



Lebanese American University Repository (LAUR)

Post-print version/Author Accepted Manuscript

Publication metadata

Title: Salesperson moral identity and value co-creation

Author(s): Omar S. Itani, Larry Chonko, Raj Agnihotri

Journal: European Journal of Marketing

DOI/Link: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-06-2020-0431>

How to cite this post-print from LAUR:

Itani, O. S., Chonko, L., & Agnihotri, R. (2022). Salesperson moral identity and value co-creation. European Journal of Marketing, DOI, 10.1108/EJM-06-2020-0431, <http://hdl.handle.net/10725/13285>

© Year 2022

This AAM is provided for your own personal use only. It may not be used for resale, reprinting, systematic distribution, emailing, or for any other commercial purpose without the permission of the publisher'.

This Open Access post-print is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives (CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0)



This paper is posted at LAU Repository

For more information, please contact: archives@lau.edu.lb

To cite the paper

Itani, O.S., Chonko, L. and Agnihotri, R. (2022), "Salesperson moral identity and value co-creation", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-06-2020-0431>

**Provided for non-commercial research and education use.
Not for reproduction, distribution or commercial use.**



Salesperson Moral Identity and Value Co-creation

Journal:	<i>European Journal of Marketing</i>
Manuscript ID	EJM-06-2020-0431.R3
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Salesforce, moral identity, value co-creation, Customer orientation, Sales performance, Sales management, Sales

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Salesperson Moral Identity and Value Co-creation

Purpose – The primary goal of this study was to examine the role of salesperson moral identity centrality in value co-creation. This study identified and tested an extended identity-based formation process of selling orientation, customer orientation, and value co-creation. This was accomplished by examining the role of inclusion of other in the self and circle of moral regard in the mechanism through which moral identity centrality impacts selling orientation, customer orientation, and value co-creation, taking into account the contingency role of salesperson self-construal.

Design/methodology/approach – An extended identity–behavior model grounded in identity theory and the social-cognitive perspective of moral identity centrality was tested. The study utilized survey data from business-to-business salespeople. Data collected were analyzed using structural equation modeling.

Findings – The results show that a central moral identity to a salesperson’s self drives higher expansion of the salesperson’s circle of moral regard. This process facilitates the mechanisms for salesperson moral identity centrality to decrease selling orientation and increase customer orientation and value co-creation, leading to higher sales performance. Independent self-construal is found to deteriorate the positive effects of salesperson moral identity centrality on inclusion of other in the self, expansion of the circle of moral regard, and customer orientation.

Practical implications – Findings have implications for the human resource side of sales organizations in the areas of recruitment, mentoring, coaching, and training. Moral identity centrality plays a vital role in the interface between salespeople and customers, leading to improved behavioral and sales outcomes. Sales managers must look for their salespeople’s moral identity centrality to improve morality in the attitudes and decision-making of their salesforce.

Originality/value – This study is the first to uncover the vital impacts of salesperson moral identity centrality on selling orientation, customer orientation, and value co-creation. Through the conceptualized and tested framework, the study opens the door for additional research to inspect the role of moral identity centrality in sales.

Keywords – Salesperson, moral identity centrality, customer orientation, selling orientation, value co-creation, sales performance, independent self-construal

Salesperson Moral Identity and Value Co-creation

Introduction

“Two things awe me most, the starry sky above me and the moral law within me.”

Immanuel Kant

In today's market, selling right is no longer just about persuading; it is becoming more about the value to be co-created between sellers and buyers. Accordingly, salespeople have a vital role in supporting organizations to co-create value with customers (Agnihotri *et al.*, 2012a; Manning *et al.*, 2011). Salespeople looking to achieve their sales targets must focus on buyers through value co-creation (Kaski *et al.*, 2018; Viio and Grönroos, 2014). Especially in business-to-business (B2B) markets, salespeople must work with buyers to provide timely solutions to their problems and support them with maximized value offerings (Hartmann *et al.*, 2018). This calls for more scholarly attention to broaden the knowledge on the role of salesperson-self in B2B value co-creation.

Salesperson value co-creation refers to the behaviors a salesperson exhibits to engage customers and work with them through a service exchange that maximizes value. There exists a rich body of literature focused on the drivers of salespeople's value co-creation. However, studies examining the antecedents to salesperson value creation predominantly focus on learned behaviors and managerial contingencies. A literature review involving salesperson value creation in B2B contexts reveals that little (if anything) is known about the relationship between moral aspects of the salesperson-self and value co-creation (see Table 1). This is surprising given the link between salespeople's moral judgments and their behaviors, such as customer-oriented selling and relational pursuits (Agnihotri and Krush, 2015; Schwepker and Good, 2011). In addition, morality plays a critical role in “developing mutually beneficial relationships with two critical stakeholders—customers and salespeople” (Evans *et al.*, 2012, p. 97). Therefore, a moral

1
2
3 salesforce can be a boon to firms in their efforts to sustain and grow relationships with customers
4
5 (Ingram *et al.*, 2007). Despite that, there remains critical research gaps in understanding the
6
7 impact of morality on value co-creation in B2B sales.
8
9

10 Prior studies have focused on sales- and organization-based drivers of value co-creation
11 and overlooked personal, specifically moral, drivers related to the salesperson's self as
12 antecedents of value co-creation (see Table 1). This study examined a personal variable of
13 salesperson—moral identity centrality—as a driver of value co-creation through the
14 salesperson's self—other perspective and psychological state at work. We grounded our study in
15 identity theory and the notion of moral identity centrality, with its social-cognitive perspective,
16 to examine the process through which salesperson moral identity centrality affects value co-
17 creation.
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

29 -----
30 Place Table 1 about here
31 -----
32

33 The social-cognitive perspective suggests that moral identity centrality inspires moral
34 attitudes and actions through self-consistency and responsibility (Stets and Carter, 2011). It
35 increases one's concern for other individuals (Aquino and Reed, 2002; Hardy *et al.*, 2010) and
36 respect for their rights and wellbeing (Youniss and Yates, 1999). We put forward that the
37 salesperson moral identity centrality concept is relevant to the sales literature, especially in the
38 salesperson–buyer relationship domain. Accordingly, we seek to extend an identity–behavior
39 process to understand the mechanisms of moral identity centrality's influences on selling
40 orientation (SO), customer orientation (CO), and value co-creation while considering the role of
41 salesperson self-construal.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Sales research investigating moral identity centrality is scarce. Yet our findings show that
4 moral identity centrality is essential to study in sales research. It influences how salespeople
5 approach customers (i.e., SO and CO) and work with them (i.e., value co-creation) to drive
6 performance. We suggest that moral identity centrality (Aquino and Reed, 2002) motivates
7 salespeople to feel concern for the welfare of customers by increasing (decreasing) a
8 salesperson's CO (SO) (e.g., Zablah *et al.*, 2012a), which then leads to an increase in value co-
9 creation.
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

19 The core of both CO and SO rests on a set of values and beliefs that are deeply rooted in
20 the self (e.g., moral identity centrality) (Deshpandé *et al.*, 1993) and emphasizes actions directed
21 toward satisfying the needs of customers (Goad and Jaramillo, 2014; Itani *et al.*, 2019). While
22 CO focuses on selling *with* customers by focusing on their needs, SO focuses on selling *to*
23 customers. Further, moral identity centrality involves a concern for the welfare of others (e.g.,
24 customers) and the need to build interpersonal relationships with them. Moral issues are
25 predominantly relevant to the sales profession because salespeople constantly face moral
26 dilemmas and ethical challenges (Valentine, 2009). Thus, the study of moral identity centrality
27 adds an ethical dimension that is, at best, implied in SOCO.
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 With this research, we seek to make several contributions to the B2B sales literature. To
41 begin, the study brings the concept of moral identity centrality to the sales research and examines
42 its role in significant concepts, such as SO, CO, and value co-creation. Second, we identify, and
43 test extended psychological mechanisms of SO, CO, and value co-creation that are characterized
44 by an identity-based formation process. We do so by examining the roles of *inclusion of other in*
45 *the self* and the *circle of moral regard*, through which moral identity centrality impacts SO, CO,
46 and value co-creation, while considering the contingency effect of self-construal. Although a
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 concept like SOCO has sparked much interest from researchers and practitioners (Bagozzi *et al.*,
4 2012), there remains a need for “compelling evidence regarding why and when salespeople
5 engage in these orientations” (Goad and Jaramillo, 2014, p. 288). As such, we offer moral
6 identity centrality as another major driver of SOCO and value co-creation.
7
8
9
10
11

12 13 **Theoretical background**

14
15 Individuals identify themselves with moral traits integrated into the self to form a moral identity
16 (Aquino and Reed, 2002). Accordingly, moral identity centrality “reflects individual differences
17 in the degree to which being moral is a central or essential characteristic of the sense of self”
18 (Shao *et al.*, 2008, p. 514). Although early literature established “internalization” (private/inward
19 focus) and “symbolization” (public/outward focus) as two aspects of moral identity centrality,
20 Aquino and Reed (2002) show inconsistency in their outcomes. These authors and others have
21 selected to employ the internalization concept to denote moral identity centrality (e.g., Aquino *et*
22 *al.*, 2009; Hannah *et al.*, 2020; Skarlicki *et al.*, 2016). Other literature reviews on moral identity
23 centrality confirm that internalization produces consistent conclusions (e.g., Hertz and
24 Krettenauer, 2016; Jennings *et al.*, 2015).
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38
39 Prior studies have examined moral identity centrality’s influences on employees’
40 attitudes and behaviors. Findings show that moral identity centrality is positively related to work
41 engagement (He *et al.*, 2014), cooperation (Sachdeva *et al.*, 2009), and citizenship behaviors
42 (McFerran *et al.*, 2010). Conversely, moral identity centrality is negatively associated with
43 employees’ moral disengagement (Zheng *et al.*, 2019) and self-interest behaviors (DeCelles *et*
44 *al.*, 2012).
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52
53 Most individuals develop a moral identity with different levels of centrality to the self.
54 The more self-important or central to the self an identity is, the more a salesperson will be
55
56
57

1
2
3 become committed to this identity (Rapp *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, in such a situation, the
4 salesperson will have to make more vigorous efforts to enact the identity (Gabler *et al.*, 2014). A
5 salesperson who centers her/his self-concept on moral identity derives higher levels of
6 psychological involvement and satisfaction in activities that respond to others' needs, as those
7 activities are consistent with the salesperson's self-concept (Mulder and Aquino, 2013).
8
9

10
11
12 According to the social-cognitive perspective, moral identity is stored in memory as a
13 composite knowledge structure comprising moral values, traits, and behavioral scripts (Aquino *et*
14 *al.*, 2009). Along these lines, moral identity centrality is a central element of a salesperson's
15 social schema, and it organizes the self around a set of moral traits (Wang *et al.*, 2019). The more
16 central moral identity is, the more it will influence the salesperson's affective, cognitive, and
17 behavioral states.
18
19

20
21
22 Moral identity centrality requires salespeople to commit their sense of self and align their
23 activities to promote others' welfare. Failing to do so could result in adverse outcomes that harm
24 the self. Individuals with predominantly self-centered moral identities invest in and identify
25 themselves as righteous and act in a moral way toward others to promote their moral identities
26 (Hardy *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, customer-facing employees who count moral identity an
27 essential aspect of their social schema are more likely to show concern for customers by
28 respecting their rights and wellbeing (Wang *et al.*, 2019). Accordingly, we build on existing
29 research on moral identity centrality in marketing and management literature to examine its role
30 in value co-creation in the B2B sales context.
31
32

33 **Model development**

34 ***Moral identity and salesperson value co-creation behavior***

35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Moral identity centrality is unity between morality and self-system (Hardy and Carlo, 2011).
4
5 Hence, moral identity centrality is known to affect individuals' interpersonal focus, whether
6
7 toward the moral self or others' wellbeing, emphasizing the needs of others. Frontline employees
8
9 who count moral identity as central to themselves are likely to show superior concern for human
10
11 welfare than those who do not (Wang *et al.*, 2019). A salesperson who counts moral identity as
12
13 fundamental to the self is known for being kind, helpful, hardworking, and morally concerned
14
15 about customers, which results in better collaboration with customers.
16
17
18

19 A salesperson with strong moral identity centrality will try to maximize the benefits of
20
21 their customers to achieve moral identity goals. Self-achievement and self-interest goals are the
22
23 opposite of self-transcendent moral goals and values (Grouzet *et al.*, 2005; Schwartz, 1994). For
24
25 that reason, when solving customers' problems and earning their expressions of gratitude, some
26
27 employees sense greater self-esteem and feelings of accomplishment (Wang *et al.*, 2011).
28
29
30

31 Sales and value creation are embedded in broader social systems (Ancillai *et al.*, 2019).
32
33 The exchange of resources between salespeople and buyers allows the co-creation of value
34
35 (Hartmann *et al.*, 2018). In chorus, moral identity centrality pushes people to exchange more
36
37 particularistic resources, such as love, status, and service with different others (Reed and Aquino,
38
39 2003). Consequently, the self-other relationship is vital to those who deem moral identity a
40
41 central component of overall personal identity (Youniss and Yates, 1999).
42
43
44

45 Moral identity centrality amplifies one's concern for others (Aquino and Reed, 2002) and
46
47 respect for their rights and wellbeing (Youniss and Yates, 1999). It supports individuals'
48
49 effectiveness at socializing (Brown and Treviño, 2009), which is important for better interaction
50
51 and value co-creation with buyers. McFerran *et al.* (2010) find that moral identity centrality
52
53 drives employees to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors. In another study, Sachdeva
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *et al.* (2009) demonstrate that employees' cooperative behaviors are triggered by moral identity
4 centrality. As such, moral identity centrality drives salespeople to be sensitive to buyers' needs
5 and concerned about their welfare, thus increasing salespeople's support, collaboration, and
6 working with buyers to co-create value. Moral identity centrality will motivate salespeople to
7 exchange more resources (social, knowledge, and time) with buyers. Thus, we advance the
8 following:
9

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17 *H1: Salesperson moral identity centrality is positively related to value co-creation.*

18 19 ***Moral identity centrality and salesperson's orientation***

20
21 Psychology research suggests two dimensions of interpersonal conduct: *concern for others* and
22 *concern for self* (Thomas, 1976). These dimensions of interpersonal conduct align with CO and
23 SO, respectively (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2012; Goad and Jaramillo, 2014). According to Saxe and Weitz
24 (1982), high CO is related to high concern for others, whereas low CO is related to low concern
25 for others. For Zablah *et al.* (2012b), CO is set when salespeople value customers more than
26 sales. By contrast, salespeople who prioritize sales more than the welfare of customers are
27 known to be selling-oriented, which contradicts what moral identity centrality prioritizes.
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36

37 CO requires salespeople to focus on customers and avoid interpersonal conduct that could
38 sacrifice customers' interests to make a sale (Saxe and Weitz, 1982). We suggest that this
39 theorizing is consistent with salespeople defining themselves in terms of moral identity.
40 Therefore, CO is, to a great extent, driven by moral identity centrality in the sales context.
41
42 Individuals who deem moral identity an important facet of the self can better understand others'
43 thoughts and feelings by placing themselves in their positions, thus allowing themselves to
44 perform more actions that support others (Hardy *et al.*, 2012).
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 SO is less likely to be the kind of job orientation that salespeople with stronger self-
4 centered moral identity possess because such orientation is expected to accompany self-interest
5 temptations and less concern for customers (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2012; Singh and Koshy, 2011). SO
6 requires salespeople to forgo their moral goals to carry out misleading actions, such as *painting*
7 *too rosy a picture of the product* and *stretching the truth* (Saxe and Weitz, 1982). Thus, SO is
8 seen as contradictory to the values of moral identity centrality. Aquino and Becker (2005) reveal
9 through controlled experiments that workers who place high importance on moral traits would
10 sacrifice financial gain to compensate for assumed misbehaviors at work. Salesperson moral
11 identity centrality prohibits selfishness in sales and directs the salesperson to satisfy customers'
12 needs. Salespeople who count moral identity as principal to themselves are less likely to follow
13 their temptations and ignore customers' interests. They may suffer from feelings of self-
14 inconsistency and self-betrayal caused by a selling-oriented mindset. Building on the arguments
15 above, the following relationships are advanced:
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 *H2: Salesperson moral identity centrality is positively related to CO.*

34 *H3: Salesperson moral identity centrality is negatively related to SO.*

35 ***The role of inclusion of other in the self***

36
37 The concept of inclusion of other in the self refers to one's perceptions of closeness to others
38 (Aron *et al.*, 1992). It is associated with a sense of connection, increased perceptions of
39 similarity with others, and responsibility for their welfare (Levine *et al.*, 2005). Inclusion of other
40 in the self guides a person to include the perspectives and aspects of others in the self (Aron *et*
41 *al.*, 2004).
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

51 The inclusion of other in the self affects a salesperson's orientation toward customers.
52
53 Previous research has settled that moral identity centrality increases the inclusion of other in the
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 self through self-expansion (Choi and Winterich, 2013; Winterich *et al.*, 2009). This is because
4 moral identity centrality highlights social responsibility, other perspective-taking, and balancing
5 self-interests with others' needs (Reimer and Wade-Stein, 2004). For that, the inclusion of other
6 in the self is a major agent of the effects moral identity centrality (Choi and Winterich, 2013;
7 Hardy *et al.*, 2010) has on one's proclivities and behaviors. Hence, moral identity centrality
8 drives salespeople to reduce the psychological distance they have with others, including
9 customers.

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19 Moral identity centrality drives salespeople to build closer relationships with customers
20 by including them in the self. For example, moral identity is found to get salespeople to have
21 higher levels of psychological proximity with customers (Itani *et al.*, 2021). Meanwhile, the
22 more others are involved in the self, the scarcer self-centered behaviors an individual exhibits
23 toward them (Bandura, 1999). For example, sharing resources with others is based on including
24 those others in the self (Aron *et al.*, 1991). We expect a salesperson to hold a certain level of
25 inclusion of other in the self, driven by moral identity centrality, thus influencing how a
26 salesperson deals with customers. Salespeople will be prone to better serving customers and
27 satisfying their needs because of such inclusion. Consequently, the following relationships are
28 postulated:
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41

42 *H4: Moral identity centrality is positively related to the inclusion of other in the self.*

43 *H5: The inclusion of other in the self is positively related to CO.*

44 *H6: The inclusion of other in the self is negatively related to SO.*

45 ***Role of the circle of moral regard***

46
47
48
49
50
51 Moral identity centrality motivates salespeople to hold and express moral obligations to out-
52 groups. It motivates them to expand their circles of moral regard to include a larger set of
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 different social groups (Reed and Aquino, 2003). Hardy *et al.* (2010) define the circle of moral
4 regard as “the boundary that defines the individuals and groups for whom a person is willing to
5 exhibit moral concern” (p. 112). According to Reed and Aquino (2003), when individuals
6 expand their circles of moral regard, they will spread the degree of moral concern for the welfare
7 and needs of others. Moral regard is used as an aspect of one’s moral relationship with others and
8 is similar to concepts like the moral circle (Singer, 2011) and the “scope of justice” (Opatow,
9 1996). Unlike the circle of moral regard, the inclusion of other in the self is not directed toward
10 an individual’s moral aspects.
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

21 The circle of moral regard is expandable and has different consequences for one’s
22 judgments of others’ moral worth (Laham, 2009). According to Singer (2011), expansion of the
23 circle of moral regard is seen as the opening out of one’s mental lines that hold other individuals
24 from being well thought-out for moral consideration. Such expansion of the circle of moral
25 regard has been shown to increase with higher moral concern for the welfare of others (Aquino
26 and Reed, 2002).
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34

35 Salespeople hold different expansion degrees of the circle of moral regard. A reason for
36 this difference is the centrality of moral identity to the self (Hardy *et al.*, 2010). Accordingly, to
37 the enlargement of the circle of moral regard is a key mean for moral identity centrality effects
38 (Smith *et al.*, 2014). Moral identity centrality obliges salespeople to think about others for moral
39 consideration, leading to increased concerns about serving customers and satisfying their needs.
40 This expansion of the circle of moral regard creates moral constraints that prohibit salespeople
41 from showing deep concern for their own interests and temptations at the expense of customers’
42 needs. Therefore, we argue that the expansion of the circle of moral regard caused by moral
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 identity centrality has a positive (negative) effect on customer (selling) orientation. Thus, we
4
5 hypothesize the following:
6

7
8 *H7: Moral identity centrality is positively related to the circle of moral regard.*

9
10 *H8: The circle of moral regard is positively related to CO.*

11
12 *H9: The circle of moral regard is negatively related to SO.*
13

14 ***Salesperson's orientation and value co-creation behavior***

15
16 CO “refers to the degree to which salespeople practice the marketing concept by trying to help
17
18 their customers make purchase decisions that will satisfy customer needs” (Saxe and Weitz,
19
20 1982, p. 344). It requires salespeople to interact *with* customers, unlike SO that underpins selling
21
22 *to* customers (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2012). The main goal of customer-oriented salespeople is to satisfy
23
24 consumers' needs by working with them to optimize benefits and reduce costs (Cross *et al.*,
25
26 2007; Kemp *et al.*, 2013). For them, the way of making a sale is more important than making the
27
28 sale itself. They trust that customer-centric approaches, such as value co-creation behavior, fulfill
29
30 customers' needs.
31
32
33
34

35
36 From a service-centered view, value co-creation is relational, customer-oriented (Vargo
37
38 and Lusch, 2008), and is amenable to salesperson's behaviors that compose part of the service
39
40 exchange (Itani *et al.*, 2020). According to Jolson (1997), CO relies on customer-driven value
41
42 creation. Moreover, CO is related to the desire to maintain long-term relationships with
43
44 customers (Franke and Park, 2006). It describes the extent to which salespeople hold value-
45
46 expressive attitudes (Wilcox *et al.*, 2009) that show an underlying concern for customers'
47
48 welfare (Zablah *et al.*, 2012b). Thus, value co-creation allows customer-oriented salespeople to
49
50 practice the marketing concept of helping customers make the best decisions to meet their needs
51
52 and maximize value (Terho *et al.*, 2015).
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 However, selling-oriented salespeople exert high self-serving temptations, behaviors, and
4 low concern for customers (Goad and Jaramillo, 2014; Saxe and Weitz, 1982). SO is related to
5 salespeople attaining self-serving goals, and specifically sales goals. It drives salespeople to
6 focus more on increasing sales and less on satisfying customers. Such a focus is not aligned with
7 value co-creation that requires salespeople to put sales goals and invest more time and effort into
8 collaborating and working with buyers to meet their needs. Based on the above discussion, we
9 hypothesize:

10
11
12 *H10: CO is positively related to value co-creation.*

13
14
15 *H11: SO is negatively related to value co-creation.*

16 17 18 ***Value co-creation behavior and sales performance***

19
20
21 Value creation has a favorable impact on various sales outcome metrics, such as acquiring new
22 accounts, higher closings rates, and sales revenue (Sullivan *et al.*, 2012). Prior studies have
23 argued that value co-creation, specifically value-based selling embedded within the value co-
24 creation notion, is a direct driver of sales outcomes (e.g., Schwepker and Schultz, 2015; Terho *et al.*,
25 2017). Value-based selling requires salespeople to work with customers to identify their
26 needs and support their business objectives proactively (e.g., Terho *et al.*, 2017). Salespeople
27 who work with customers to provide optimal solutions, serve customers better, and maximize the
28 value experienced by customers are likely to be strong performers. Terho *et al.* (2015) find that
29 B2B salespeople who apply value-based selling achieve higher selling performance. Another
30 study identifies B2B salespeople who engage in value-enhancing behaviors to drive higher sales
31 outcomes (Schwepker and Schultz, 2015). Accordingly, we advance the following:

32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51 *H12: Value co-creation is positively related to sales performance.*

52 53 54 ***The moderating role of salesperson self-construal—chronic self-construal***

1
2
3 Self-construal helps in assessing the extent to which others are part of one's self-concept or
4 identity (Cross *et al.*, 2000). More so, one's active self-concept functions through the interaction
5 of moral identity centrality and self-interest promoting factors (Aquino *et al.*, 2009). The
6 significant role of self-construal is related to its effects on individuals' motivational and
7 cognitive processes (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Recent studies have found that self-construal
8 has genetic/heritable components (Kitayama and Park, 2014) and influences individuals' neural
9 progression (Han and Humphreys, 2016). Dissimilarities in self-construal elicit multiple issues
10 concerning self-concept-related processes (Cross *et al.*, 2000). This results in elements that
11 arouse the moral self-schema, leading to increased or decreased salience of moral identity within
12 one's self-concept.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

26 Individuals with predominantly independent self-construal stand out, define themselves
27 as superior to others, and maintain a positive success-to-aspirations ratio to promote a positive
28 view of the self (Harter, 1993). They view themselves as self-sufficient, skilled, and unique
29 (Aaker and Williams, 1998). They rationalize the relationships they have with others by
30 conducting cost-benefit analyses (Singelis *et al.*, 1995) and behave in favor of self-attitudes
31 rather than other norms (Triandis, 2001).
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 Individuals with predominantly interdependent self-construal view themselves "as part of
41 an encompassing social relationship" and recognize that their behavior "is determined,
42 contingent on, and, to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts,
43 feelings, and actions of others in the relationship" (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 227). They
44 share a socio-centric identity (Bochner, 1994) that drives them to be worried about the wellbeing
45 of others (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Interdependent individuals avoid social disapproval and
46 seek social consent (Lalwani, 2009). Such individuals deliver normatively appropriate responses
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 and perform greater impression management (Lalwani, 2009). They try to maintain harmony
4
5 with others and adapt to their demands (Markus and Kitayama, 2003).
6

7
8 Individuals with predominantly independent self-construal consider internal attributes
9
10 central to their sense of self (Giacomin and Jordan, 2017). Additionally, they may be less
11
12 sensitive to social identity (e.g., moral identity) (Kim and Hyun, 2013). On the contrary,
13
14 individuals with predominantly interdependent self-construal base their sense of self on close
15
16 social roles and group membership (Giacomin and Jordan, 2017). Interdependent individuals are
17
18 more cooperative than independent individuals in social dilemmas (Utz, 2004). Interdependent
19
20 self-construal can be relational, leading individuals to include others in the self and hold
21
22 empathic concern for them (Cross *et al.*, 2000). Interdependent individuals will have more
23
24 information and better elaborative cognitive representation of others (Giacomin and Jordan,
25
26 2017). Social unity and close interpersonal relationships, driven by interdependence and
27
28 collectivism, are roots for a context that allows identity-promoting behaviors (Lam *et al.*, 2012).
29
30
31
32

33 Moral identity centrality is evidenced despite differences in self-construal between
34
35 salespeople. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the more independent or less interdependent a
36
37 salesperson is, the weaker the effects of moral identity centrality will be because independence
38
39 will blur the focus driven by moral identity on others' needs at the expense of self-interest.
40
41 However, Henrich *et al.* (2010) argue that the moral identity centrality concept is entrenched in
42
43 Western cultures, where independent self-construal predominates. Hertz and Krettenauer (2016)
44
45 posit that independent-self and individualism may motivate an individual to act morally because
46
47 of the need to be consistent with his or her self-concept.
48
49
50

51 The discrepancy found in how self-construal interacts with moral identity centrality
52
53 underscores the importance of examining the moderating role of salesperson independent self-
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 construal. The self-construal construct plays a vital role in this study because it affects the
4
5 cognitive processing style and social context sensitivity of salespeople and how they construe
6
7 themselves (e.g., Giacomin and Jordan, 2017). A salesperson who is high (low) in independent
8
9 self-construal will represent the self as distinct from (connected to) others, including customers
10
11 (e.g., Cross *et al.*, 2011). The same salesperson will highlight her/his unique abilities (uniqueness
12
13 and separateness) and overlook interpersonal relationships and social obligations (e.g., Giacomin
14
15 and Jordan, 2017), even when holding a central moral identity. While the importance of self-
16
17 other relationship is linked to high moral identity centrality (Youniss and Yates, 1999), this link
18
19 is contingent on self-construal, affecting how a salesperson construes her/his identity. The
20
21 discussion above suggests that independent self-construal may weaken the positive effects of
22
23 moral salesperson identity centrality. In our study, we assume salespeople with lower (higher)
24
25 independent (interdependent) self-construal are more likely to be affected and guided by moral
26
27 identity centrality in their orientations and behaviors toward customers. In sum, the above
28
29 discussion advocates that the impacts of moral identity centrality are moderated by salesperson
30
31 self-construal. Thus, we advance the following:
32
33
34
35
36

37
38 *H13: Independent self-construal will weaken (strengthen) the positive (negative) relationship*
39
40 *between moral identity centrality and (a) value co-creation, (b) customer orientation, (c)*
41
42 *selling orientation, (d) inclusion of other in the self, and (e) the circle of moral regard.*
43

44 **Method**

45 ***Sample***

46
47 To test the hypothesized relationships (see Figure 1), data were collected online with the help of
48
49 a market research company that provides data collection services in the US. The salesperson
50
51 represents the seller in B2B relationships and is responsible for most of the interactions with
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 buyers. The characteristics of a salesperson, including traits, identity, and orientation, have a
4
5 significant impact on performance outcomes in B2B settings (e.g., Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka,
6
7 2007; Shannahan *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the B2B context seems relevant to test the proposed
8
9 model.
10

11
12 -----
13 Place Figure 1 about here
14
15 -----
16

17 A web-based survey was prepared and shared by email with an online panel of
18
19 salespeople. Respondents were incentivized to participate. A link was shared by email with 3,367
20
21 salespeople. Two reminders were sent to drive additional involvement. There were 642
22
23 respondents (19.1% response rate). Filtering questions were included to check the eligibility of
24
25 salespeople to participate in the study. Only B2B working salespeople (322 respondents) were
26
27 allowed to complete the survey. Incomplete responses and respondents who failed the attention
28
29 checks were eliminated (9 responses), leaving a final sample of 313 B2B salespeople (9.3%
30
31 effective response rate). We also checked for “straight-line” responses, unrealistic answers, and
32
33 inconsistent responses. Nonresponse bias was not an issue after comparing early and late
34
35 respondents across the study and demographic variables (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). The
36
37 final sample details are summarized in Table 2.
38
39
40
41

42 -----
43 Place Table 2 about here
44
45 -----
46

47 **Measures**

48
49 The measures employed were adapted from prior studies. Moral identity centrality is
50
51 operationalized as the degree to which traits such as caring, compassionate, fair, friendly,
52
53 generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind are important to a salesperson’s identity (e.g.,
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Aquino and Reed, 2002; Hardy and Carlo, 2011). The adapted measure captures the
4 salesperson's internalization of these moral traits into the self. Scholars have mainly applied the
5 internalization dimension to characterize moral identity centrality (e.g., Aquino *et al.*, 2009;
6 Hannah *et al.*, 2020; Skarlicki *et al.*, 2016).
7
8
9
10
11

12 To measure the salesperson's inclusion of other in the self, a single item pictorial
13 measure (Venn-like diagram) was adopted from Aron *et al.* (1992). This measure comprises
14 seven pairs of circles; the first circle is labeled *self* and the second is labeled *other*. The pairs of
15 circles are with various levels of overlap to symbolize the levels of closeness respondents have
16 with others. Respondents were directed to choose the pair that most accurately resembles the
17 degree of closeness between the *self* and *other*. The circle of moral regard measure developed by
18 Reed and Aquino (2003) was adapted. Respondents reported the extent to which they believe
19 they have a "moral or ethical obligation to show concern for the welfare and interests" of
20 different groups, such as "people of different ethnicities". SOCO measures were based on the
21 scales developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982). A five-item measure was adapted to collect
22 information about salesperson value co-creation behavior (O'Cass and Ngo, 2012).
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 Salesperson self-construal was measured using a shortened measure of the original
39 measure developed by Singelis (1994). A higher score on this measure indicates the respondent's
40 stronger (weaker) independent (interdependent) self-construal. On average, we found
41 respondents to be quite independent, as our sample was collected in the US. Average percentage
42 of the sales quota achieved based on the assigned quota was collected to measure sales
43 performance (e.g., Lussier *et al.*, 2021; Mulki and Lassk, 2019).
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

51 Job satisfaction was included to the model as a covariate to control its possible impact on
52 SOCO and value co-creation behavior (e.g., Alnakhli *et al.*, 2020; Pettijohn *et al.*, 2007). Further,
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 salesperson experience, age, and education level were added to the model as covariates (e.g.,
4 Agnihotri *et al.*, 2017; Gabler *et al.*, 2017; Jaramillo and Grisaffe, 2009). Finally, we checked for
5 any confounding effect that could result from social desirability response bias. For this, we used
6 a shortened measure of social desirability (Reynolds, 1982). The analysis shows that no concern
7 was found when controlling for the impact of social desirability on all endogenous variables.
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Place Table 3 about here

Results

Measurement model

The conceptual model was tested using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM supports the analysis of complex models that include single-item measures and multiple interaction effects (Chin *et al.*, 2003). PLS-SEM has advantages when testing non-normal data and a small sample size relative to the number of constructs and items included in the model (Hair *et al.*, 2011). PLS-SEM is appropriate for B2B populations and is a suitable method to achieve convergence (Hair *et al.*, 2019). In reporting the findings, we follow the guidelines suggested by Benitez *et al.* (2020). In our analysis, we first examined the psychometric properties of the measures by checking Cronbach's Alpha (α), composite reliability, and AVE to assess reliability and validity before testing the structural model.

In the first measurement model we ran, one of the items in the moral identity centrality measure was of poor loading and, thus, was removed. After running the model for the second

1
2
3 time, we checked again and found that all items to load significantly ($p < .05$) on their
4
5 corresponding measures. We used the bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples to assess the
6
7 significance levels of the loadings and coefficients. We did not find any indication of high
8
9 problematic cross-loading items (Gefen and Straub, 2005). These results provided evidence of
10
11 convergent validity.
12
13

14
15 For all multi-item measures, α was greater than .7, and CR was greater than .8,
16
17 supporting the reliability and internal consistency of the measures. The lowest AVE was equal to
18
19 .53—self-construal scale. We compared correlations among constructs to the square root AVE in
20
21 line with the Fornell-Larcker criterion. None of the correlations was greater than the square root
22
23 AVE compared to, providing evidence of discriminant validity. We also utilized the heterotrait–
24
25 monotrait ratio test (HTMT) recommended by Henseler *et al.* (2015). The HTMT compares “the
26
27 indicator correlations between constructs with the correlations within indicators of the same
28
29 construct” (Hair *et al.*, 2019, p. 571). None of the HTMT pairs was higher than .85, indicating
30
31 discriminant validity (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). Further, the bootstrapped confidence interval for
32
33 HTMT values did not include the threshold value (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the absence of
34
35 problematic items that cross-loaded on constructs other than the one assigned to provide
36
37 evidence supported the discriminant validity found (Chin, 1998).
38
39
40
41

42
43 While common method bias is less likely to be found in the presence of valid and reliable
44
45 measures (Fuller *et al.*, 2016), we used multiple techniques to check and control for such bias. To
46
47 check for common method variance, procedural remedies based on the work of Podsakoff *et al.*
48
49 (2003), including measures separation, different scale points, and utilization of well-established
50
51 measures, were in place during data collection. For example, the measure of moral identity
52
53 centrality, a focal construct in the study, was presented as a personal factor, not specifically
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 related to sales, on a separate survey webpage. The separation method was used with other sales-
4 related constructs. Specifically, separation between predictor and criterion variables was taken
5 into consideration. In addition, different response formats (see Appendix) were utilized to avoid
6 the use of common, single-scale anchors (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).
7
8
9

10
11
12 Harman's single factor technique was utilized by running an exploratory factor analysis
13 with one-factor model. The findings suggest that a single-factor model is not better than a
14 multiple-factor model. Next, a full collinearity assessment test was conducted. None of the
15 constructs and items held at a variance inflation factor greater than the 3.3 (Kock, 2015).
16
17 Moreover, we followed the marker variable criterion advanced by Lindell and Whitney (2001)
18 using "survey completion duration" as the marker variable, which theoretically is not linked to
19 other variables in the model. We found survey completion duration to have nonsignificant
20 correlations with the variables in the model. The path model showed consistent results with and
21 without the inclusion of the marker variable. Moreover, consistent results were replicated when
22 partialling the effect of social desirability on the model variables (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). In
23 sum, the procedural steps and statistical analyses conducted evinced no common method bias
24 concerns.
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 ***Structural model***

41
42 Multiple structural models were tested by observing the standardized path coefficients of the
43 links postulated and their significance levels using the bootstrapping method with 5,000
44 subsamples. Results from the three models tested are summarized in Table 4, which also includes
45 the goodness-of-fit measures ($SRMR < .08$, $d_{ULS} < HI_{95}$, and $d_G < HI_{95}$). The measures are in line
46 with suggested decision criteria (e.g., Benitez *et al.*, 2020; Hu and Bentler, 1999), offering
47 support for the good fit of the models.
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 We tested multiple models starting with the *direct effects model*. We included the control
4 variables and direct effects of moral identity centrality on all endogenous variables (i.e., the
5 circle of moral regard, the inclusion of other in the self, SO, CO, value co-creation, and sales
6 performance). In addition, we included the effects of the circle of moral regard and inclusion of
7 other in the self on SO, CO, and value co-creation. The results support the positive relationship
8 (H₁) between moral identity centrality and value co-creation behavior ($\beta = .58, p < .01$).
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16

17 Findings from the *direct effects model* support H₂ and H₃, in which moral identity
18 centrality was found to positively impact CO ($\beta = .57, p < .01$) and negatively impact SO ($\beta =$
19 $-.19, p < .01$). Moreover, moral identity centrality increased salesperson inclusion of other in the
20 self ($\beta = .26, p < .01$) and expanded her/his circle of moral regard ($\beta = .50, p < .01$). These
21 outcomes support H₄ and H₇. Further, these results demonstrate that the inclusion of other in the
22 self has a nonsignificant effect on SO and CO. Thus, H₅ and H₆ are not supported. Regarding the
23 impacts of the circle of moral regard, the expansion of this circle led to an increase in salesperson
24 CO ($\beta = .22, p < .01$) and decrease in SO ($\beta = -.21, p < .01$). This supports H₈ and H₉. Moreover,
25 findings show a positive relationship between value co-creation and sales performance ($\beta = .37,$
26 $p < .01$), supporting H₁₂. Other findings show a positive relationship between the expansion of
27 the circle of moral regard and inclusion of other in the self ($\beta = .23, p < .01$). CO positively
28 influenced sales performance ($\beta = .17, p < .05$) and job satisfaction was positively related to CO
29 ($\beta = .21, p < .01$), value co-creation ($\beta = .27, p < .01$), and sales performance ($\beta = .21, p < .01$).
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50 Finally, salesperson age has a positive relationship with CO ($\beta = .07, p < .05$) and a negative
51 relationship with SO ($\beta = -.19, p < .01$).
52

53 Next, we tested the *extended model*. In this model, besides the relationships examined in
54 the *direct effects model*, we included links from salesperson inclusion of other in the self, circle
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 of moral regard, SO, and CO to value co-creation. While we did not hypothesize any effect of the
4 inclusion of other in the self and circle of moral regard on value co-creation behavior, testing
5 these links is important to provide a comprehensive perspective of the moral identity-based
6 process proposed. In the *extended model*, results show that the influence of moral identity
7 centrality on value co-creation dropped to $\beta = .18, p < .05$ from $\beta = .58, p < .01$ in the *direct*
8 *effects model* ($\Delta\beta = .4; p < .01$). To further examine the process linking moral identity centrality
9 and value co-creation, we examined the effects of other variables on value co-creation. We found
10 that both the circle of moral regard ($\beta = .13, p < .05$) and inclusion of other in the self ($\beta = .13, p$
11 $< .05$) had positive effects on value co-creation. These additional links provide a better
12 understanding of how moral identity centrality and value co-creation are directly and indirectly
13 related. The results support H₁₀, with a positive effect of CO on value co-creation ($\beta = .48, p <$
14 $.01$). The negative relationship between SO and value co-creation (H₁₁) is not supported. The
15 results from the *direct effects* and *extended models* provide sufficient support for the proposed
16 process (i.e., identity → self other perspective → psychological state → outcomes) linking
17 salesperson moral identity centrality to SOCO, value co-creation, and performance.
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 Finally, to examine how salesperson self-construal moderates the effects of moral identity
39 centrality (H₁₃), we tested a *full model* (Table 4) including all hypothesized relationships. The
40 *full model* consists of the independent self-construal construct and an interaction term between
41 moral identity centrality and independent self-construal, with links between the interaction term
42 and the endogenous variables. Findings from the *full model* support the relationships found in the
43 *direct effects* and *extended models*.
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

51 -----
52 Place Table 4 about here
53 -----
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Our findings validate that salesperson self-construal moderated three of the five effects of moral identity centrality examined concerning the interaction effects tested. Specifically, we found that independent self-construal dampened the positive effects of moral identity centrality on CO (H_{13b}), the inclusion of other in the self (H_{13d}), and the circle of moral regard (H_{13e}). This is evident in the negative interaction effects of moral identity centrality and independent self-construal on CO ($\beta = -.09, p < .05$), inclusion of other in the self ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$), and circle of moral regard ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$). The results do not support H_{13a} and H_{13c} . Therefore, this research finds that higher independent self-construal works as a boundary form to the favorable effects of moral identity centrality. For additional examination of the interaction effects found, we followed the techniques recommended by Aiken *et al.* (1991) to plot these effects in Figures 2(a), (b), and (c). The significant interaction effects show independent self-construal acting as an inhibitor of the positive effects of salesperson moral identity on the expansion of the circle of moral regard, the inclusion of other in the self, and CO. Figure 2(a) evinces that salespeople who hold low independent self-construal focus more on customer-oriented selling. Figure 2(b) reveals that moral identity centrality has a limited effect in increasing the inclusion of other in the self when a salesperson holds high independent self-construal. Low independent self-construal makes moral identity centrality more effective in driving a salesperson to include other in the self. Finally, Figure 2(c) shows a negative moderating effect of independent self-construal on the relationship between salesperson moral identity centrality and the circle of moral regard. The circle of moral regard is mostly expanded when a salesperson holds low independent self-construal.

Place Figure 2 about here

1
2
3 The variance explained (R^2) of the latent factors is as follows: circle of moral regard =
4
5 .39; inclusion of other in the self = .14; CO = .63; SO = .16; value co-creation = .59; and sales
6
7 performance = .41. Additional findings show a negative effect of independent self-construal on a
8
9 salesperson's inclusion of other in the self ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$). Table 5 includes a summary of the
10
11 findings.
12
13

14
15 -----
16 Place Table 5 about here
17 -----
18
19

20 Discussion

21
22 Moral issues are relevant to sales contexts, as salespeople convey many ethical dilemmas in their
23
24 work (Valentine, 2009). Developing an understanding of the salesforce's moral self and
25
26 behaviors is vital for managers because their salespeople often encounter conditions that
27
28 challenge them to balance several goals associated with personal interests, the firm's objectives,
29
30 and customers' interests. This study investigated the relationship between salesperson moral
31
32 identity centrality and value co-creation, considering the process through which this relationship
33
34 takes place.
35
36
37

38
39 Salespeople who count moral identity as key to self-definition are motivated to keep
40
41 customers' best interests in mind while sacrificing their self-interest. They follow a customer-
42
43 centric approach to complete their job tasks and avoid misleading and pressure selling. While
44
45 value co-creation behavior requires significant resources, moral identity centrality helps
46
47 salespeople in the make-or-break moment. In addition, customer-oriented salespeople can show
48
49 their value expressive attitudes toward buyers by exhibiting value co-creation behavior to
50
51 maximize the benefits buyers derive from an exchange.
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Moral identity centrality has a positive effect on value co-creation even after accounting
4 for the impact of circle of moral regard, inclusion of other in the self, and CO. As such, a
5 salesperson's behaviors are to a great extent driven by the salesperson identity. Specifically, a
6 salesperson's moral identity centrality is more than a self-system; it is the salesperson's mental
7 model of self. Moral identity centrality drives salespeople to have buyers' best interests in mind.
8 Our study suggests that value co-creation is a moral identity-promoting behavior that can
9 enhance sales performance. This adds to previous literature highlighting the vital role salesforce
10 morality plays in developing quality relationships between customers and salespeople (Evans *et*
11 *al.*, 2012; Ingram *et al.*, 2007).
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

24 The mechanisms through which moral identity centrality increases a salesperson's value
25 co-creation behavior are proposed to manifest through an *identity*→ *self other perspective*→
26 *psychological states*→ *behavioral outcomes process*. Specifically, the process shows that
27 identity (moral identity) acts as a self-definitional factor that guides individuals' (salespeople)
28 interpretation of their moral obligation and relationships with others. As a result, this influences
29 their psychological states and the way they approach (SOCO) others (customers), leading to
30 behavioral outcomes (value co-creation) and sales outcomes (sales performance). The process
31 developed and supported in this study can be used in the ongoing research stream of identity-
32 based marketing.
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

44 The expansion of the circle of moral regard is a vital mechanism of how moral identity
45 centrality drives salespeople to focus on customers first and resist ceding to their self-interests,
46 leading to increased value co-creation. Besides, the circle of moral regard has a direct favorable
47 influence on value co-creation. Therefore, the moral obligation and concern a salesperson has for
48 the welfare of others stimulate additional cooperation with buyers to drive mutual co-creation of
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 value. While salesperson moral identity centrality positively affects the inclusion of other in the
4 self, our findings regarding the inclusion of other in the self construct show that it directly
5 influences value co-creation behavior. Our findings also show the inclusion of other in the self
6 and circle of moral regard to be positively related.
7
8
9

10
11
12 Although we suggested that salesperson SO would be negatively related to value co-
13 creation, our findings provide no support for this effect. Therefore, it could be that selling-
14 oriented salespeople have no interest in co-creating value, as their focus is on making the sale.
15
16
17 Our study supports the notion in B2B sales that CO is the preferred orientation owing to its
18 favorable outcomes for buyers, salespeople, and selling organizations compared to SO.
19
20
21
22

23 24 **Theoretical implications**

25
26 From a theoretical perspective, our research has several implications. First, developing a better
27 understanding of the moral identity centrality construct is essential for theory because
28 salespeople regularly face moral dilemmas as they try to balance multiple interests concerning
29 their job objectives, organization's goals, and customers' interests (Agnihotri *et al.*, 2012b). Shao
30 *et al.* (2008) suggest that moral identity centrality is a crucial driver of moral motivation and
31 behavior and can determine moral actions in an organization. Despite the natural alignment of
32 the moral identity centrality construct in the salesperson context, there has been minimal
33 scholarly exploration in this area.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

44
45 The focus on identity-based marketing can be extended to sales research, as salesperson
46 identity can be a crucial factor affecting how salespeople approach and behave with buyers. The
47 salesperson's moral identity centrality has been found to increase CO and value co-creation
48 behavior, leading to improved sales performance. These favorable consequences are driven by
49 the moral concern and obligations moral identity holds. We believe that our developed model is a
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 valuable step toward understanding the role of moral identity centrality in sales. This process
4 applies to identity-based marketing and sales studies in the areas of relationship marketing and
5 value-based selling.
6
7
8

9
10 Second, we believe our findings add to the understanding of SOCO's embeddedness in
11 psychological mechanisms (Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Zablah *et al.*, 2012b). Overlooking the moral
12 identity centrality concept in sales research undermines the development of a better
13 understanding of the role identity plays in explaining salesperson orientations and behaviors. We
14 found that a salesperson's SOCO is highly affected by moral identity centrality, which is related
15 to the salesperson's sense of self, and is developed across different life stages, particularly during
16 early ones. We have also shown that value co-creation is an outcome of the personal identities
17 and psychological states of salespeople. This adds to our understanding of why salespeople differ
18 in their engagement in value co-creation.
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30
31 Third, the moderating role of salesperson self-construal in moral identity centrality
32 effects advances the sales theory. This study provides a better understanding of the role of the
33 self in driving salespeople to interact with others, specifically customers (e.g., Lam *et al.*, 2012).
34 Due to the discrepancy found in the literature and the possible interplay between moral-self and
35 self-construal (e.g., Henrich *et al.*, 2010; Hertz and Krettenauer, 2016), we examined how likely
36 it is that salesperson self-construal moderates the effects of moral identity centrality. While our
37 study offers evidence that moral identity centrality has positive outcomes in sales, our
38 moderation analysis results show that self-construal plays an important role in moral identity
39 research. Salesperson independent self-construal has been found to suppress the positive effects
40 of salesperson moral identity centrality on the inclusion of other in the self, expansion of the
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 circle of moral regard, and CO. Thus, independent self-construal acts as a boundary factor that
4
5 undermines the favorable effects of moral identity centrality has.
6

7 **Managerial implications**

8
9
10 The increase in business scandals, and more specifically in occupations involving sales, has
11
12 brought salespeople's moral conduct into question. Therefore, studies aimed at understanding
13
14 how salespeople can prioritize customers' needs over their own interests and act morally to
15
16 satisfy these needs offer valuable contributions. This study provides support for the importance
17
18 and applicability of moral identity centrality within sales. Contemporary research has validated
19
20 that "moral identity is neither a holistic identity structure nor a fixed trait"; instead, it is
21
22 "structured within social roles, whereby individuals tend to form distinct moral identities for
23
24 each of their various work, family and personal roles" (Wang *et al.*, 2019, p. 16). Keeping in
25
26 mind the malleable nature of moral identity, managers should try to shape the salesperson's role-
27
28 based moral identity through developmental interventions.
29
30
31

32
33 Managers recruiting salespeople to manage B2B relationships need to consider moral
34
35 identity centrality as a distinguishing requirement. When drafting a recruitment proposal to
36
37 attract salespeople, the HR and sales departments should consider using the "interview measure"
38
39 established by Frimer and Walker (2009) as a rich narrative assessment of moral identity
40
41 centrality. More so, organizations should consider incorporating selection methods that assess
42
43 the self-construal orientation of salespeople.
44
45

46
47 A primary concern for managers lies in their ability to influence salesperson moral
48
49 identity. According to Aquino and Reed (2002), people internalize moral traits, which are
50
51 influenced by symbolism. For that, sales managers, acting as leaders, portray the "right"
52
53 symbolic image. Sales managers create a sensory experience that might invoke attitudinal and
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 behavioral change. The job of sales managers is, then, to make the internalized moral traits of a
4 salesperson more centralized to her/himself. As leaders, sales managers can convey to
5 salespeople ways of navigating those politics without breaching moral principles. For example,
6 acting as servant leaders (Grisaffe *et al.*, 2016), sales managers promote the welfare of their sales
7 representatives. In addition, they work to expand the sales manager–salesperson moral circle by
8 including other stakeholders and creating a mutual understanding of the sales role among all
9 parties.

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Prior studies have demonstrated that moral identity centrality can be identified, to a great extent, through an individual's experience of community and volunteering activities (Hart *et al.*, 1998; Pratt *et al.*, 2003). Managers can attempt to upturn the stimulation of moral identity centrality by offering salespeople several situational cues in the workplace that can direct their devotion toward the moral facets of their self-concept (Aquino *et al.*, 2009; Mulder and Aquino, 2013). For example, sales organizations need to implement identity-based ethics training and support their salespeople in providing community and civic-related services that are known to keep moral identity centrality more salient. Neesham and Gu (2015) recommend an “appeal to self-perceptions of moral identity” as a teaching/learning process and a leverage strategy that can strengthen moral judgment.

One of the strengths of moral identity centrality is that it leans toward self-reinforcing and other-reinforcing. As such, salespeople acting morally toward customers and peers are likely to reinforce their moral identity centrality. We believe that managers, peers, and organizational culture can play a role in strengthening a salesperson's moral identity. Salespeople may develop multiple self-conceptual identities due to specific normative requirements, such as moral identity centrality, professional identity, and gender identity. However, leaders need to provide an

1
2
3 environment for their salesforce that makes moral identity more salient. They must lead as moral
4 exemplars to improve morality in the attitudes and decision-making of their salespeople.
5

6
7 Likewise, management must recognize salespeople's moral decisions and behaviors to reinforce
8 the salespeople's moral identities.
9

10 11 12 **Limitations and future research** 13

14 Owing to the lack of similar research on moral identity in sales, we call for more studies to
15 investigate the role of salesperson moral identity centrality. We encourage future studies to test
16 the relations between salesperson moral identity centrality and other sales concepts, such as
17 adaptability, emotional intelligence, emotional labor, and service provision. Future studies must
18 further clarify the different processes through which salesperson moral identity centrality can
19 drive proactive outcomes and performance. Researchers can build on the present research results
20 to examine the role of moral identity in business-to-consumer (B2C) contexts.
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30
31 While our study focused on the interface between salespeople and buyers, we argue that
32 moral identity centrality plays a significant role in the interface between salespeople and their
33 managers, peers, and others in the organization. Thus, future studies must examine the role of
34 moral identity centrality in intra-organizational and external interfaces that affect the
35 performance of salespeople. We suggest that moral identity centrality supports the salesperson's
36 performance by facilitating the salesperson's relationships with colleagues and other employees.
37 Accordingly, moral identity centrality can support prosocial and teamwork behaviors and
38 prohibit corrupted ones in the workplace, leading to an increase in job outcomes. Similarly, it is
39 important to understand how managers and their leadership skills and organizational culture play
40 a role in supporting or prohibiting salespeople's dependence on moral identity to guide their
41 decisions and behaviors.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 A recent study shows that organizations embrace moral identity centrality and this,
4
5 together with employee moral identity centrality, drives citizenship behaviors and decreases
6
7 unethical prosocial acts (Matherne *et al.*, 2018). This suggests that employees perceive
8
9 organizations to hold moral identity centrality, which can affect their own moral identities.
10
11 Similarly, sales organizations may utilize SO instead of CO. It is vital to understand how a
12
13 salesperson reacts to such conflicting situations when moral identity is central to the self.
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

References

- Aaker, J.L. and Williams, P. (1998), "Empathy versus pride: The influence of emotional appeals across cultures", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 241–261.
- Agnihotri, R., Gabler, C.B., Itani, O.S., Jaramillo, F. and Krush, M.T. (2017), "Salesperson ambidexterity and customer satisfaction: Examining the role of customer demandingness, adaptive selling, and role conflict", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 27–41.
- Agnihotri, R., Kothandaraman, P., Kashyap, R. and Singh, R. (2012a), "Bringing 'social' into sales: The impact of salespeople's social media use on service behaviors and value creation", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 333–348.
- Agnihotri, R. and Krush, M.T. (2015), "Salesperson empathy, ethical behaviors, and sales performance: the moderating role of trust in one's manager", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 164–174.
- Agnihotri, R., Rapp, A., Kothandaraman, P. and Singh, R.K. (2012b), "An emotion-based model of salesperson ethical behaviors", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 109 No. 2, pp. 243–257.
- Aiken, L.S., West, S.G. and Reno, R.R. (1991), *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*, Sage.
- Alnakhli, H., Singh, R., Agnihotri, R. and Itani, O.S. (2020), "From cognition to action: the effect of thought self-leadership strategies and self-monitoring on adaptive selling behavior", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 35 No. 12, pp. 1915–1927.
- Ancillai, C., Terho, H., Cardinali, S. and Pascucci, F. (2019), "Advancing social media driven sales research: Establishing conceptual foundations for B-to-B social selling", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 82, pp. 293–308.
- Aquino, K. and Becker, T.E. (2005), "Lying in negotiations: How individual and situational factors influence the use of neutralization strategies", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26 No. 6, pp. 661–679.
- Aquino, K., Freeman, D., Reed, I.I., Lim, V.K. and Felps, W. (2009), "Testing a social-cognitive model of moral behavior: the interactive influence of situations and moral identity centrality", *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, Vol. 97 No. 1, pp. 123–141.
- Aquino, K. and Reed, I.I. (2002), "The self-importance of moral identity", *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, Vol. 83 No. 6, pp. 1423–1440.
- Armstrong, J.S. and Overton, T.S. (1977), "Estimating nonresponse bias in mail surveys", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 396–402.

- 1
2
3 Aron, A., Aron, E.N. and Smollan, D. (1992), "Inclusion of other in the self scale and the
4 structure of interpersonal closeness", *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, Vol.
5 63 No. 4, pp. 596–612.
- 7 Aron, A., Aron, E.N., Tudor, M. and Nelson, G. (1991), "Close relationships as including other
8 in the self", *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, Vol. 60 No. 2, pp. 241–253.
- 10 Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., Mashek, D., Lewandowski, G., Wright, S.C. and Aron, E.N.
11 (2004), "Including others in the self", *European Review of Social Psychology*, Vol. 15
12 No. 1, pp. 101–132.
- 14 Bagozzi, R.P., Verbeke, W.J., van den Berg, W.E., Rietdijk, W.J., Dietvorst, R.C. and Worm, L.
15 (2012), "Genetic and neurological foundations of customer orientation: field and
16 experimental evidence", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 40 No. 5, pp.
17 639–658.
- 19 Bandura, A. (1999), "Social cognitive theory of personality", *Handbook of Personality*, Vol. 2,
20 pp. 154–196.
- 22 Baumann, J. and Le Meunier-FitzHugh, K. (2014), "Trust as a facilitator of co-creation in
23 customer-salesperson interaction—an imperative for the realization of episodic and
24 relational value?", *AMS Review*, Vol. 4 No. 1–2, pp. 5–20.
- 26 Benitez, J., Henseler, J., Castillo, A. and Schuberth, F. (2020), "How to perform and report an
27 impactful analysis using partial least squares: Guidelines for confirmatory and
28 explanatory IS research", *Information & Management*, Vol. 57 No. 2, p. 103168.
- 30 Blocker, C.P., Cannon, J.P., Panagopoulos, N.G. and Sager, J.K. (2012), "The role of the sales
31 force in value creation and appropriation: New directions for research", *Journal of
32 Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 15–27.
- 34 Bochner, S. (1994), "Cross-cultural differences in the self concept: A test of Hofstede's
35 individualism/collectivism distinction", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 25
36 No. 2, pp. 273–283.
- 38 Brown, M.E. and Treviño, L.K. (2009), "Leader–follower values congruence: Are socialized
39 charismatic leaders better able to achieve it?", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 94
40 No. 2, pp. 478–490.
- 42 Chin, W.W. (1998), "The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling",
43 *Modern Methods for Business Research*, Vol. 295 No. 2, pp. 295–336.
- 45 Chin, W.W., Marcolin, B.L. and Newsted, P.R. (2003), "A partial least squares latent variable
46 modeling approach for measuring interaction effects: Results from a Monte Carlo
47 simulation study and an electronic-mail emotion/adoption study", *Information Systems
48 Research*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 189–217.
- 50 Choi, W.J. and Winterich, K.P. (2013), "Can brands move in from the outside? How moral
51 identity enhances out-group brand attitudes", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 77 No. 2, pp.
52 96–111.
- 53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Cross, M.E., Brashear, T.G., Rigdon, E.E. and Bellenger, D.N. (2007), "Customer orientation
4 and salesperson performance", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 41 No. 7/8, pp.
5 821–835.
6
7 Cross, S.E., Bacon, P.L. and Morris, M.L. (2000), "The relational-interdependent self-construal
8 and relationships", *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, Vol. 78 No. 4, pp. 791–
9 808.
10
11 Cross, S.E., Hardin, E.E. and Gercek-Swing, B. (2011), "The what, how, why, and where of self-
12 construal", *Personality & Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 142–179.
13
14 DeCelles, K.A., DeRue, D.S., Margolis, J.D. and Ceranic, T.L. (2012), "Does power corrupt or
15 enable? When and why power facilitates self-interested behavior", *Journal of Applied*
16 *Psychology*, Vol. 97 No. 3, pp. 681–689.
17
18 Deeter-Schmelz, D.R. and Sojka, J.Z. (2007), "Personality traits and sales performance:
19 Exploring differential effects of need for cognition and self-monitoring", *Journal of*
20 *Marketing Theory & Practice*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 145–157.
21
22 Delpechitre, D., Beeler-Connelly, L.L. and Chaker, N.N. (2018), "Customer value co-creation
23 behavior: A dyadic exploration of the influence of salesperson emotional intelligence on
24 customer participation and citizenship behavior", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 92,
25 pp. 9–24.
26
27 Deshpandé, R., Farley, J.U. and Webster, F.E. (1993), "Corporate culture, customer orientation,
28 and innovativeness in Japanese firms: A quadrad analysis", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol.
29 57 No. 1, pp. 23–37.
30
31 Evans, K.R., McFarland, R.G., Dietz, B. and Jaramillo, F. (2012), "Advancing sales performance
32 research: A focus on five underresearched topic areas", *Journal of Personal Selling &*
33 *Sales Management*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 89–105.
34
35 Franke, G.R. and Park, J.-E. (2006), "Salesperson adaptive selling behavior and customer
36 orientation: a meta-analysis", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp. 693–
37 702.
38
39 Friend, S.B., Malshe, A. and Fisher, G.J. (2019), "What drives customer Re-engagement? The
40 foundational role of the sales-service interplay in episodic value co-creation", *Industrial*
41 *Marketing Management*, Vol. 84, pp. 271–286..
42
43 Frimer, J.A. and Walker, L.J. (2009), "Reconciling the self and morality: An empirical model of
44 moral centrality development", *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 45 No. 6, pp. 1669–
45 1681.
46
47 Fuller, C.M., Simmering, M.J., Atinc, G., Atinc, Y. and Babin, B.J. (2016), "Common methods
48 variance detection in business research", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69 No. 8,
49 pp. 3192–3198.
50
51 Gabler, C.B., Agnihotri, R. and Itani, O.S. (2017), "Can salesperson guilt lead to more satisfied
52 customers? Findings from India", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 32
53 No. 7, pp. 951–961.
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Gabler, C.B., Rapp, A. and Richey, R.G. (2014), “The effect of environmental orientation on
4 salesperson effort and participation: the moderating role of organizational identification”,
5 *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 173–187.
- 6 Gefen, D. and Straub, D. (2005), “A practical guide to factorial validity using PLS-Graph:
7 Tutorial and annotated example”, *Communications of the Association for Information*
8 *Systems*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 91–109.
- 9
10
11 Giacomini, M. and Jordan, C. (2017), “Interdependent and independent self-construal”, in
12 Zeigler-Hill, V. and Shackelford, T.K. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual*
13 *Differences*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, pp. 1–7.
- 14
15 Goad, E.A. and Jaramillo, F. (2014), “The good, the bad and the effective: a meta-analytic
16 examination of selling orientation and customer orientation on sales performance”,
17 *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 285–301.
- 18
19 Grisaffe, D.B., VanMeter, R. and Chonko, L.B. (2016), “Serving first for the benefit of others:
20 preliminary evidence for a hierarchical conceptualization of servant leadership”, *Journal*
21 *of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 40–58.
- 22
23 Grouzet, F.M., Kasser, T., Ahuvia, A., Dols, J.M.F., Kim, Y., Lau, S., Ryan, R.M., *et al.* (2005),
24 “The structure of goal contents across 15 cultures”, *Journal of Personality & Social*
25 *Psychology*, Vol. 89 No. 5, pp. 800–816.
- 26
27 Haas, A., Snehota, I. and Corsaro, D. (2012), “Creating value in business relationships: The role
28 of sales”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 94–105.
- 29
30 Hair, J.F., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2011), “PLS-SEM: Indeed a silver bullet”, *Journal of*
31 *Marketing Theory & Practice*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 139–152.
- 32
33 Hair, J.F., Sarstedt, M. and Ringle, C.M. (2019), “Rethinking some of the rethinking of partial
34 least squares”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 53 No. 4, pp. 566–584.
- 35
36 Han, S. and Humphreys, G. (2016), “Self-construal: A cultural framework for brain function”,
37 *Current Opinion in Psychology*, Vol. 8, pp. 10–14.
- 38
39 Hannah, S.T., Thompson, R.L. and Herbst, K.C. (2020), “Moral identity complexity: Situated
40 morality within and across work and social roles”, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 46 No.
41 5, pp. 726–757.
- 42
43 Hardy, S.A., Bhattacharjee, A., Reed II, A. and Aquino, K. (2010), “Moral identity and
44 psychological distance: The case of adolescent parental socialization”, *Journal of*
45 *Adolescence*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 111–123.
- 46
47 Hardy, S.A. and Carlo, G. (2011), “Moral identity”, *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*,
48 Springer, pp. 495–513.
- 49
50 Hardy, S.A., Walker, L.J., Olsen, J.A., Woodbury, R.D. and Hickman, J.R. (2014), “Moral
51 identity as moral ideal self: links to adolescent outcomes”, *Developmental Psychology*,
52 Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 45–57.
- 53
54 Hardy, S.A., Walker, L.J., Rackham, D.D. and Olsen, J.A. (2012), “Religiosity and adolescent
55 empathy and aggression: The mediating role of moral identity”, *Psychology of Religion*
56 *& Spirituality*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 237–248.
- 57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Hart, D., Atkins, R. and Ford, D. (1998), "Urban America as a context for the development of
4 moral identity in adolescence", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 513–530.
- 5
6 Harter, S. (1993), "Causes and consequences of low self-esteem in children and adolescents",
7 *Self-Esteem*, Springer, pp. 87–116.
- 8
9 Hartmann, N.N., Wieland, H. and Vargo, S.L. (2018), "Converging on a new theoretical
10 foundation for selling", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 82 No. 2, pp. 1–18.
- 11
12 He, H., Zhu, W. and Zheng, X. (2014), "Procedural justice and employee engagement: Roles of
13 organizational identification and moral identity centrality", *Journal of Business Ethics*,
14 Vol. 122 No. 4, pp. 681–695.
- 15
16 Henrich, J., Heine, S.J. and Norenzayan, A. (2010), "Most people are not WEIRD", *Nature*, Vol.
17 466 No. 7302, p. 29.
- 18
19 Henseler, J., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2015), "A new criterion for assessing discriminant
20 validity in variance-based structural equation modeling", *Journal of the Academy of
21 Marketing Science*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 115–135.
- 22
23 Hertz, S.G. and Krettenauer, T. (2016), "Does moral identity effectively predict moral behavior?:
24 A meta-analysis", *Review of General Psychology*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 129–140.
- 25
26 Hohenschwert, L. (2012), "Salespeople's value creation roles in customer interaction: An
27 empirical study", *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 145–166.
- 28
29 Hohenschwert, L. and Geiger, S. (2015), "Interpersonal influence strategies in complex B2B
30 sales and the socio-cognitive construction of relationship value", *Industrial Marketing
31 Management*, Vol. 49, pp. 139–150.
- 32
33 Hu, L. and Bentler, P.M. (1999), "Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis:
34 Conventional criteria versus new alternatives", *Structural Equation Modeling: A
35 Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 1–55.
- 36
37 Ingram, T.N., LaForge, R.W. and Schwegler Jr, C.H. (2007), "Salesperson ethical decision
38 making: The impact of sales leadership and sales management control strategy", *Journal
39 of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 301–315.
- 40
41 Itani, O.S., Goad, E.A. and Jaramillo, F. (2019), "Building customer relationships while
42 achieving sales performance results: Is listening the holy grail of sales?", *Journal of
43 Business Research*, Vol. 102, pp. 120–130.
- 44
45 Itani, O.S., Jaramillo, F. and Paesbrugge, B. (2020), "Between a rock and a hard place: Seizing
46 the opportunity of demanding customers by means of frontline service behaviors",
47 *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 53, p. 101978.
- 48
49 Itani, O.S., Kalra, A., Chaker, N.N. and Singh, R. (2021), "'Because you are a part of me':
50 Assessing the effects of salesperson social media use on job outcomes and the
51 moderating roles of moral identity and gender", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol.
52 98, pp. 283–298.
- 53
54 Jaramillo, F. and Grisaffe, D.B. (2009), "Does customer orientation impact objective sales
55 performance? Insights from a longitudinal model in direct selling", *Journal of Personal
56 Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 167–178.
- 57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Jennings, P.L., Mitchell, M.S. and Hannah, S.T. (2015), “The moral self: A review and
4 integration of the literature”, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 36 No. S1, pp.
5 S104–S168.
6
7 Johnson, C., Kaski, T., Karsten, Y., Alamäki, A. and Stack, S. (2021), “The role of salesperson
8 emotional behavior in value proposition co-creation”, *Journal of Services Marketing*,
9 Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-11-](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-11-2019-0455)
10 [2019-0455](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-11-2019-0455).
11
12 Jolson, M.A. (1997), “Broadening the scope of relationship selling”, *Journal of Personal Selling*
13 *& Sales Management*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 75–88.
14
15 Kaski, T., Niemi, J. and Pullins, E. (2018), “Rapport building in authentic B2B sales
16 interaction”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 69, pp. 235–252.
17
18 Kaski, T.A., Hautamaki, P., Pullins, E.B. and Kock, H. (2017), “Buyer versus salesperson
19 expectations for an initial B2B sales meeting”, *Journal of Business & Industrial*
20 *Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 46–56.
21
22 Kemp, E., Leila Borders, A. and Ricks, J.M. (2013), “Sales manager support: fostering emotional
23 health in salespeople”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47 No. 3/4, pp. 635–654.
24
25 Kim, J.-H. and Hyun, Y.J. (2013), “The importance of social and ideal social dimensions in self-
26 congruity research”, *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 39–49.
27
28 Kitayama, S. and Park, J. (2014), “Error-related brain activity reveals self-centric motivation:
29 culture matters”, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, Vol. 143 No. 1, pp. 62–
30 70.
31
32 Kock, N. (2015), “Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach”,
33 *International Journal of E-Collaboration*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 1–10.
34
35 Kohtamäki, M. and Partanen, J. (2016), “Co-creating value from knowledge-intensive business
36 services in manufacturing firms: The moderating role of relationship learning in supplier–
37 customer interactions”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69 No. 7, pp. 2498–2506.
38
39 La Rocca, A., Moscatelli, P., Perna, A. and Snehota, I. (2016), “Customer involvement in new
40 product development in B2B: The role of sales”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol.
41 58, pp. 45–57.
42
43 Laham, S.M. (2009), “Expanding the moral circle: Inclusion and exclusion mindsets and the
44 circle of moral regard”, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp.
45 250–253.
46
47 Lalwani, A.K. (2009), “The distinct influence of cognitive busyness and need for closure on
48 cultural differences in socially desirable responding”, *Journal of Consumer Research*,
49 Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 305–316.
50
51 Lam, S.K., Ahearne, M. and Schillewaert, N. (2012), “A multinational examination of the
52 symbolic–instrumental framework of consumer–brand identification”, *Journal of*
53 *International Business Studies*, Vol. 43 No. 3, pp. 306–331.
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Levine, M., Prosser, A., Evans, D. and Reicher, S. (2005), "Identity and emergency intervention:
4 How social group membership and inclusiveness of group boundaries shape helping
5 behavior", *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 443–453.
- 6 Liinamaa, J., Viljanen, M., Hurmerinta, A., Ivanova-Gongne, M., Luotola, H. and Gustafsson,
7 M. (2016), "Performance-based and functional contracting in value-based solution
8 selling", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 59, pp. 37–49.
- 9
10
11 Lindell, M.K. and Whitney, D.J. (2001), "Accounting for common method variance in cross-
12 sectional research designs", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 86 No. 1, pp. 114–121.
- 13
14 Liu, Y. and Zhao, X. (2020), "Successful implementation of value-based selling: a value co-
15 creation and dynamic capabilities perspective", *Journal of Business & Industrial*
16 *Marketing*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 372–389.
- 17
18 Lussier, B., Philp, M., Hartmann, N.N. and Wieland, H. (2021), "Social anxiety and salesperson
19 performance: The roles of mindful acceptance and perceived sales manager support",
20 *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 124, pp. 112–125.
- 21
22 Manning, G.L., Reece, B.L. and Ahearne, M. (2011), *Selling Today: Creating Customer Value*,
23 Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- 24
25 Marcos-Cuevas, J., Nätti, S., Palo, T. and Baumann, J. (2016), "Value co-creation practices and
26 capabilities: Sustained purposeful engagement across B2B systems", *Industrial*
27 *Marketing Management*, Vol. 56, pp. 97–107.
- 28
29 Markus, H.R. and Kitayama, S. (1991), "Culture and the self: Implications for cognition,
30 emotion, and motivation", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 98 No. 2, p. 224–253.
- 31
32 Markus, H.R. and Kitayama, S. (2003), "Culture, self, and the reality of the social",
33 *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 14 No. 3–4, pp. 277–283.
- 34
35 Matherne, C.F., Ring, J.K. and Farmer, S. (2018), "Organizational moral identity centrality:
36 Relationships with citizenship behaviors and unethical prosocial behaviors", *Journal of*
37 *Business & Psychology*, Vol. 33 No. 6, pp. 711–726.
- 38
39 McFerran, B., Aquino, K. and Duffy, M. (2010), "How personality and moral identity relate to
40 individuals' ethical ideology", *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 35–56.
- 41
42 Mulder, L.B. and Aquino, K. (2013), "The role of moral identity in the aftermath of dishonesty",
43 *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 121 No. 2, pp. 219–230.
- 44
45 Mulki, J. and Lassk, F.G. (2019), "Joint impact of ethical climate and external work locus of
46 control on job meaningfulness", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 99, pp. 46–56.
- 47
48 Neesham, C. and Gu, J. (2015), "Strengthening moral judgment: A moral identity-based leverage
49 strategy in business ethics education", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 131 No. 3, pp.
50 527–534.
- 51
52 O'Cass, A. and Ngo, L.V. (2012), "Creating superior customer value for B2B firms through
53 supplier firm capabilities", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 125–
54 135.
- 55
56 Opotow, S. (1996), "Affirmative action, fairness, and the scope of justice", *Journal of Social*
57 *Issues*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 19–24.

- 1
2
3 Paschen, J., Paschen, U., Pala, E. and Kietzmann, J. (2020), "Artificial intelligence (AI) and
4 value co-creation in B2B sales: Activities, actors and resources", *Australasian Marketing*
5 *Journal*, in press, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2020.06.004>.
6
7 Pettijohn, C.E., Pettijohn, L.S., Pettijohn, J.B. and Taylor, A.J. (2007), "How do the attitudes of
8 students compare with the attitudes of salespeople? A comparison of perceptions of
9 business, consumer and employer ethics", *Marketing Management Journal*, Vol. 17 No.
10 1, pp. 51–64.
11
12 Pilon, F. and Hadjielias, E. (2017), "Strategic account management as a value co-creation selling
13 model in the pharmaceutical industry", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol.
14 32 No. 2, pp. 310–325.
15
16 Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Lee, J.-Y. and Podsakoff, N.P. (2003), "Common method
17 biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended
18 remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879–903.
19
20 Pratt, M.W., Hunsberger, B., Pancer, S.M. and Alisat, S. (2003), "A longitudinal analysis of
21 personal values socialization: Correlates of a moral self-ideal in late adolescence", *Social*
22 *Development*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 563–585.
23
24 Rapp, A., Agnihotri, R. and Baker, T.L. (2015), "Competitive intelligence collection and use by
25 sales and service representatives: how managers' recognition and autonomy moderate
26 individual performance", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 43 No. 3,
27 pp. 357–374.
28
29 Reed, I.I. and Aquino, K.F. (2003), "Moral identity and the expanding circle of moral regard
30 toward out-groups", *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, Vol. 84 No. 6, p. 1270–
31 1286.
32
33 Reimer, K. and Wade-Stein, D. (2004), "Moral identity in adolescence: Self and other in
34 semantic space", *Identity*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 229–249.
35
36 Reynolds, W.M. (1982), "Development of reliable and valid short forms of the Marlowe-Crowne
37 Social Desirability Scale", *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 119–125.
38
39 Rustholkarhu, S., Hautamaki, P. and Aarikka-Stenroos, L. (2020), "Value (co-)creation in B2B
40 sales ecosystems", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. ahead-of-print No.
41 ahead-of-print, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-03-2020-0130>.
42
43 Sachdeva, S., Iliev, R. and Medin, D.L. (2009), "Sinning saints and saintly sinners: The paradox
44 of moral self-regulation", *Psychological Science*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 523–528.
45
46 Saxe, R. and Weitz, B.A. (1982), "The SOCO scale: A measure of the customer orientation of
47 salespeople", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 343–351.
48
49 Schwartz, S.H. (1994), "Are there universal aspects in the structure and contents of human
50 values?", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 19–45.
51
52 Schwepker, C.H. and Good, D.J. (2011), "Moral judgment and its impact on business-to-
53 business sales performance and customer relationships", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol.
54 98 No. 4, pp. 609–625.
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Schwepker, J.C.H. and Schultz, R.J. (2015), "Influence of the ethical servant leader and ethical
4 climate on customer value enhancing sales performance", *Journal of Personal Selling &
5 Sales Management*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 93–107.
- 6
7 Shannahan, K., Bush, A. and Shannahan, R. (2013), "Are your salespeople coachable? How
8 salesperson coachability, trait competitiveness, and transformational leadership enhance
9 sales performance", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 40–
10 54.
- 11
12 Shao, R., Aquino, K. and Freeman, D. (2008), "Beyond moral reasoning: A review of moral
13 identity research and its implications for business ethics", *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Vol.
14 18 No. 4, pp. 513–540.
- 15
16 Sheth, J.N. and Sharma, A. (2008), "The impact of the product to service shift in industrial
17 markets and the evolution of the sales organization", *Industrial Marketing Management*,
18 Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 260–269.
- 19
20 Singelis, T.M. (1994), "The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals",
21 *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 580–591.
- 22
23 Singelis, T.M., Triandis, H.C., Bhawuk, D.P. and Gelfand, M.J. (1995), "Horizontal and vertical
24 dimensions of individualism and collectivism: A theoretical and measurement
25 refinement", *Cross-Cultural Research*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 240–275.
- 26
27 Singer, P. (2011), *The Expanding Circle: Ethics, Evolution, and Moral Progress*, Princeton
28 University Press.
- 29
30 Singh, R. and Koshy, A. (2011), "Does salesperson's customer orientation create value in B2B
31 relationships? Empirical evidence from India", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol.
32 40 No. 1, pp. 78–85.
- 33
34 Skarlicki, D.P., van Jaarsveld, D.D., Shao, R., Song, Y.H. and Wang, M. (2016), "Extending the
35 multifoci perspective: The role of supervisor justice and moral identity in the relationship
36 between customer justice and customer-directed sabotage", *Journal of Applied
37 Psychology*, Vol. 101 No. 1, pp. 108–121.
- 38
39 Smith, I.H., Aquino, K., Koleva, S. and Graham, J. (2014), "The moral ties that bind . . . Even to
40 out-groups: The interactive effect of moral identity and the binding moral foundations",
41 *Psychological Science*, Vol. 25 No. 8, pp. 1554–1562.
- 42
43 Stets, J.E. and Carter, M.J. (2011), "The moral self applying identity theory", *Social Psychology
44 Quarterly*, Vol. 74 No. 2, pp. 192–215.
- 45
46 Sullivan, U.Y., Peterson, R.M. and Krishnan, V. (2012), "Value creation and firm sales
47 performance: The mediating roles of strategic account management and relationship
48 perception", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 166–173.
- 49
50 Terho, H., Eggert, A., Haas, A. and Ulaga, W. (2015), "How sales strategy translates into
51 performance: The role of salesperson customer orientation and value-based selling",
52 *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 45, pp. 12–21.
- 53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Terho, H., Eggert, A., Ulaga, W., Haas, A. and Böhm, E. (2017), "Selling value in business
4 markets: Individual and organizational factors for turning the idea into action", *Industrial*
5 *Marketing Management*, Vol. 66, pp. 42–55.
- 6
7 Terho, H., Haas, A., Eggert, A. and Ulaga, W. (2012), "'It's almost like taking the sales out of
8 selling'—Towards a conceptualization of value-based selling in business markets",
9 *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 174–185.
- 10
11 Thomas, K. (1976), "Conflict and conflict management", In Duneette (ed) Handbook of
12 Industrial and Organisational Psychology", *Chicago: Rand Mc. Nally*.
- 13
14 Töytäri, P. (2015), "Assessing value co-creation and value capture potential in services: a
15 management framework", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp.
16 254–274.
- 17
18 Töytäri, P. and Rajala, R. (2015), "Value-based selling: An organizational capability
19 perspective", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 45, pp. 101–112.
- 20
21 Triandis, H.C. (2001), "Individualism-collectivism and personality", *Journal of Personality*, Vol.
22 69 No. 6, pp. 907–924.
- 23
24 Ulaga, W. and Kohli, A.K. (2018), "The role of a solutions salesperson: Reducing uncertainty
25 and fostering adaptiveness", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 69, pp. 161–168.
- 26
27 Utz, S. (2004), "Self-construal and cooperation: Is the interdependent self more cooperative than
28 the independent self?", *Self and Identity*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 177–190.
- 29
30 Valentine, S. (2009), "Ethics training, ethical context, and sales and marketing professionals'
31 satisfaction with supervisors and coworkers", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales*
32 *Management*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 227–242.
- 33
34 Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2008), "Service-dominant logic: continuing the evolution", *Journal*
35 *of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 1–10.
- 36
37 Viio, P. and Grönroos, C. (2014), "Value-based sales process adaptation in business
38 relationships", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 43 No. 6, pp. 1085–1095.
- 39
40 Viio, P. and Grönroos, C. (2016), "How buyer–seller relationship orientation affects adaptation
41 of sales processes to the buying process", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 52, pp.
42 37–46.
- 43
44 Wang, M., Liao, H., Zhan, Y. and Shi, J. (2011), "Daily customer mistreatment and employee
45 sabotage against customers: Examining emotion and resource perspectives", *Academy of*
46 *Management Journal*, Vol. 54 No. 2, pp. 312–334.
- 47
48 Wang, Z., Xing, L., Xu, H. and Hannah, S.T. (2019), "Not all followers socially learn from
49 ethical leaders: The roles of followers' moral identity and leader identification in the
50 ethical leadership process", *Journal of Business Ethics*.
- 51
52 Wilcox, K., Kim, H.M. and Sen, S. (2009), "Why do consumers buy counterfeit luxury brands?",
53 *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 247–259.
- 54
55 Winterich, K.P., Mittal, V. and Ross Jr, W.T. (2009), "Donation behavior toward in-groups and
56 out-groups: The role of gender and moral identity", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.
57 36 No. 2, pp. 199–214.
- 58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Youniss, J. and Yates, M. (1999), "Youth service and moral-civic identity: A case for everyday
4 morality", *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 361–376.
5
6 Zablach, A.R., Bellenger, D.N., Straub, D.W. and Johnston, W.J. (2012a), "Performance
7 implications of CRM technology use: a multilevel field study of business customers and
8 their providers in the telecommunications industry", *Information Systems Research*, Vol.
9 23 No. 2, pp. 418–435.
10
11 Zablach, A.R., Franke, G.R., Brown, T.J. and Bartholomew, D.E. (2012b), "How and when does
12 customer orientation influence frontline employee job outcomes? A meta-analytic
13 evaluation", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 76 No. 3, pp. 21–40.
14
15 Zheng, X., Qin, X., Liu, X. and Liao, H. (2019), "Will creative employees always make trouble?
16 Investigating the roles of moral identity and moral disengagement", *Journal of Business
17 Ethics*, Vol. 157 No. 3, pp. 653–672.
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 1 Model

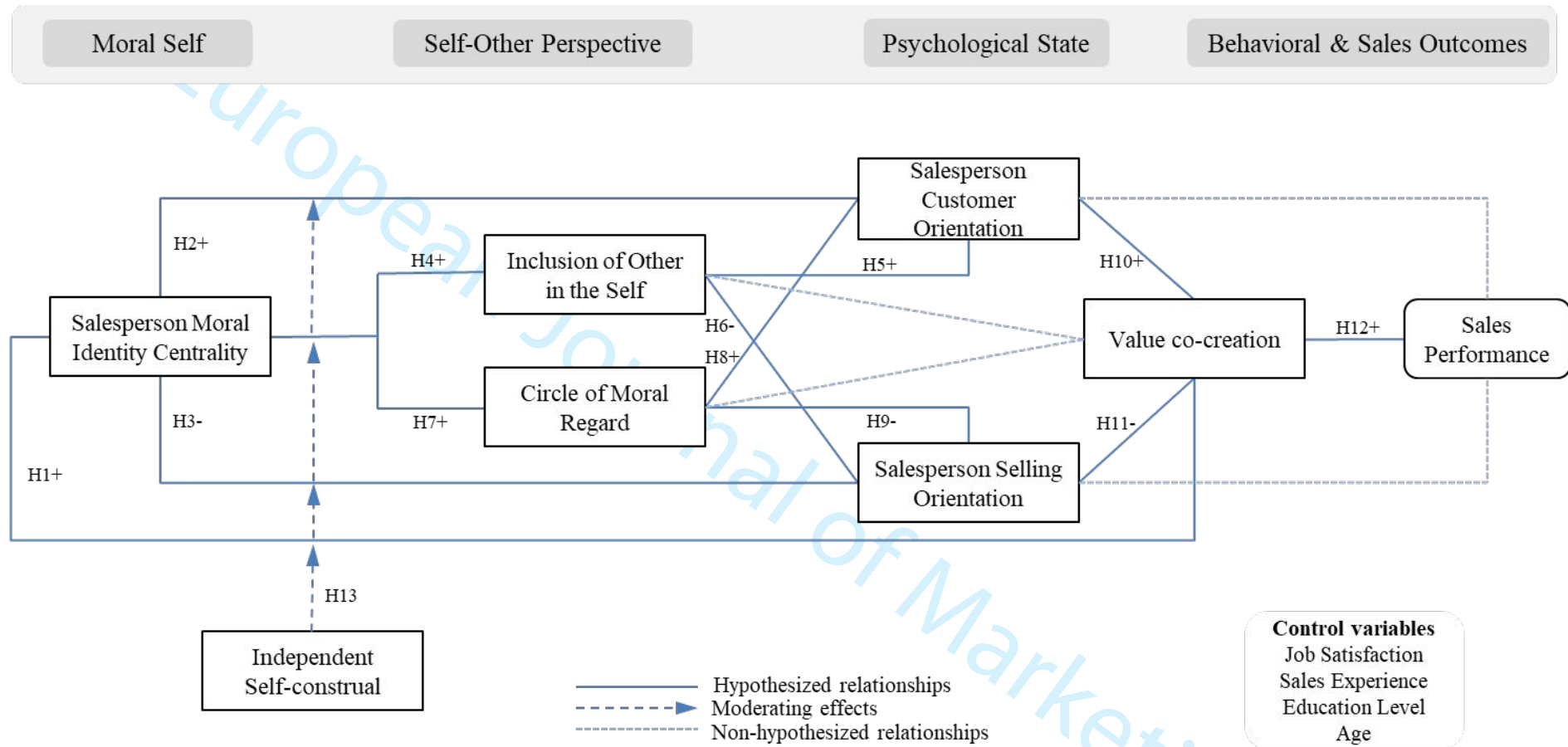
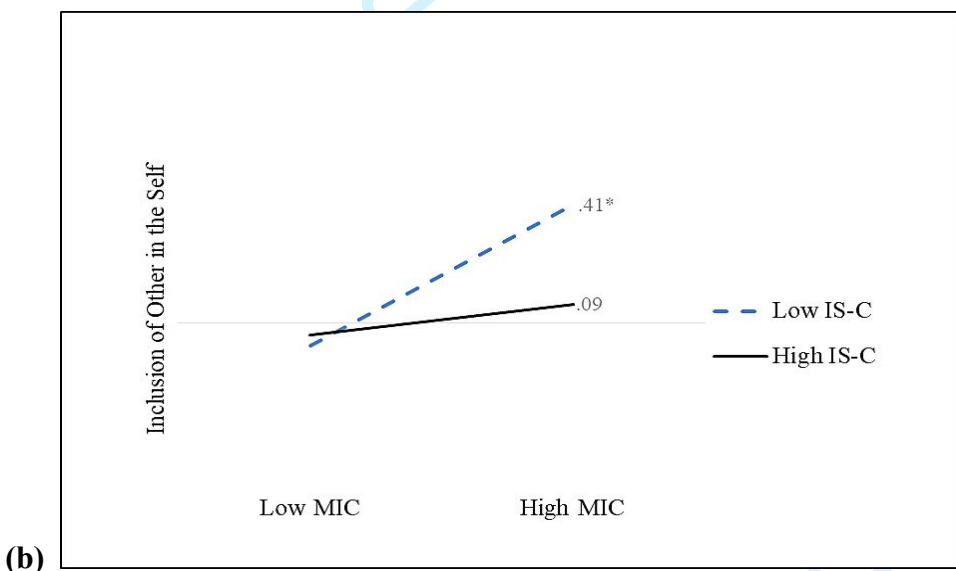
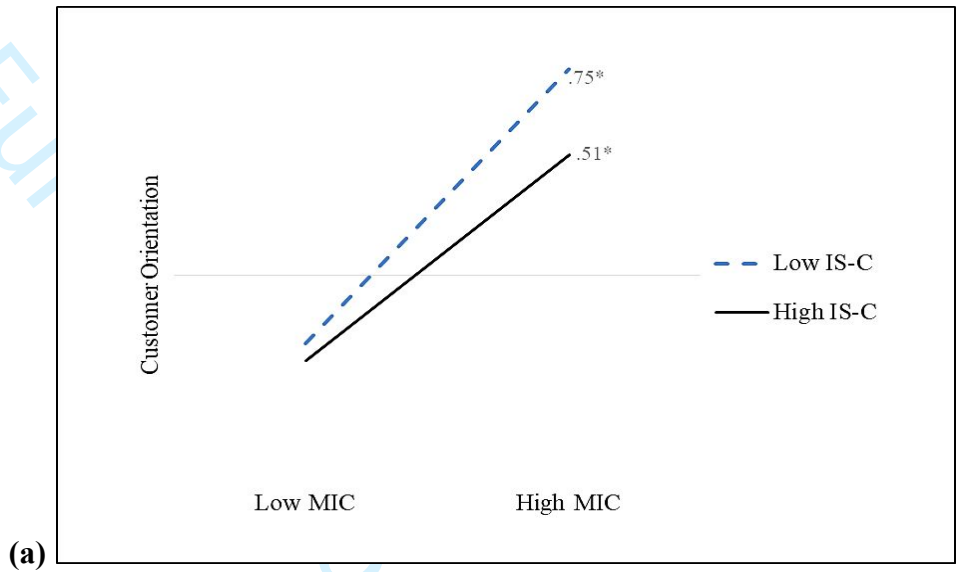
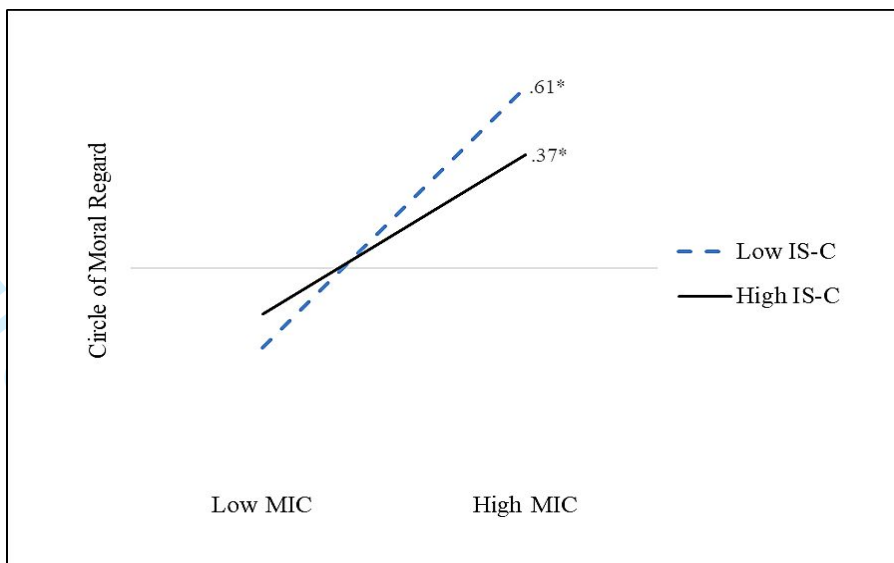


Figure 2 Interaction Effect of Moral identity Centrality (MIC) and Independent Self-construal (IS-C) on (a) Customer Orientation, (b) Inclusion of Other in the Self, (c) Circle of Moral Regard



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60



(c)

Significance level: $p < .05$

European Journal of Marketing

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

Table 1 A Review of the Literature on Value Co-Creation in B2B Sales

Year	Authors	Nature	Drivers of Value Creation/Co-creation	Conceptualization of Value Creation/Co-creation
	Current study	Empirical	Salesperson moral identity centrality has direct and indirect effect on value co-creation. Moral identity centrality expands the circle of moral regard, which facilitates salesperson moral identity centrality to decrease selling orientation and increase salesperson customer orientation and value co-creation. The indirect effect of moral identity centrality on value co-creation is attenuated by independent self-construal of salesperson.	Salesperson value co-creation refers to the behaviors salesperson takes to engage and work with customers during the product or service exchange process with of the objective of mutually maximizing the perceived value.
2021	Johnson <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Salesperson emotional behaviors can influence the co-creation of value propositions.	Value co-creation proposition refers to the joint understanding between salesperson and customers on how to create value together through dialogues and interactions.
2020	Friend <i>et al.</i>	Empirical	Customer knowledge supports sales response in driving value co-creation.	Creation of value through sellers' and buyers' processes, practices, & resources.
2020	Liu & Zhao	Conceptual	Value co-creation is related to value-based selling.	Value-based selling includes value co-creation activities that take place with the seller, between the seller and the customer, and among various actors in a service ecosystem.
2020	Plouffe <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Value co-creation takes place through solutions selling.	Value co-creation is solution-based and relational in nature.
2020	Rusthollkarhu <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	In B2B sales ecosystems, value (co-)creation takes place through value idea emergence with the process of value proposition creation.	Value is (co-)created when the processes of value proposition creation and value idea emergence are intertwined.
2020	Paschen <i>et al.</i>	Conceptual	Artificial intelligence enables value co-creation in B2B sales	Value co-creation in the interaction between activities, actors, and resources.
2018	Hartmann <i>et al.</i>	Conceptual	Salesperson's service exchange can affect value co-creation practices.	It is related to salesperson's service exchange.

1				
2				
3				
4	2018	Delpechitre <i>et al.</i>	Empirical	Salesperson emotional intelligence drives customer value co-creation.
5				It includes customer citizenship behaviors and customer participation behaviors.
6	2018	Ulaga & Kohli	Conceptual	Salesperson solution selling supports value co-creation process.
7				It is based on salesperson solution selling.
8	2018	Kaski <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Rapport building skills help salespeople engage with prospective buyers in a collaborative, value co-creating sales.
9				Value co-creating interaction is based on rapport building and customer-engaging collaboration.
10				
11				
12	2017	Terho <i>et al.</i>	Empirical	Salesperson's learning orientation and networking abilities are drivers of salesperson's value-based selling.
13				It is related to value-based selling that focus on seller-buyer interaction for providing better solution and more value offerings.
14				
15	2017	Pilon & Hadjielias	Qualitative	Customer-tailored value-added initiatives and relationship enhancers are two key dimensions that enable value co-creation.
16				It focuses on long-term productive, collaborative, and dialogic relationships between sellers and buyers.
17				
18	2017	Kaski <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Salespeople's expectations to create value with buyers majorly result from their personal skills and behaviors as well as the solutions they sell.
19				It is an outcome of the joint activities between sellers and buyers including interactional exchanges of knowledge and other resources.
20				
21				
22				
23	2016	Viio & Grönroos	Qualitative	Value-based buyer-seller business engagement occurs because of high relationship orientation for buyers and sellers.
24				Value-based business engagement or value co-creation is a combination of buyer-seller relationship orientations.
25				
26	2016	La Rocca <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Salespeople can shape the buyer-seller interactions leading to increase buyer involvement and co-participation in new products development.
27				Customer value creation can take place through customer involvement in new product development & solution development.
28				
29				
30				
31	2016	Liinamaa <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Contracts can support or hinder value-based selling.
32				It is associated with value-based selling processes and value-based pricing.
33				
34	2016	Kohtamäki & Partanen	Empirical	Relationship learning allows sellers to co-create value with buyers.
35				A joint process in which sellers and buyers interact and create value.
36				
37	2016	Marcos-Cuevas <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Sustained purposeful engagement supports sales organizations to co-create and capture value.
38				Value co-creative practices include "three categories - linking, materializing and institutionalizing - to provide coherence to practices such as co-ideation, co-design and co-launching." (p. 98)
39				
40				
41				
42				
43				
44				
45				
46				
47				

1				
2				
3	2015	Terho <i>et al.</i>	Empirical	Customer orientation is a driver of value-based selling.
4				Value co-creation is related to value-based selling that
5				focus on seller-buyer interaction for providing better
6				solution and more value offerings.
7	2015	Töytäri & Töytäri	Qualitative	Sales opportunity management framework can
8				support value co-creation.
9				Sales opportunity management supports and assess
10				value co-creation and value capture potential in
11	2015	Hohenschwert & Geiger	Qualitative	Customer value perceptions can be expanded by
12				increasing the salesperson attractiveness as future
13				interaction partner.
14	2015	Schwepker & Schultz	Empirical	Servant leadership and the interaction between
15				ethical climate and servant leadership drive
16				salesperson value enhancing behavior performance.
17				Salesperson's value enhancing behavior performance
18				that includes salesperson taking more accountability
19				of customers' needs, understanding buyers, acting as
20				advocate for buyers, and other service as well as
21	2015	Töytäri & Rajala	Qualitative	Value-based selling including value proposition
22				design, value quantification, & value
23				communication.
24				Value-based selling is "a sales approach that builds on
25				identification, quantification, communication, and
26				verification of customer value." (p. 101)
27	2014	Baumann & Le Meunier-FitzHugh	Conceptual	Trust and relational exchanges play positive role in
28				supporting value-generating processes.
29				It is interactive and interpersonal based (relational and
30				trust) and includes co-creation and co-production.
31	2014	Viio & Grönroos	Qualitative	Adaptation and relationship orientation play
32				positive role in driving value-based business.
33				Value-based business engagement that builds on
34				strategic adaptation, high relationship orientation &
35				strategic purchasing portfolio.
36	2012	Blocker <i>et al.</i>	Conceptual	Developing customer value knowledge and
37				tracking, adapting, as well as anticipating value can
38				encounters & relational processes as well as buyer-
39				drive value co-creation. Relationship dynamics and seller ties.
40				macro-contextual conditions can influence value
41				buyer-seller value co-creation.
42	2012	Hohenschwert	Qualitative	Salespeople need to act as advisors, brokers,
43				secretaries, & friends to buyers to be able to create
44				value.
45				Value creation is embedded within the relational
46				exchanges in business relationships between
47				salesperson and customer.

1				
2				
3				
4	2012	Sullivan <i>et al.</i>	Empirical	–
5				The firm's ability to understand and transform customer needs into superior solutions for customers.
6	2012	Terho <i>et al.</i>	Conceptual	Understanding the customers' business model, crafting the value proposition, & communicating customer value.
7				Value-based selling is about understanding the business model of buyer, value proposition crafting and communicating buyer value.
8				
9	2012	Haas <i>et al.</i>	Qualitative	Socio-cognitive construction supports value creation.
10				It is relational-based characterized jointness, balanced initiative, interacted value, & socio-cognitive construction.
11				
12				
13	2011	Singh & Koshy	Empirical	Customer orientation has positive impact on value creation.
14				Customer perceived benefits attributable to the salesperson, and the company.
15				
16	2008	Sheth & Sharma	Conceptual	Customer oriented & relational strategies drive value co-creation.
17				–
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
26				
27				
28				
29				
30				
31				
32				
33				
34				
35				
36				
37				
38				
39				
40				
41				
42				
43				
44				
45				
46				
47				

Table 2 Sample Characteristics

<i>Exchange type %</i>		
Services		18.8
Products		35.8
Both		45.4
<i>Company Size (yearly revenues) %</i>		
Less than \$1 million		20.8
\$1-10 million		38.3
\$11-50 million		19.2
\$51-100 million		12.8
More than \$100 million		8.9
<i>Average age (years)</i>		33.3
<i>Average sales experience (years)</i>		10.05
<i>Gender %</i>		
Female		27.5
Male		72.5
<i>Education level %</i>		
College degree or above		85.3
Total Number of Salespeople		313

Table 3 Correlations Matrix, Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and AVE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Moral Identity Centrality	.81											
2. Circle of Moral Regard	.39*	.79										
3. Inclusion of Other in the Self	.20*	.37*	—									
4. Customer Orientation	.66*	.48*	.16*	.86								
5. Selling Orientation	-.24*	-.18*	.10	-.08	.87							
6. Value Co-creation	.56*	.57*	.38*	.65*	.07	.82						
7. Sales Performance	.39*	.38*	.27*	.53*	.08	.49*	—					
8. Self-construal	-.05	-.15*	-.19*	.01	-.06	.01	-.06	.73				
9. Job Satisfaction	.27*	.38*	.42*	.45*	-.11	.46*	.46*	-.05	.94			
10. Experience	-.11	.04	-.08	-.04	-.10	-.03	.01	.09	.01	—		
11. Education Level	-.05	-.03	.07	-.06	.07	-.06	-.03	-.15*	-.04	-.04	—	
12. Age	.13*	.12*	-.12*	.15*	-.22*	.06	.05	.03	-.03	.49*	-.11	—
Average	5.84	5.26	4.59	5.86	4.17	5.47	88.1	4.29	5.64	10.05	—	33.3
Standard Deviation	.99	1.1	1.63	1.08	1.68	1.04	32.7	.55	1.26	7.79	—	8.75
Cronbach's alpha α	.82	.89	—	.88	.89	.88	—	.79	.94	—	—	—
Composite reliability	.88	.91	—	.92	.93	.91	—	.87	.96	—	—	—
Average variance extracted	.65	.62	—	.75	.76	.67	—	.53	.89	—	—	—

Significance level: * $p < .05$; Numbers added along the diagonal are the square root average variance extracted; — Not applicable.

	Direct Effects Model	Extended Model	Full Model
MIC → CMR	.50**	.50**	.49**
MIC → IOS	.26**	.26**	.25**
MIC → CO	.57**	.57**	.55**
MIC → SO	-.19**	-.19**	-.19**
MIC → VC-C	.58**	.18*	.18*
IS-C → CMR	—	—	-.04
IS-C → IOS	—	—	-.13*
IS-C → CO	—	—	.10
IS-C → SO	—	—	-.01
IS-C → VC-C	—	—	.07
IS-C × MIC → CMR	—	—	-.12*
IS-C × MIC → IOS	—	—	-.16*
IS-C × MIC → CO	—	—	-.09*
IS-C × MIC → SO	—	—	.06
IS-C × MIC → VC-C	—	—	.01
CMR → CO	.22**	.22**	.23**
CMR → SO	-.21**	-.20**	-.21**
CMR → VC-C	—	.13*	.14*
IOS → CMR	.23**	.23**	.21**
IOS → CO	-.06	-.06	-.05
IOS → SO	.09	.09	.09
IOS → VC-C	—	.13*	.14*
CO → VC-C	—	.48**	.46**
CO → SP	.17*	.17*	.17*
SO → VC-C	—	.05	.05
SO → SP	.06	.06	.06
VC → SP	.37**	.37**	.37**
JS → CO	.21**	.20**	.20**
JS → SO	.05	.05	.06
JS → VC-C	.27**	.08	.08
JS → SP	.21**	.21**	.21**
EXP → CO	-.03	-.03	-.04
EXP → SO	-.03	-.03	-.03
EXP → VC-C	.05	.05	.04
EXP → SP	.02	.02	.02
AGE → CO	.07*	.07*	.07*
AGE → SO	-.19**	-.19**	-.18**
AGE → VC-C	-.04	-.06	-.05
AGE → SP	.01	.01	.01
EDU → CO	.04	.03	.05
EDU → SO	.03	.03	.03
EDU → VC-C	-.01	-.03	-.02
EDU → SP	.01	.01	.01

<i>Goodness of Fit Measures</i>			
SRMR	.047 (H ₉₅ .051)	.043 (H ₉₅ .049)	.041 (H ₉₅ .047)
d_{ULS}	1.04 (H ₉₅ 1.46)	1.01 (H ₉₅ 1.33)	.949 (H ₉₅ 1.31)
d_G	.481 (H ₉₅ .581)	.455 (H ₉₅ .555)	.452 (H ₉₅ .539)

MIC = Moral Identity Centrality; CMR = Circle of Moral Regard; IOS = Inclusion of Other in the Self; CO = Customer Orientation; SO = Selling Orientation; VC-C = Value Co-creation; SP = Sales Performance; IS-C = Independent Self-construal; JS = Job Satisfaction; EXP = Experience; EDU = Education Level.

Significance level: * p < .05; ** p < .01

Table 4 Results

Table 5 Summary of the Findings

	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Support</i>
H1	Salesperson moral identity centrality is positively related to value co-creation.	✓
H2	Salesperson moral identity centrality is positively related to CO.	✓
H3	Salesperson moral identity centrality is negatively related to SO.	✓
H4	Moral identity centrality is positively related to the inclusion of other in the self.	✓
H5	The inclusion of other in the self is positively related to CO.	✗
H6	The inclusion of other in the self is negatively related to SO.	✗
H7	Moral identity centrality is positively related to the circle of moral regard.	✓
H8	The circle of moral regard is positively related to CO.	✓
H9	The circle of moral regard is negatively related to SO.	✓
H10	CO is positively related to value co-creation.	✓
H11	SO is negatively related to value co-creation.	✗
H12	Value co-creation is positively related to sales performance.	✓
H13a	Independent self-construal will weaken the positive relationship between moral identity centrality and value co-creation.	✗
H13b	Independent self-construal will weaken the positive relationship between moral identity centrality and CO.	✓
H13c	Independent self-construal will strengthen the negative relationship between moral identity centrality and SO.	✗
H13d	Independent self-construal will weaken the positive relationship between moral identity centrality and inclusion of other in the self.	✓
H13e	Independent self-construal will weaken the positive relationship between moral identity centrality and the circle of moral regard.	✓

CO = Customer Orientation; SO = Selling Orientation

Appendix

Measures	Item Loading*	Weight*	VIF
Moral Identity Centrality^a			
Listed below are some characteristics that may describe a person:			
<i>Caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind.</i>			
The person with these characteristics could be you, or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of			
It would make me feel good to be a person who has these	.80	.34	2.69
Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of	.87	.33	2.59
<i>I would be ashamed to be a person who has these characteristics^(R)</i>			
Having these characteristics is not really important to me ^(R)	.62	.37	1.90
I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	.90	.14	1.32
Circle of Moral Regard^b			
Report the extent to which you believe you have “a moral or ethical obligation to show concern for the welfare and interests” of the below groups:			
People from another country	.74	.17	2.32
Strangers	.77	.31	1.67
Your colleagues who you work with	.70	.13	1.85
People who practice a different religion than you	.84	.18	2.31
People of different ethnicities than you	.82	.26	2.14
People you deal with in your daily life	.86	.22	2.39
Customer Orientation^c			
I try to help buyers achieve their goals	.86	.31	2.18
A good salesperson has to have the buyer’s best interest in mind	.87	.29	2.37
I try to influence a buyer by information rather than by pressure	.88	.29	2.63
I try to figure out what a buyer’s needs are	.86	.28	2.36
Selling Orientation^c			
I try to sell as much as I can rather than satisfy buyers.	.87	.27	2.78
I paint too rosy picture of my products/services, to make them sound as good as possible	.88	.31	2.67
It is necessary to stretch the truth in describing a product/service to a	.84	.30	2.11
I begin the sales talk for a product/service before exploring the buyer’s	.88	.27	2.78
Value Co-creation^a			
I work together with buyers to produce offerings that mobilize them	.74	.24	1.66
I interact with buyers to design offerings (products and services) that meet their needs	.87	.27	2.45
I provide offerings for and in conjunction with buyers	.86	.28	2.44
I co-opt buyer involvement in providing offerings for them	.77	.21	2.19
I provide buyers with supporting offerings to help them get more value	.83	.24	2.47
Independent Self-construal^a			
I would rather depend on myself than others	.72	.25	1.49

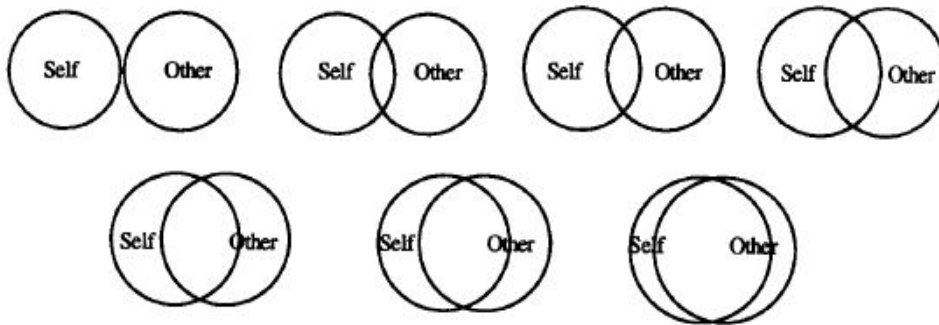
1				
2				
3	It is important to do my job better from others	.76	.23	1.56
4	Decisions reached in groups are better than those reached by single	.71	.32	1.78
5	individuals ^(R)			
6	I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefits of the group I am	.70	.18	2.09
7	I often do my own things.	.75	.23	2.48
8	It is important to be useful to others ^(R)	.73	.24	1.48
9				

Job Satisfaction

11	Overall, I am satisfied with my job ^a	.94	.35	2.54
12	I find real enjoyment in my job ^a	.95	.35	2.82
13	How satisfied are you with your overall job? ^d	.93	.36	2.66
14				

Inclusion of Other in the Self ^e

Choose the pair of circles that best represents your closeness to other



^a Agreement Scale (1 = strongly disagree vs. 7 = strongly agree)

^b Responsibility Scale (1 = absolutely no obligation vs. 7 = very strong obligation)

^c Frequency Scale (1 = never vs. 7 = always)

^d Satisfaction Scale (1 = extremely dissatisfied vs. 7 = extremely dissatisfied)

^e Overlapping Scale (1 = no overlap vs. 7 = most overlap)

^(R) reversed coded item

* Significance level = $p < .05$

Item in Italic was dropped

VIF: Variance Inflation Factor

Provided for non-commercial research and education use.
Not for reproduction, distribution or commercial use.