occur in his/her life and work, hence attributing a negative outcome to something internal or personal? Or, will the salesperson feel as if he/she has no control over the environment and attribute the cause externally? If employees believe negative job outcomes are caused by forces beyond their control, satisfaction with the employment situation is likely to decrease.

One of the most often examined constructs in sales force research involves job satisfaction (Qu and Zhao, 2012). Job satisfaction is linked directly (Valentine *et al.*, 2011) or indirectly (Rutherford *et al.*, 2011), with turnover propensity to leave (Boles *et al.*, 1997), performance (Brown and Peterson, 1994), and organizational commitment (Rutherford *et al.*, 2011). Of these linkages, perhaps the one of most interest and the relationship that attracts the most attention is that between job satisfaction and salesperson turnover or propensity to leave. There are several reasons why this relationship is potentially of such interest.

First, studies have shown that when a salesperson leaves his/her organization, the costs associated with the departure can range from 25 percent to 200 percent of their annual compensation (Klewer and Schaffer, 1995; Pinkovitz, 1997; Lewin and Sager, 2010). Second, these costs can affect a firm in three areas:

1. the decrease in business that comes from the departed salesperson no longer working;
2. the additional costs associated with finding, hiring and training a replacement; and
3. the loss of business associated with learning curve deficiencies, i.e. when the new salesperson starts his/her position, he/she will not initially perform at the same level of the experienced salesperson (Russ and McNeilly, 1995).

This is important for the company as a whole, not just the sales force (Chelariu *et al.*, 2008). Third, when a sales force underperforms, due to inefficiencies from turnover or some other cause, the effect passes through the industrial firm like falling dominos. Finally, this relationship has been supported in a large number of studies (Pettijohn *et al.*, 2007; DeConinck, 2011).

To aid firms in the reduction of salesperson turnover, there have been a number of studies conducted linking a wide range of variables with propensity to leave and turnover. One construct that has been consistently linked either directly or indirectly to turnover involves an employee's level of satisfaction with their job (Singh and Loncar, 2010). For example, Rutner *et al.* (2008) found that high levels of job satisfaction resulted in lower levels of turnover intention in their study of information technology workers. Further, Ashill *et al.* (2008) also found that the link was supported in their study of frontline marketing employees. Therefore, while the linkage between job satisfaction and turnover is well established, gaining a better understanding of those organizational and work-related factors that influence job satisfaction can ultimately help result in actions that lead to reduced salesperson turnover (Sager, 1994). Researchers have examined extensively the impact of stress-related variables on job satisfaction (Ashill *et al.*, 2008; Rutner *et al.*, 2008). Findings suggest that role stress plays a major role in the reduction of job satisfaction (Veloutsou and Panigyrakis, 2004; Anton, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationships between external locus of control, stress-related variables (role conflict, role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion) and job satisfaction in a sales context. First, salespeople are unique from other business disciplines in that salespeople are boundary spanners (Weitz *et al.*, 2007). They most often leave the internal environment of the firm and enter the external environment of the marketplace. They often do this with little formal control and little to no supervision. It is this unique aspect of the sales environment that often differentiates salespeople from other business disciplines and makes

results of other studies less applicable to the field of sales. This is important for three reasons. Second, in the sales literature external locus of control is a relatively underexplored topic relative to many organizational behavior issues that have received considerably more attention such as role conflict and role ambiguity. Third, finding a construct that is potentially a managerially actionable factor that may be related to increased job satisfaction is useful to sales organizations because higher levels of job satisfaction have been shown to increase performance and organizational commitment (Mulki *et al.*, 2008) as well as reduce hiring and training costs (Agarwal *et al.*, 2009).

2. Literature review

To develop hypotheses for this study, previous work on external locus of control has been examined. Rahim (1996) found that external locus of control had a direct effect on two constructs that are often found to cause negative job outcomes in sales:

1. role conflict; and
2. role ambiguity.

Research has also shown that both role conflict and role ambiguity have direct effects on negative job outcomes, for example emotional exhaustion (Karatepe, 2010); and positive job outcomes, for example job satisfaction (Geersbro and Ritter, 2010).

Knowing the relationships external locus of control has with other constructs in sales research is important because, in addition to knowing that external locus of control affects job satisfaction, managers will understand how it causes job satisfaction to either increase or decrease. Studies have examined the broad effects of external locus of control (e.g. Chelariu *et al.*, 2008), showing that it leads to increased prosperity for a firm. But what individual effects does it have? This study attempts to unearth exactly how external locus of control indirectly may reduce turnover by increasing job satisfaction, thereby decreasing turnover and increasing firm profitability. Specifically, what direct effects does external locus of control have on role conflict, role ambiguity and job satisfaction; and what indirect effects does it have on positive (job satisfaction) and negative (emotional exhaustion) outcomes through the role stress variables?

2.1 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as the degree to which an employee has a positive emotional response to his/her job; this results from the employee viewing the job as either congruent with his/her values or self-fulfilling (Locke, 1976). According to Futrell and Parasuraman (1984), salespeople with a higher level of satisfaction with their job were less likely to leave their position and seek employment elsewhere. Inversely, salespeople with a lower level of satisfaction with their jobs were more likely to switch organizations. This is important because of the role job satisfaction has in influencing variables such as turnover and propensity to leave among salespeople (Boles *et al.*, 1997; Rutherford *et al.*, 2011; Valentine *et al.*, 2011). Research has shown that the costs associated with turnover can sometimes be double a salesperson's annual compensation (Lewin and Sager, 2010).

Barnes *et al.* (2006) investigated whether characteristics of a sales job directly influenced job satisfaction, or whether the influence was indirect with mediation by role stress factors. Their findings indicate that the effect of characteristics of a sales job on job satisfaction are both direct and partially mediated by job stress factors such as role ambiguity and role conflict.

2.2 External locus of control

External locus of control is a construct that positions one's belief and/or perception that outcomes and consequences in life are uncontrollable and completely at the mercy of outside forces (Rotter, 1966). People with a less external locus of control report higher levels of job satisfaction (Organ and Greene, 1974), while a more external locus of control is negatively correlated with job satisfaction (Brissett and Nowicki, 1976). For example, Wang *et al.* (2010) found that as one's external locus of control increases, one will exhibit lower levels of satisfaction with their job. Grannis (1992) found that those with a less external locus of control are able to both better handle stress and handle more stress than those with a more external locus of control. Dailey (1980) found that scientists with a less external locus of control had higher levels of satisfaction, as did Kasperson (1982) in a study of hospital employees, and Huang (2006) in a study of culinary employees. This finding was further repeated by Salazar *et al.* (2006) in their study of hotel managers. However, none of these studies were in the sales area. Given that the sales area is different from other types of general employment owing to the boundary nature of the position (Lyonski and Johnson, 1983) and the lessened managerial control that is associated with an outside sales position, it is important to ascertain if the linkage holds within a sales context. Thus:

H1. As a salesperson's external locus of control increases, the salesperson will exhibit significantly lower levels of job satisfaction.

2.3 Role stress

The two main forms of role stress have been formally defined as role conflict and role ambiguity (Rizzo *et al.*, 1970). Role conflict occurs when an employee receives two different, and conflicting, sets of expectations in a work setting. Particularly in boundary-spanning positions, one set of expectations cannot be followed without violating the other, leading to an increased amount of stress for the employee (Behrman and Perreault, 1984). Role ambiguity occurs when an employee is unclear on how to behave and/or perform in their particular job capacity or in a specific situation within that job (Behrman and Perreault, 1984). This is most often due to a lack of clear, consistent information regarding the rights, duties and responsibilities of a particular job.

Employees with a more external locus of control find the work environment to be more stressful (Bernardi, 1997). Rahim (1996) found that a more external locus of control leads to higher levels of role stress in both managers and entrepreneurs. Organ and Greene (1974) found that employees with a less external locus of control experienced lower role ambiguity than employees with a more external locus of control. Yousef (2000) found a significant, positive relationship between external locus of control and both role conflict and role ambiguity. Again, building on

the managerial literature, it is important to ascertain if the relationships will hold within the boundary spanning role that salespeople work within. Thus:

H2. A more external locus of control will be positively related to a salesperson's level of role conflict.

H3. A more external locus of control will be positively related to a salesperson's level of role ambiguity.

2.4 Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is one of the three dimensions of burnout, along with depersonalization and non-accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion is caused by excessive psychological and emotional stress in an individual (Jackson *et al.*, 1986). Emotional exhaustion occurs frequently in employees whose jobs require a high state of arousal, such as boundary-spanning employees, as opposed to employees who perform monotonous and/or tedious functions (Maslach and Jackson, 1984).

There is a variety of research examining the positive relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion (e.g. Singh *et al.*, 1994; Hamwi *et al.*, 2011). The results are consistent across different industry settings, where increased levels of role conflict are associated with increased emotional exhaustion in employees. Boles *et al.* (1997) found a direct, positive relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion in their study of salespeople. Further, Elloy *et al.* (2001) found a significant, positive relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion when examining self-managed work teams. The work of Gil-Monte *et al.* (1993) with medical industry professionals reinforces these findings.

H4. Role conflict will be positively related to emotional exhaustion.

Role ambiguity has received consistent empirical support as an antecedent of emotional exhaustion (Moore, 2000). Moore (2000) found that the relationship between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion holds true for internet technology workers. Studying hospital employees, Kelloway and Barling (1991) also found that role ambiguity is a predictor of emotional exhaustion. As employees' jobs become more and more unclear and their goals more undefined, these employees will experience increasing levels of emotional exhaustion. Maslach and Jackson (1981) found that role ambiguity is significantly related with emotional exhaustion. In their examination of accountants, Fogerty *et al.* (2000) found that role ambiguity has a significant, direct, positive effect on emotional exhaustion.

H5. Role ambiguity will be positively related to emotional exhaustion.

Employees who experience emotional exhaustion due to excessive psychological and emotional demands often lay the blame for their exhaustion with their firm, thereby reducing satisfaction with their employment (Winstanley and Whittington, 2002). If employees are experiencing emotional exhaustion, they then become less open to company goals, less driven to reach them, and more likely to lapse into apathy on the job (Lazaro *et al.*, 1984). These results were recently

reinforced by Wright and Hobfoll (2004) in their examination of human services counselors. According to Fu *et al.* (2009), salespeople who exhibit behaviors such as a lack of goal-driven behavior and general apathy on the job have a lower level of motivation. Kohli (1985) found that salespeople with decreased motivation had a lower level of satisfaction with their job. In the study of salespeople, Babakus *et al.* (1999) and Rutherford *et al.* (2011) find direct, negative relationships between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Klein and Verbeke (1999) found a similar correlation in their study of Dutch salespeople.

H6. Emotional exhaustion will be negatively related to a salesperson's job satisfaction.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

Salespeople employed with a national promotions firm were surveyed for this study. The firm itself was an outdoor advertising agency whose customers ranged across a number of industries. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, resulting in 140 usable responses, for a response rate of 70 percent. The response rate was abnormally high because the company employing the salespeople championed the study. The survey was distributed with a cover letter from both the firm stressing the importance of salesperson participation and a cover letter from the researchers insuring confidentiality. The salespeople in the study were 72 percent male, averaged three years of tenure with the firm and ranged in age from 22 to 64; 73 percent of respondents had a college education. Non-response bias was tested using the procedure of Armstrong and Overton (1977). The first and fourth quartiles of responders were compared across all relevant demographic variables. No significant differences were found. Nor were significant differences discovered for different age levels or educational levels.

3.2 Measures

Validated scales were adapted for all measures used in this study. Scales were adapted by removing certain items that affected reliability estimates. These items could be removed without concern given that all constructs in the study are reflective and not formative (Hardin *et al.*, 2008). Reflective items are a reflection of the construct they are measuring, so removal of scale items does not fundamentally change the construct being measured, as evidenced by the reliability estimates.

All scales were assessed on seven-point Likert-type instruments, where responses ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. All scales met reliability requirements put forth by Nunnally (1978). External locus of control was measured using ten items from Levenson (1974), and has a Cronbach's α of 0.87. Role conflict and role ambiguity were assessed using eight and three items, respectively, from Rizzo *et al.* (1970), and had respective Cronbach's α values of 0.81 and 0.76. Emotional exhaustion was measured using six items from Maslach and Jackson (1981), and had a Cronbach's α of 0.91. Job satisfaction was measured using four items from the INDSALES scale (Corner *et al.*, 1989), and had a Cronbach's α of .86. Table I contains all correlations, reliabilities, means and standard deviations. The Appendix contains the scale items except for the emotional exhaustion scale; these items are

copyrighted and therefore cannot be published. However, the item number listed in the Appendix is related to the item number in the source study, so readers can reference Maslach and Jackson (1981) for further information.

Table I. Correlations, reliabilities, means and standard deviations

	RC	RA	EE	JS	LOC	Means	Standard deviations
Role conflict	0.81					3.08	0.83
Role ambiguity	0.51	0.76				1.43	1.02
Emotional exhaustion	0.59	0.41	0.91			2.38	1.28
Job satisfaction	-0.49	-0.38	-0.50	0.86		5.4	1.01
Locus of control	0.25	0.3	0.22	-0.33	0.87	2.68	0.83

Notes: All correlations are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level except for those in italics, which are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level; reliabilities are shown on the diagonal

4. Analysis and results

Data were analyzed using LISREL 8.7. First, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. The resulting measurement model showed adequate fit according to Hu and Bentler (1999), with a χ^2 value of 612.36 with 479 degrees of freedom ($p < 0.00$), SRMR=0.072, CFI=0.96 and RMSEA=0.057. The average variance extracted for each item was above the recommended level of 0.05 (role conflict=0.56, emotional exhaustion=0.60, job satisfaction=0.58, locus of control=0.54) according to Hair *et al.* (2010) with the exception of role ambiguity, which was only 0.36. This result is expected, however, as role ambiguity and role conflict have been shown to have a lot of overlap in variance (Carlson and Perrewé, 1999). Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the variance extracted estimates for each pair of constructs with the squared correlation for that construct. The variance extracted estimates should be greater than the squared multiple correlations. All constructs met these criteria except for role ambiguity, which again could be explained by an overlap in variance, indicating that the model meets the criteria for discriminant validity. This overlap in variance is explored further in the Discussion section.

Next, the structural model was tested. The results also met Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria for good fit, and had a χ^2 of 610.89 with 481 degrees of freedom ($p < 0.00$), SRMR=0.074, CFI=0.96 and RMSEA=0.057. The parameter estimate of -0.20 ($t = -2.79$, $p < 0.05$) for the relationship between external locus of control and job satisfaction indicates that salespeople with a more external locus of control have significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their job than salespeople with a less external locus of control, supporting *H1*. The next relationship examined was between external locus of control and role conflict. The parameter estimate was 0.17 ($t = 2.62$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that salespeople with a more external locus of control have a significantly higher level of role conflict than salespeople with a less external locus of control, providing support for *H2*. The parameter estimate for the relationship between external locus of control and role ambiguity was 0.35 ($t = 3.47$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that salespeople with a more external locus of control have significantly higher levels of role ambiguity than salespeople with a less externally focused locus of control. This supports *H3*.

The relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion had a parameter estimate of 1.42 ($t = 4.14$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that role conflict has a significant positive relationship with emotional exhaustion, supporting *H4*. The parameter estimate between role ambiguity and

emotional exhaustion was not significant (-0.06 , $t=-0.37$, $p>0.05$). Thus, results fail to support *H5*. Finally, the parameter estimate of -0.35 ($t=-4.92$, $p<0.05$) for the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction indicates that salespeople with higher levels of emotional exhaustion have lower levels of job satisfaction. This result supports *H6*.

Figure 1 shows the resulting model.

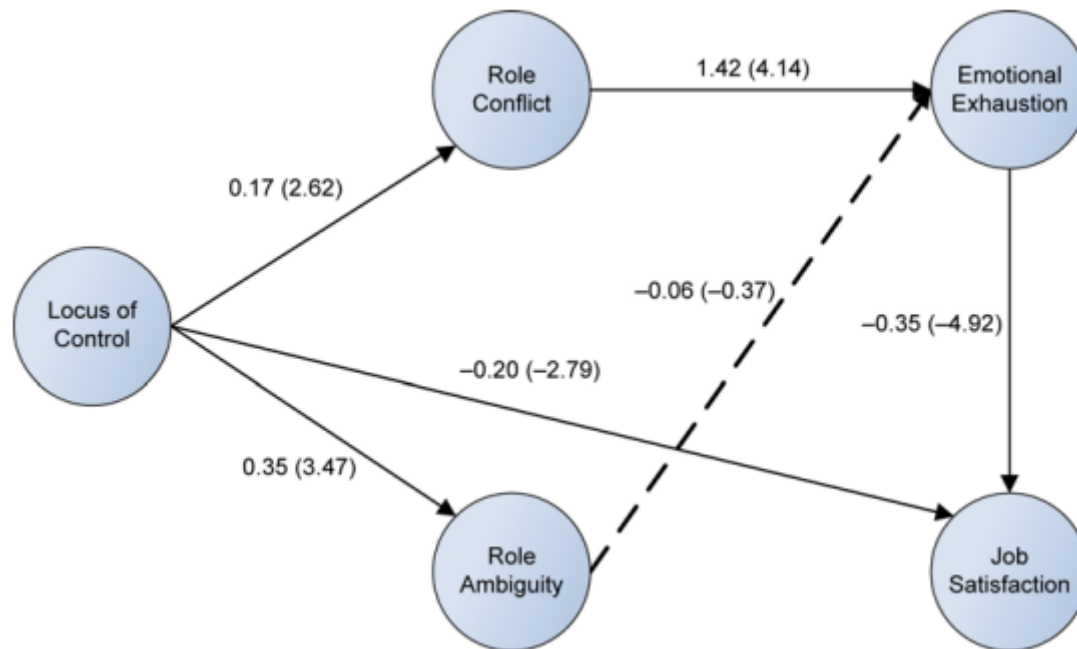


Figure 1. Resulting model

Notes: Insignificant paths are shown with dotted lines; numbers outside the parentheses are parameter estimates, while numbers inside the parentheses are *t* values

5. Discussion

5.1 Findings

The results of this research present two key findings. First, salespeople with a more external locus of control will display significant lower levels of satisfaction with their job, keeping in line with previous research in the area (Chelariu *et al.*, 2008; Geersbro and Ritter, 2010). Next, salespeople with a more external locus of control were also found to exhibit significantly higher levels of both role conflict and role ambiguity, mirroring the findings of Rahim (1996). Hence, findings from this study support that literature examining external locus of control from outside a sales setting can be applied within a sales context.

Further, the study finds that an increased level of role conflict is positively related to an increased level of emotional exhaustion. This is consistent with previous research (Singh *et al.*, 1994). Finding that role ambiguity does not have a significant effect on emotional exhaustion is unexpected and suggests that salespeople do not respond like many other types of employees. Indeed, this finding suggests that salespeople may be different from other occupations – at least with respect to this particular relationship. Perhaps a salesperson can reach a maximum level of

emotional exhaustion. At that point salespeople either turn over or risk their mental and/or emotional well-being. If that is the case, then experienced salespeople represent a sample that has self-selected for their ability to deal with role ambiguity to a greater degree than a typical workforce. Indeed, many outside salespeople have to deal with role ambiguity on a regular basis as customers make requests that they have never dealt with in previous situations and these salespeople may not have the luxury of calling their manager and “kicking the problem upstairs”. It is also possible that there is a lot of overlap in the variance explained between role conflict and role ambiguity. Once the variance in role conflict is accounted for, there may not be enough unique variance in the role ambiguity construct. Similar results have been found in previous research (e.g. Carlson and Perrewé, 1999). In addition, emotional exhaustion is negatively related to job satisfaction, as predicted.

5.2 Managerial implications

These results are important because they bring to light a phenomenon that is managerially actionable. Simple personality inventories may help managers discover which of their salespeople are more externally focused and which ones are more internally focused. Many of the more popular personality inventories used by sales firms, such as the PAI and the Myers-Briggs inventory, contain an attribution component. Being aware of and controlling for external locus of control in recruitment is perhaps the most cost-effective strategy for developing a sales force with a less external locus of control (Johnston and Marshall, 2009). If external locus of control is indeed related to role stress and job satisfaction, hiring new recruits with a less external locus of control may be a positive first step.

If a salesperson is already a member of the sales force, simple conversations with sales managers may reveal that a more external locus of control is one of a salesperson's problems. Research done by IBM has shown that a 30-minute meeting with a manager once a week or once a month can bring to light a lot of these types of attribution issues and allow the firm to take measures to assist salespeople in shifting their locus of control to a less external focus. Training may be able to help in this area. Managers need to show salespeople that they do have control over their environment, and more importantly, how to exert that control. For example: motivational speakers and books, group discussions where salespeople have the opportunity to share and mentoring programs can provide some level of assistance in attitude change toward a less external locus of control. Partnering salespeople who have a more external locus of control with top performers who exhibit a less external locus of control for a period of time could show the salesperson that his/her expectancy estimates of the job are unfounded. Showing salespeople that there is a link between behaviors and performance and that they do have some level of control over their outcomes could potentially be important. This step should lead to salespeople with a previously more external locus of control taking ownership of their job and possessing less external locus of control. This newfound feeling of control will lead to a higher level of satisfaction with his/her job (Huddleston *et al.*, 2002).

Some managers may feel that these measures are cost-prohibitive. However, undertaking these measures for salespeople that either are or have the potential to be good earners will result in a positive cost benefit equation. The financial benefits that come from maintaining a higher level of business and a higher learning curve will far outweigh the costs of the aforementioned

measures. Also, the additional savings that will come from lower hiring and training costs will again dwarf the costs associated with measuring and shifting an external locus of control. A study by Wilkening (1998) shows that when turnover is high (defined as above 27 percent), more than 14 percent of sales revenue goes to costs associated with turnover. When turnover is low (defined as less than 10 percent), the percentage of sales revenue needed to offset turnover costs is only 3 percent. Developing and maintaining a sales force that has a less external locus of control will provide benefits to the whole firm, not just the sales force. Chelariu *et al.* (2008) found that when a sales force had a less external locus of control, it indirectly lead to prosperity for a firm. This study also found that when salespeople are given more autonomy – meaning that they are allowed to make their own decisions, are empowered and have more say in and influence on potential work outcomes – prosperity for a firm also increases. However, one should take note; there is a slippery slope between empowerment and control. Allowing salespeople to have too much autonomy can result in a loss of focus on the firm's mission and goals as salespeople begin to do their own thing, so to speak.

5.3 Research implications

This study puts forth a few important research implications as well. The discovery that external locus of control has influences beyond its direct effects leads to a need to discover more about this under-researched variable. How does one form their perception of external locus of control? Is it nature, meaning it is generally ingrained since birth; or is it nurture, meaning external locus of control perceptions change as one's environment changes? In addition, research streams should be opened into what other variables exist through which external locus of control can exert indirect influence on job outcome constructs.

Another implication is the phenomenon of shared variance experienced by role conflict and role ambiguity. This mirrors previous findings by Carlson and Perrewé (1999). While this phenomenon has been noted in several studies, it would be of use to researchers to further delve into the details of how and why this sharing of variance occurs between two supposedly unique constructs. Should research continue measuring role conflict and role ambiguity as unique, somewhat independent constructs, or should role stress be examined as a whole. These findings indicate that including one role stress variable in a study without the other may not give the fullest picture of what is happening in the relationships among constructs.

5.4 Future research

These implications open some avenues for future research. For example, how do the relationships between external locus of control, role stress variables and emotional exhaustion affect other job outcome variables such as organizational commitment and performance? This would allow sales and marketing researchers to see how extensive and overarching an effect external locus of control could potentially have.

A second area of potential research is examining what predictor variables would impact someone developing a less external locus of control versus a more external locus of control. This is important because if managers can find ways to control, or at least influence, a salesperson's external locus of control they can proactively, rather than reactively, move a sales force's

overarching locus of control toward a less external position. A third area could be a thorough examination of what other potential mediators in addition to role stress and emotional exhaustion may facilitate the link between external locus of control and job satisfaction. External locus of control likely influences more than just the role stress variables. Finally, a longitudinal study to see how enduring a salesperson's external locus of control is over time would provide great insight for managers, practitioners and researchers.

5.5 Limitations

This study, like most research, does have some limitations. This study only examined constructs from the perspective of salespeople. Having additional data from buyers and/or sales managers would provide additional insight and help cut down on any potential self-report and common methods bias. Generalizability is also an issue. The data in this study come from only one business-to-business sales force. Additional data from multiple firms and from multiple cultures would reveal a much clearer picture of the relationships between the constructs being examined in this study.

5.6 Conclusions

The key contribution of this study is the finding that external locus of control can both directly influence a salesperson's level of job satisfaction, and indirectly affect the job satisfaction of salespeople through its direct effect on the role stress variables. This research provides a starting point for examining how external locus of control affects business-to-business salespeople. This study examined a model based on how one's degree of external locus of control can affect role-related stress and emotional exhaustion. External locus of control is found to drive one's satisfaction with their job both directly and indirectly. A more external locus of control leads to a significantly lower level of job satisfaction. A more external locus of control also increases levels of role conflict, which in turn increases one's emotional exhaustion. As mentioned before, shifting a salesperson's locus of control from more external to less external can bring about significant increases in job satisfaction, and can ultimately lead to lower levels of turnover. Organizations can also use personality inventories and psychological profiles to focus on hiring salespeople with a less external locus of control. This may be financially beneficial to many sales forces.

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Appendix. Scale items

Table A1. Scale items

Locus of control (ten items) $\alpha = 0.87$	<p>To a great extent, my life is controlled by accidental happenings</p> <p>Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interests from bad luck happenings</p> <p>When I get what I want, it is usually because I am lucky</p> <p>I have often found that what is going to happen will happen</p> <p>I feel like what happens in my life is controlled by accidental happenings</p> <p>My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others</p> <p>Whether or not I get into a car accident is mostly a matter of luck</p> <p>People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups</p> <p>It is not always wise for me to plan ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune</p> <p>If important people were to decide they didn't like me, I probably would not make many friends</p>
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Role conflict (eight items) $\alpha = 0.81$	I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently I work on unnecessary things I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment I receive incompatible requests from two or more people I have to do things that should be done differently I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it
Emotional exhaustion (six items^a) $\alpha = 0.91$	EE 1 EE 2 EE 3 EE 4 EE 6 EE 8
Job satisfaction (four items) $\alpha = 0.86$	My job gives me a sense of accomplishment My job is exciting My job is satisfying I am really doing something worthwhile in my job
Role ambiguity (three items) $\alpha = 0.76$	I know exactly what is expected of me (R) I feel certain about how much authority I have (R) Explanation of what has to be done is clear (R)

Note: The following items have correlated error terms in both the measurement and structural model: RC4 and RC5; EE1 and EE2; AOC1 and AOC3; R, reverse coded; values shown are correlation coefficients; ^a these items are copyrighted – please see Maslach and Jackson (1981) for full items