

THE SALESPERSON'S ABILITY TO BOUNCE BACK: EXAMINING THE MODERATING ROLE OF RESILIENCY ON FORMS OF INTRA-ROLE JOB CONFLICT AND JOB ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS AND PERFORMANCE

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The sales literature reflects mounting scholarly interest in the influence of self-regulation on salespeople's job-related behaviors and performance. One form of self-regulation lies in the salesperson's level of resiliency. Resiliency is particularly relevant in a sales setting because salespeople frequently confront conflict in their work and family roles due to the unique nature of their jobs. To enhance our understanding of resiliency, we develop a conceptual model that examines the importance of resiliency in the challenging context in which salespeople balance both career and family roles. We analyze resiliency's moderating impact on these areas of conflict, their downstream implications on stress, and the effect of stress on job-related variables. Our findings suggest that resiliency provides salespeople with a sense of personal buoyancy that not only reduces the effects of work-family conflict on stress but that it also attenuates the debilitating effects of stress on job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

While finding the balance between one's work and life spheres is highly sought after, a salesperson's ability to manage the overlapping roles in each sphere is particularly challenging. Salespeople are required to fulfill different selling expectations ranging from collaborative to competitive in nature (Peterson & Shepherd, 2011). Moreover, they confront an array of work and family related issues that can drive conflict within each role (Boles, Wood, & Johnson, 2003). Marital problems, caregiving responsibilities, financial challenges, job redesigns, and furloughs can create spillover effects which blur the boundaries of personal and work life realms (Bakker et al., 2011; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2000). The conflict of these roles can manifest itself in a variety of personal and job outcomes (Halpern, 2005).

The American workforce is increasingly seeking resources to help handle such conflict. The number of individuals utilizing employee assistance programs has increased 120 percent over a four year period (Human Resources International, 2012); and the market for self-regulation programs within the sales industry has been estimated at approximately \$1.7 billion annually (Leach, Liu, & Johnston, 2005).

Sales scholars have recently focused their attention on personal resources that can bolster one's self-regulation abilities (Leach, Liu, & Johnston, 2005), as the psychological well-being and emotional capacities of salespeople is being viewed as critical elements of their productivity (e.g., Agnihotri, Krush, & Singh, 2012; Hamwi, Rutherford, & Boles, 2011). However, examinations regarding the effects of self-regulation mechanisms on intra-role conflict are relatively limited within the sales literature as the majority of research has focused on coping mechanisms (Leach, Liu, & Johnston, 2005; Nonis & Sager, 2003).

One increasingly attractive self-regulation mechanism lies rooted in the foundations of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Positive psychological resources have been found to assist employees with certain forms of self-regulation (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006). One such positive resource receiving greater attention is resiliency. Resiliency is defined as the capability to positively 'bounce back' from conflict (Luthans, 2002). Resiliency is considered relatively malleable, open to development, and a potential personal resource that can be drawn upon to mitigate intra-role conflict (Luthans et al., 2007).

The goal of our research is to understand the importance of resilience to the salesperson confronting intra-role conflict. To do so, we draw from theories that focus on personal resources and develop a framework that outlines the direct effects of work-family conflict on job stress, as well as the downstream effects of stress on job attitudes and performance. We also examine the moderating effects of resiliency on these relationships. Our research appears to be the first to examine a positive, self-regulation mechanism that may attenuate the effects of inter-role conflict. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first attempt to investigate the importance and influence of resiliency within a salesperson performance framework. Given the dynamic and challenging job profile of salespeople, we believe this study offers significant contributions to academe. Similarly, for industry, resiliency appears to be a resource that can be enhanced through training, whether that training is focused on managers or their front-line personnel (Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011).

Theoretical Background and Model Development

Today's salesforce faces a barrage of expectations that competes for their personal resources. For instance, the conflict between career and family demands is especially salient

for salespeople, who are embedded in relational exchanges at work and at home, and must "balance the demands of several parties" (Netemeyer, Maxham, & Pullig, 2005, p. 130).

From a career perspective, the expectation of one's sales role continues to require greater investment of personal resources. The individual salesperson confronts heightened customer expectations, a need for greater depth and breadth of knowledge, an increased understanding of technology, and an urgency to interpret competitive motivations (Jones et al., 2005). Personal resources are further strained as technology creates continual communication flows that tether salespeople to their firms, their teams, and their customers (Jones et al., 2005). It is easy to understand how the consistent demands of one's sales career interferes with the other realms of life, including the roles and responsibilities associated with family. For instance, some salespeople may feel as though they are neglecting their families when they must be away from home due to travel; for others, they may feel as though their best efforts at work are hampered by home-office working arrangements (Kahn & Byosiore, 1992; Boles, Wood & Johnson, 2003).

At the same time, salespeople face greater expectations within their families. Family roles often mean confronting a host of challenges including marital and financial issues, or assisting a loved one, such as a parent (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). Today, thirty percent of U.S. adults help a loved one with personal needs or household chores, managing finances, arranging for outside services, or visiting regularly to see how they are doing (Fox & Brenner, 2012). For other individuals, they provide multigenerational support. Popularly known as the sandwich generation, this group cares for their parents and also provides financial assistance to their children (Young, 2009). The dual expectations of family and work roles result in confronting a host of incompatible role expectations, known as work-family conflict (Kumashiro, Rusbult, & Finkel, 2008). This

mismatch of conflicting expectations creates an intra-personal competition for scarce personal resources, such as temporal and mental resources (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), which may result in stress and further interfere with job attitudes and sales performance (Boles, Wood, & Johnson, 2003; Hamwi, Rutherford, & Boles, 2011).

Considering the challenges posed by the dual role expectations of work and family, the importance of understanding personal resources has never have been more important than it is for today's salespeople. Personal resources are viewed as a reserve that aids one's ability to navigate through the peaks and valleys of life, manage oneself during challenging situations (Taylor et al., 2000), and handle work situations (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997).

We focus on two theories that describe the value of maintaining personal resources and their commensurate effects on personal and workplace productivity and satisfaction. Job Demands-Control theory (Karasek, 1979) describes the value of control over certain job-based resources. This theory suggests that personal resources aid salespeople in confronting the challenges of their jobs and serve as a means to attenuate the demands of their careers (Zablah et al., 2012). We also integrate the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) that suggests individuals are constantly attempting to balance and use their personal resources in a strategic manner to achieve productive outcomes (Hobfoll, 1989; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). These resources can be critical since they can provide the cognitive and emotional fuel to propel oneself during situations that may deplete personal resources (Hobfoll, 2001). In sum, these theories suggest certain personal resources may temper the effect between intra-role conflict and stress.

Personal resources may take many forms, including personal qualities (Hobfoll, 1989). One personal resource garnering greater attention by scholars is resiliency (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006). Resiliency is defined as the capability to positively 'bounce

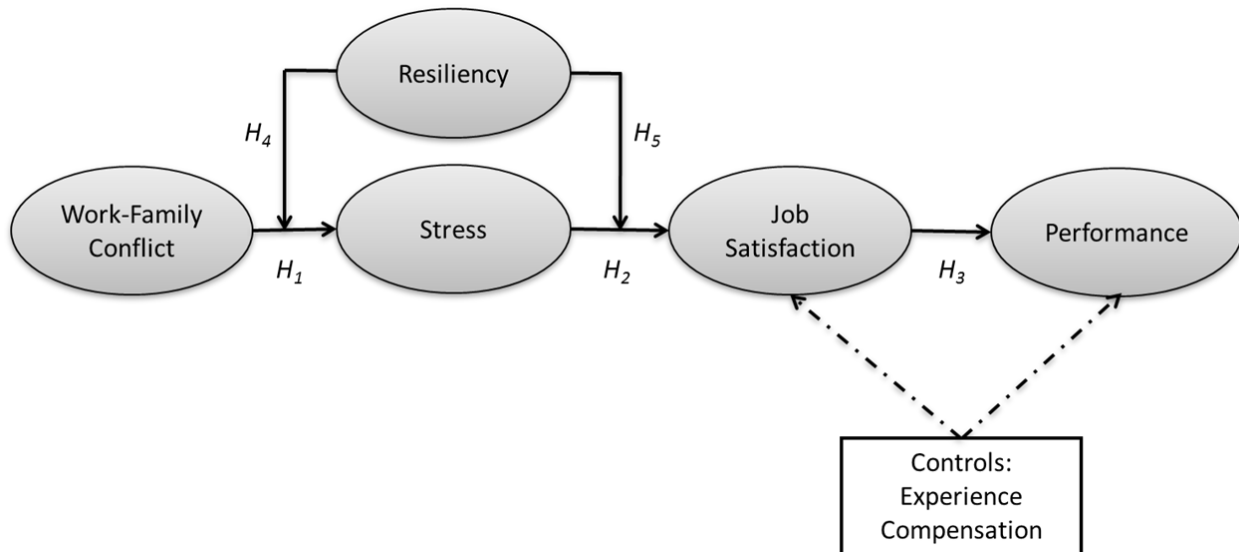
back' from conflict (Luthans, 2002). The literature on resiliency suggests it is an important personal resource that employees can draw from through multiple means (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006). Resiliency can operate through the attenuation of negative affect (e.g., a damage control) and can bolster the ability to sustain a constructive response to one's circumstances (e.g., a positive influence) (Zautra, 2009). In the former, resiliency allows the salesperson to look realistically at situations. In doing so, resiliency provides a defense against negative affect and reduces the extent to which an individual's positive affect is attenuated. In the latter, resiliency enables the salesperson to focus on the positive side of the event. In effect, resiliency inhibits ineffective, negative responses, thereby allowing the salesperson to select from a set of effective behaviors (Genet & Siemer, 2011). As such, resiliency serves as a personal resource of cognitive and emotional flexibility that enables individuals to adapt and regulate their thoughts and emotions to match their context or situational demands (Genet & Siemer, 2011; Waugh, Thompson, & Gotlib, 2011; Yehuda et al., 2006).

In summary, our literature review lays the foundation for our conceptual model (Figure 1) that begins with work-family conflict and its impact on job stress. Further, we examine the impact of stress on a salesperson's adaptability and perceived job satisfaction. Finally, we integrate resiliency and evaluate its ability to attenuate the relationship between work-family conflict and stress, and its ability to attenuate the relationship between stress and job satisfaction.

Intra-Role Conflict and Stress

In our first set of hypotheses we examine the direct effects of intra-role conflict, specifically work-family conflict on stress. The literature suggests that greater work-family conflict will be associated with greater levels of job stress (Netemeyer, Maxhamm, & Pullig, 2005). As individuals experience greater demands at work, their ability to meet the expectations

**FIGURE 1:
Conceptual Model**



inherent within their family role may falter. This form of conflict creates “a discrepancy between an employee's perceived state and desired state” (Edwards, 1992, p. 245), which effectively results in job stress. As job demands require greater resources, the salesperson may perceive a reduced amount of control he/she has over the job. As individuals experience greater demands at work, their ability to meet the expectations inherent within their family role may falter. That is, work-family conflict increases job-related stress due to the challenge of deploying limited personal resources in an attempt to balance career and family roles (Van Der Doef & Maes, 1999).

Hypothesis 1: Higher work-family conflict is positively related to a salesperson's job stress.

Relationship between Stress and Job Satisfaction

The next stage in our conceptual model focuses on the effects of stress on a salesperson's behaviors and attitudes. Our first relationship examines the impact of job stress on job satisfaction. We argue that stress reduces positive job attitudes and a higher level of stress leads to negative attitudes toward work. For salespeople to change their strategies they need cognitive resources to reason through not just

rational, but also the technical aspects of the sale. Stress puts a drain on the cognitive resources of individuals (Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012); and in effect depletes cognitive and emotional resources. Hence, stress may reduce some forms of emotional regulation, and thereby influence one's attitude toward the job. Further, the literature has demonstrated that job stress leads to lower levels of job satisfaction (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007).

Hypothesis 2: Higher job stress is negatively related to a salesperson's job satisfaction.

The Effects of Job Satisfaction on Performance

We argue that there is a link between job satisfaction and performance. We suggest that satisfaction creates a motivational impetus toward performance. Job satisfaction serves as an attitude that can influence motivation. As salespeople feel content and fulfilled by their position, they may increase their determination and energy toward meeting their performance goals, thereby realizing greater performance (Jaramillo, Mulki, & Marshall, 2005). Similarly, two meta-analyses provide credence that job satisfaction leads to better job performance (Brown & Peterson, 1993; Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985). Building upon

the logic that a salesperson's satisfaction toward the job should act as a motivational driver of performance, we argue a positive relationship between job satisfaction and sales performance.

Hypothesis 3: Higher salesperson job satisfaction is positively related to sales performance.

Resiliency's Moderating Effect on Work-Family Conflict and Stress

The final stage of our conceptual model examines the potential for resiliency to moderate the previously proposed relationships. Overall, we argue that when the salesperson possesses a high degree of resiliency, the individual has a positive resource to draw upon. We purport that this resource is critical in reducing the impact of intra-role conflict on job stress.

Resiliency provides a means to enable greater self-regulation and buffer one's sense of control (Leach, Liu, & Johnston, 2005). This resource imbues the individual with a sense of realism about the inherent demands of their personal and job environment (Coutu, 2002). This perspective allows a straightforward, matter-of-fact focus, which is critical to enable a person to maintain and sustain personal motivation in performing sales and family duties. Additionally, resilient individuals are more likely to maintain and build more cognitive and affective resources that can act as a buffer. These resources can help salespeople focus on the customer and the specific sales situations they are in rather than on activities that may not help them achieve their objective.

Similarly, research suggests that resiliency can help individuals keep things in perspective, proactively assess risks, and develop a "pragmatic and strategic" response to a challenge (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006). For example, highly resilient salespeople who encounter work-family conflicts may be better equipped to understand their situations and assess the associated risks (that may affect either their family or work spheres) better than their low resilience colleagues. This ability to

keep things in perspective would enable the salesperson to maintain focus on the work at hand which could inhibit the development of stress. In sum, resiliency could be viewed as a resource capable of attenuating the relationship between work-family conflict and stress.

Hypothesis 4: A salesperson's resiliency will reduce the positive relationship between work-family conflict and job stress.

Resiliency's Moderating Effect between Stress and Job Satisfaction

We also suggest that resiliency may serve as a positive resource for salespeople in reducing the effects of stress on their job attitudes. Resiliency provides a valuable resource that can reduce the impact of stress on cognitive resources needed for job satisfaction. An individual's resiliency builds "a stable processing structure that promotes adaptive functioning in the face of challenge" (Freitas & Downey, 1998, p. 207). Additionally, scholars suggest that those with greater resilience tend to be more effective in a dynamic environment (Luthans, 2002), and higher levels of resilience help employees accommodate changes within their environment (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). This flexibility and ability to accommodate change would well serve the salesperson within the selling context. Finally, some researchers have asserted that a critical component of resilience is inner resourcefulness (Coutu, 2002).

Resiliency may also serve as a resource in reducing the impact of stress on job satisfaction. First, resiliency may provide a form of active emotional regulation, which produces positive affect (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Research indicates that individuals who feel more positive affect are likely to broaden their perspectives (Fredrickson, 2004) and this broadening may enable the salespeople to adopt a perspective of viewing the environment realistically and with authenticity (Coutu, 2002). In effect, resiliency will help regulate and control a person's perspective about the inherent demands of the sales position and the

sales environment by interjecting a sense of realism into the situation (Coutu, 2002). This realism will effectively lower the potential for a salesperson to adopt a negative perception regarding the sales job and its requirements.

Hypothesis 5: A salesperson's resiliency will reduce the negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction.

Sample

Our sampling frame is a random sample of salespeople within the real estate industry. We chose one industry to control for external effects (Podsakoff et al., 2000). For our data collection, we purchased a commercial list that was comprised of randomly selected salespeople within the real estate industry. We followed a three stage approach that integrates best practices and procedures within the literature (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2008). Stage one consisted of sending post cards informing our sample of our impending study e-mail. Stage two occurred approximately two weeks later, as we sent an e-mail with a link to our study's survey to the sample. In the third stage, each respondent received a second e-mail reminding them of our study. Of the initial 1700 potential respondents, 163 postcards were not delivered, effectively generating a total sample of 1537 who received the postcard. Of the 1537, we received 172 completed surveys for a response rate of 11.19%. Our respondent profile reflected an even split between the genders; and approximately 78% of our respondents were married. In terms of work experience in their present job: 23% of respondents possessed 6-10 years, 19% possessed 11-15 years and 29% possessed 10 or more years.

Measures

We utilized existing and validated measures within the literature for the study. In some instances, the measures were adapted for a sales context. The *work-family conflict* construct measured the respondents' perception of work creating conflict with one's family-based

responsibilities (e.g. "*I often have to miss important family activities because of my job*"). To measure the construct, we used a three-item, seven-point Likert scale adapted from Netemeyer et al. (2004) that exhibited strong reliability ($\alpha = .81$).

Salesperson resiliency was our key moderating variable. We wanted to know the respondents' ability to bounce back from hardships and challenges by asking them to evaluate statements, such as, "*I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.*" To measure the construct, we used a four-item, seven-point Likert scale adapted from Smith et al. (2008) that exhibited strong reliability ($\alpha = .91$).

The *job stress* construct describes salespeople's difficulty in managing their sales job (e.g., "*I feel a lot of stress due to my current job in sales*"). The three-item scale ($\alpha = .84$), was adopted from Flaherty, Dahlstrom, and Skinner (1999).

Job satisfaction describes salespeople's contentment in their present sales job. It is adapted from Price and Mueller (1986) and Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996). It is a semantic differential scale with three items (e.g., "*My job is satisfying/not satisfying*"). This scale demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = .96$).

Sales performance is a five-item scale describing salespersons' ability to generate sales and meet sales objectives and goals. The scale, adapted from Behrman, Bigoness, and Perreault (1981), captures salespeople's self-reported assessment of their own performance (e.g., "*I believe I generate a high level of dollar sales*"). The scale exhibited strong reliability ($\alpha = .85$). Salespeople's *experience* and *compensation* were included in the analyses to control for other potential influences on our dependent variables.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

We used a t-test to assess potential differences between early and late respondents on all of the constructs. The analysis suggested that nonresponse bias is not an issue for the data, as the results of the examination were not statistically significant (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). Then, we utilized the two-step approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) to analyze construct validity and reliability.

The confirmatory factor analysis incorporated the reflective measures, work-family conflict, job stress, job satisfaction and job performance. We report commonly assessed fit indices. The comparative fit index (CFI=.98) meets the good fit threshold as it exceeds .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The root mean square of approximation is below .06 (RMSEA=.043, ci: .018, .061) and therefore reflects relatively good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Browne & Cudeck, 1989). The non-normed fit index (NNFI=.98) also exceeds the .95 threshold (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Based on these fit indices, we suggest that model fit for the measurement model was good ($\chi^2=160.098$ *df*: 125). Adequate psychometric properties are demonstrated by the scale reliabilities (see Appendix). Composite reliability measures range from .83 to .96. Average variance extracted (AVE) ranges from .63 to .89. The average variance extracted for each measure also meets the suggested .5 cutoff (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). For discriminant validity, we ensured the average variance extracted was greater than the squared correlation between the construct and every iterative pair that contained the construct. Additionally, we compared a series of constrained nested models with the unconstrained measurement model. In each case, the unconstrained model reflected a statistically significant better fit than the constrained model. Overall, the results from our examinations suggest the scales possess reasonable convergent and discriminant validity.

To examine the potential for common method bias, we followed the literature (Olson, Slater, & Hult, 2005; Griffith & Lusch, 2007). First, we used varied construct formats, including Likert scales and a semantic differential scale within our study. Our approach is aligned with the literature as Rindfleisch et al. (2008, p. 275) suggest that "the use of heterogeneous formats and scales is useful for disrupting consistency biases and increasing validity". Second, theory suggests that we integrate resiliency as a moderating variable. As such, our concern regarding common method bias is substantially mitigated with these hypotheses. Research notes that moderating effects are not impacted by common method bias (Rapp, Schillewaert, & Hao, 2008). Third, we compared a CFA in which all items were loaded on a single factor and compared it with the original measurement model. The measurement model demonstrated a significant difference and fit the data better (Griffith & Lusch, 2007; Lindell & Whitney, 2001). We also conducted an analysis for multicollinearity using the variance inflation factor (VIF). All VIFs exhibited a value below the acceptable threshold of 10 (Hair et al., 2010).

Hypothesis Testing

The zero order correlations are given in Table 1. Next, we used moderated regression to examine our hypotheses due to the sample size. As the independent and moderating variables in our study are continuous, following Irwin and McClelland (2001), we tested "the differential effects of one independent variable across values of the other" (p. 106). Because the literature shows that experience and compensation levels can potentially affect perceptions of both an individual's career and performance, we included the two items as control variables (Churchill et al., 1985). Overall, our approach was to enter first the control variables (where applicable; in the second step, we entered the main effects; and in the third effect, we entered the interaction terms. Table 2 reflects the results of our three regression models and the tests of our hypotheses.

TABLE 1:
Correlations Among Constructs

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
1 Resiliency	--				
2 Work-Family Conflict	-.182*	--			
3 Job Stress	-.360**	.488**	--		
4 Job Satisfaction	.335**	-.229**	-.264**	--	
5 Job Performance	.277**	.097	.079	.312**	--

* $<.05$; ** $<.001$

TABLE 2:
Results of Analysis

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Std. Beta	Sig.	R ²	ΔR ²	F Change	Sig F. Change
Stress	<i>Main Effects</i>						
	Work-Family Conflict	.411	.000	.			
	Resiliency	-.265	.000	.277	.277	29.139	.000
	<i>Moderator</i>						
	Work-Family Conflict X Resiliency	.139	.048	.296	.019	3.982	.048
Job Satisfaction	<i>Control Variables</i>						
	Experience	.183	.036				
	Compensation	.066	.045	.045	.045	3.33	.039
	<i>Main Effects</i>						
	Stress	-.188	.024				
	Resiliency	.234	.005	.162	.117	9.736	.000
	<i>Moderator</i>						
	Stress X Resiliency	.254	.000	.218	.055	9.721	.002
Performance	<i>Control Variables</i>						
	Experience	.175	.025				
	Compensation	.388	.000	.220	.220	20.467	.000
	<i>Main Effects</i>						
	Job Satisfaction	.247	.001	.278	.058	11.608	.001

Our results suggest work-family conflict has a significant, positive effect on job stress (H_1 : $\beta = .411$, $p < .05$; Table 2). We also found support for our hypothesis that job stress would have a negative effect on job satisfaction (H_2 : $\beta = -.188$, $p < .05$). The results reflect the impact of stress on job-based attitudes. The next hypothesis (H_3) captured the influence of job satisfaction on sales performance. A significant positive relationship was found between job

satisfaction and salesperson performance (H_3 : $\beta = .247$, $p < .05$).

Next, we analyzed the moderating effect of resiliency on the relationship between work-family conflict and job stress. We mean centered all variables to reduce multicollinearity effects, prior to calculating the interaction product (Aiken & West, 1991). Interestingly, we found a significant effect: (H_4 :

$\beta = .139$ $p < .05$). For those with a high level of resiliency, the relationship between work-family conflict and stress is attenuated.

Finally, the hypothesis (H_5) examining resiliency's moderating effect on the relationship between job stress to job satisfaction was supported. This supports our argument that resiliency has a buffering effect on job stress and the relationship to job satisfaction (H_5 : $\beta = .254$, $p < .05$). For those with a high level of resiliency, the relationship between stress and job satisfaction is attenuated, when compared to those who have a low level of resiliency.

Discussion

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

While extant organizational behavior and human resources literatures provide evidence that resiliency plays a key role while shaping job attitudes and influencing outcomes (e.g. Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Luthans et al., 2007), sales research on this self-regulation mechanism is in its relative infancy. Our research contributes to this stream of study by offering critical insights into the value of resiliency for the salesperson who is balancing family and work roles and expectations.

As Jones et al. (2005) notes, salespeople confront increasing complexity in their environment. This is no truer than in the current times of economic uncertainty, both from the employer's side (e.g. performance pressure) and from the customers' side (e.g. high customer demands). Hence, it is critical that salespeople are equipped with personal traits that can not only allow them to balance their multiple roles but also be successful in their careers. For academia, our results highlight the value of understanding the construct of resilience within the sales context and further examining the application of personal resources within the marketing and sales literature.

Previous studies examined the direct effects of intra-role conflict (Boles, Johnston, & Hair,

1997; Boles & Babin, 1996; Netemeyr, Brashear-Alejandro, & Boles, 2004) and have evaluated the value of coping mechanisms (Nonis & Sager, 2003). However, we believe our research is the first to examine the application of personal self-regulation resources to intra-role conflict within the sales literature. Along with this, our study offers other theoretical implications. First, our research appears to be the first use of resiliency in the sales literature. This is notable, as understanding positive psychological resources is increasingly valued within the management domain (Luthans et al., 2007).

Second, our analysis suggests that resiliency possesses important effects on intra-role conflict. Our results demonstrate that resiliency moderates the relationship between work-family conflict and stress. This suggests that resiliency has importance, but plausibly requires other personal resources within the individual and/or provided by the organization

Apart from theoretical contributions of our study, we believe this study offers some important implications for managerial thought. The potential of resiliency to attenuate some effects of intra-role conflict on stress, and further reduce the consequences of stress on employee outcomes are important to today's salesforce. For instance, consider the environment in which the salesperson is embedded. New devices and technology make it easier to access work and provide greater flexibility and autonomy for employees. This access and flexibility, however, presents the possibility of creating even more pressure on the employees to balance the roles and expectations of both work and family. Our results demonstrate that resiliency serves as an important personal resource in today's competitive work environment.

Our results suggest resiliency may serve as a helpful asset in the employee's toolkit and suggests that managers should consider evaluating an employee's level of resilience during the selection process. Measuring job candidates' resiliency would not only provide

insight into their ability to manage adversity but it would also provide evidence of how they might adapt (or not adapt) when confronted with new relationship/customer situations. Sales managers could examine the opportunity to use best-practices from other industries to assess individual resilience (Griffith & West, 2013). As the potential for work-based stress within the sales community is well known (Singh, 1998), this tool may serve as a proactive step to ensure job fit and that the candidate has the disposition to succeed in an environment where developing long-term relationships with customers is the new norm.

Similarly, our study may provide food for thought regarding training initiatives. Many business analysts have underlined the importance of training programs that help employees control their emotions (e.g., Beck, 2010). Organizational behaviorists like Luthans et al. (2007) maintain that resilience may be fairly malleable and subject to development. For example, an *asset-focused development strategy* emphasizes developing the resources available to employees to help them face a traumatic event or adverse situations. Employers who “pay for continued education, promote developmental workshops and cross-training, and reward those seeing to better themselves” develop employee resilience and an increased sense of ownership (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006, p.34). A *process-focused development strategy* can also be used to influence the manner in which an employee interprets events and experiences. This development approach aims to develop employee confidence in performing a job well and includes widely recognized techniques such as “mastery and success experiences, vicarious learning and/or modeling, persuasion and/or positive feedback, and psychological and/or physiological arousal” (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006, p.35). Based on these studies, it is plausible to create a corporate training context to enhance employees’ resilience. As our study demonstrates, such reinforcement is good for both the employee (increased job

satisfaction) and for the firm (increased sales performance).

Limitations and Future Research

As with any study, our research is not without limitations. First, our study sample focused on a single industry, which limited the generalizability of our results. The idiosyncratic nature of real estate sales added further limits on our interpretation. In real estate, the entire sales process is longer and requires multiple contacts with, and more personalized service for, each client (Krishnan, Netemeyer, & Boles, 2002). Therefore, resilience may be more salient in such a selling context.

Because our research provides only a cross-sectional snapshot in a finite time period, it is difficult to completely realize the order of effects, and therefore we assume some level of causality based on theoretical and logical relationships established by prior research. A longitudinal study is warranted to fully understand the causal nature of the relationships in this study. All of our measures, including performance, were self-reported. Although research suggests that self-ratings do not bias performance estimates (Churchill et al., 1985), future studies using objective sales data would allow for a richer understanding of how performance is influenced by resiliency.

Despite these limitations, our approach allowed us to control for certain industry- and firm-level factors, and our findings provide sufficient evidence that examining salesperson resiliency and its influence on job attitudes and behavior is worthy of continued investigation. We plot a pathway for future research and personal resources that could be tested with resiliency. Opportunities remain to examine contingency variables, including those for the environment, firm culture, and control mechanisms in various industries and selling contexts.

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**APPENDIX:
Measures**

Item and Construct Reliability for Resiliency (Smith et al., 2008)

I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times	<i>α</i>	.91
It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event	<i>C.R</i>	.92
It is not hard for me to snap back when something bad happens (R)	<i>AV</i>	.72
I usually come through difficult times with little trouble		

Item and Construct Reliability for Job Stress (Flaherty, Dahlstrom, & Skinner, 1999)

I feel stress a lot of the time due to the nature of my job	<i>α</i>	.84
I feel a lot of stress due to my current job in sales	<i>C.R</i>	.87
It is difficult to cope with everything that is needed to be a sales rep.	<i>AV</i>	.69

Item and Construct Reliability for Work-Family Conflict (Netemeyer et al., 2004)

I often have to miss important family activities because of my job	<i>α</i>	.81
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands that my job puts on me	<i>C.R</i>	.87
Because of my job, I can't involve myself as much as I would like in maintaining close relations with my family (or spouse/partner)	<i>AV</i>	.69

Item and Construct Reliability for Job Satisfaction (Price & Mueller, 1986; Netemeyer et al., 1997)

give me a sense of accomplishment/does not give me a sense of accomplishment	<i>α</i>	.96
is satisfying/is not satisfying	<i>C.R</i>	.96
is worthwhile/is worthless	<i>AV</i>	.89

Item and Construct Reliability for Sales Performance (Behrman, Bigoness, & Perreault, 1981)

Compared to my colleagues, I believe I generate a higher level of dollar sales	<i>α</i>	.85
I always exceed the sales objectives and targets set for me	<i>C.R</i>	.86
Frankly, I perform as well as other sales agents in this job	<i>AV</i>	.57
I am very effective in generating sales quickly		
Overall, my performance is superior to a typical sales agent in my firm		