The Influence of Servant Leadership on Business-to-Business Salespeople's Social Media Usage

By Charles H. Schwepker, Jr.

In light of recent research showing a positive relationship between business-to-business salespeople's social media usage and sales performance, it behooves sales organizations to better understand influences on salespeople's social media usage. This paper examines the relationship between leadership style, sales manager support for social media usage and salesperson usage among a sample of 279 business-to-business salespeople. Findings suggest that servant leadership positively influences salesperson perception of sales management support for social media, and that this support and servant leadership both influence salespeople's use of social media. Managerial and future research implications are provided.

As social media continues to play a more prominent role in business and marketing, its application to business-to-business selling takes on greater significance. This is particularly true in light of studies indicating that social media usage among business-to-business salespeople has been shown to positively affect salesperson performance (Schultz, Schwepker and Good 2012a; Rodriguez, Peterson and Krishnan 2012). As such, it is important to understand means within the sales organization for encouraging and fostering salespeople's use of social media.

Sales management support has generally been viewed as an antecedent to technology adoption in the salesforce (Ahearne, Jelinek and Rapp 2005). Given that the use of social media generally involves the use of technology, this finding takes on added significance. However, using social media (i.e., distributing content through Internet and mobile technologies such as Youtube, Twitter, Facebook, Linkedin, and blogs to facilitate interpersonal interactions) involves a different application of technology than salesforces are accustomed. In addition, usage of social media varies across generations, with millennials leading the way, as Generation X and Baby Boomers trail behind (Bennett 2014; Perrin 2015; Schultz, Schwepker and Good 2012b). With contrasting generations (e.g., boomers, generation X, millennials) comprising today's salesforce, and sales managers tending to be comprised of Baby Boomers and those in Generation X (according to the bureau of labor statistics, the median age of sales managers is 42.4 years), there may be some question regarding the strength of sales managers' support of social media usage in the salesforce.

With regards to support, a question thus arises as to the type of leadership style that might be conducive to such support. Although little is known about the relationship between sales management leadership and social media usage, it may be possible that certain leadership styles are more conducive to encouraging social media use among salespeople. Leadership style provides both direction and tone for how salespeople interact with customers, thus influencing their ultimate success. One type of leadership style that may have the potential to encourage social media usage is servant leadership. The servant leader concentrates on serving others, including employees, customers and other stakeholders, through personal integrity (Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson 2008). A key dimension of servant leadership is empowering subordinates (Liden et al. 2008). Empowerment is important because it leads to employee ownership of tasks and responsibilities (Druskat and Wheeler 2003) and has been found to positively affect salespeople's technology usage (Mathieu, Ahearne and Taylor 2007). Because the servant leader, in part, focuses on empowering employees, this leadership style may facilitate salespeople's use of social media.

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The purpose of this paper is to better understand the relationship between sales management leadership style (i.e., servant leadership), sales management support for social media usage and social media usage among business-to-business salespeople (see Figure 1). The findings from this research provide direction for influencing salespeople's use of social media, which is critical given the positive relationship between social media use and salesperson performance. First, hypotheses are developed. Then, the research method is described and results are provided. Finally, implications for management are provided, along with limitations and directions for future research.

Figure 1
Hypothesized Relationships Among Study Variables
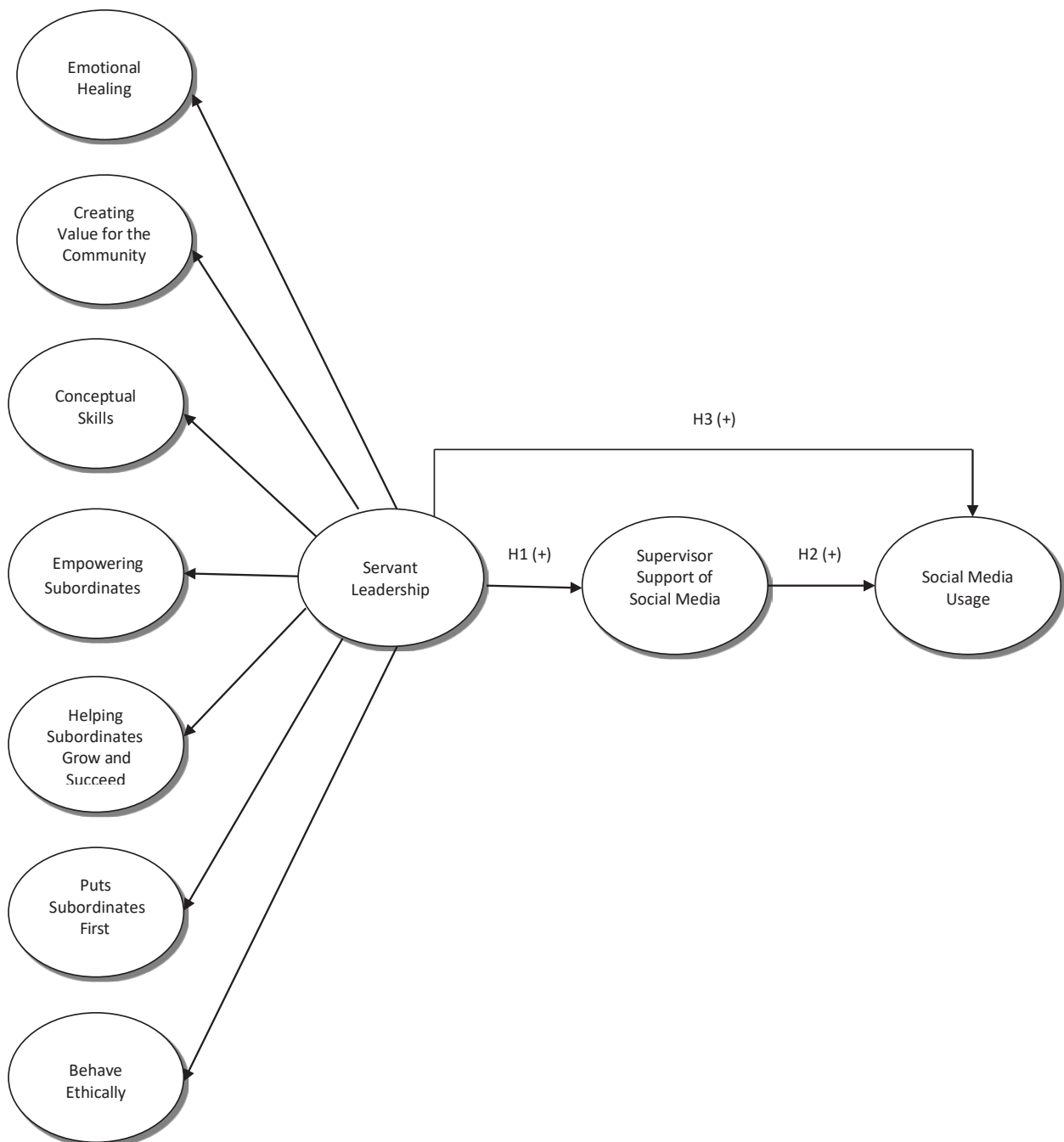
LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Sales Leadership

Sales leadership is described as "activities performed by those in a sales organization to influence others to achieve common goals for the collective good of the sales organization and company" (Ingram et al. 2005, p. 137). As "managers of meaning" (Smircich and Morgan 1983), sales leaders help develop a consensus among followers on what is important (Wodak, Kwon and Clarke 2011). Sales leaders, who are found at both the executive and supervisory levels of management, stimulate followers to grow, develop and achieve performance (Ingram et al. 2005).

Leadership has been examined from a number of approaches, including contingency leadership, trait approaches, shared team or dispersed leadership, style approaches, functional team leadership and flexible leadership (Flaherty 2011). This study focuses on leadership style, an approach that examines behaviors likely to result in effective leadership. The premise behind this line of investigation is that leaders can acquire knowledge of and apply an array of behaviors to affect organizational outcomes (Flaherty 2011).

There are various styles of leadership. One popularly studied style is *transactional leadership*, which focuses on the relationship between leaders' administration of rewards or punishment that are contingent upon performance (cf., Bass 1985). Sales research suggests that contingent reward behavior positively influences salesperson attitudes and role perceptions, and to a lesser extent sales performance (cf., Ingram et al. 2005). Other styles of leadership emphasize the significance of valuing followers as a method of influencing their behavior. For instance, *transformational leaders* influence followers through a process of internalization. By providing intellectual stimulation, individualized support to followers, and having high performance expectations, among other things (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter 1990), these leaders are able to encourage followers to bypass self-interest to achieve group goals (Burns 1978). Another style approach is *ethical leadership*, which involves applying normatively appropriate conduct toward followers (Brown et al., 2005). This leader is an ethical individual

who cares about people and society at large and serves as a role model to influence followers to do the same (Brown and Trevino 2006). One leadership style that has been given a lot of attention in the sales literature is *considerate leadership*. Considerate leaders create a supportive and friendly environment by listening and responding to employee feedback, incorporating suggestions in decision-making, collaborating and providing necessary resources (House 1971; Rafferty and Griffin 2006). This type of leadership style is associated with elevated employee morale and job satisfaction, but has been found to be negatively related to salesperson job performance. Finally, a style that has received less attention, servant leadership, likewise focuses on valuing followers. The primary objective of the servant leader is to help followers achieve success, even at the expense of his/her own needs (Ehrhart 2004; Greenleaf 1977). Servant leaders expect salespeople to seek ways to improve their performance and provide support for them to do so (Cates 2015). Because a key dimension of servant leadership involves empowering subordinates (Liden et al. 2008), and empowerment positively influences salespeople's technology usage (Mathieu, Ahearne and Taylor 2007), this study focuses on this leadership style.

Servant leadership has been found to positively impact organizations through its influence on positive work attitudes and behaviors (Russell and Stone 2002). Importantly, leaders using this style have been able to develop employees who genuinely care about customers (Lytle and Timmerman 2006). In a sales context, servant leadership has been found to have a positive impact in the sales organization, affecting its ethical level and ethical work climate, person-organization fit, organizational commitment and turnover intention (Jaramillo et al. 2009b; Jaramillo, Bande and Varela 2015). Additionally, servant leadership increases salespeople's use of customer-oriented selling, fosters greater job satisfaction, and reduces job stress (Jaramillo et al. 2009a). Moreover, it positively influences salespeople's value enhancing behavior performance, as well as outcome performance (Schwepker and Schultz 2015).

Examining the dimensions of servant leadership may help explain its relationship to both sales management

support of social media and salespeople's use of social media. Liden et al. (2008) identified seven dimensions that capture the essence of servant leadership: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering subordinates, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. In particular, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and empowering subordinates may be most enlightening in this regard as explained in the context of leadership support.

Leadership Support

In the context of this study, sales management support for social media is viewed as a form of leadership support, which has been shown to influence salespeople's attitudes and behaviors (Jaramillo and Mulki 2008; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich 2001; Netemeyer et al. 1997). Leadership support concerns employee perceptions regarding the extent of support and consideration received from their immediate supervisor (Netemeyer et al. 1997). Path-goal theory suggests that leaders are able to get employees to perform by facilitating the path to their goals (House and Dessler 1974). When leaders are supportive, salespeople are more motivated and put forth greater effort (Jaramillo and Mulki 2008). Such support has been found to lead to salesperson technology usage (Weinstein and Mullins 2012) and greater salesperson performance (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich 2001). It seems logical that servant leaders who help subordinates to grow and succeed and put them first would be likely to encourage and support the use of social media among salespeople as a means for helping them to sell and improve their performance.

Empowering individuals provides them with authority and responsibility for achieving their work (Conger and Kanungo 1988). Mathieu, Ahearne and Taylor (2007) found sales managers' use of empowerment resulted in greater salesperson technology usage. Given that social media typically involves using technology, it is possible that empowerment might likewise result in greater social media usage. Among other things, the servant leader empowers employees to make important work decisions and as such opens the door for salespeople to adopt social media to facilitate their sales job. The extant research leads to the following hypotheses:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between servant leadership and salespeople's perception of their sales manager's support for their social media usage.

H_2: There is a positive relationship between salespeople's perception of their sales manager's support for their social media usage and salespeople's social media usage.

H_3: There is a positive relationship between servant leadership and salespeople's social media usage.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

The sample was obtained by soliciting a national data collection organization to execute a nationwide Internet-based survey. This organization's database did not differentiate between business-to-business and business-to-consumer salespeople. Thus, data was collected by sending an email to all sales professionals in this organization's database (26,729) to invite them to participate in the survey. As a result, 2,655 salespeople used the Web to access this study's survey for a 15.9% response rate. After answering a screening question (i.e., respondents were asked to identify the type of sales in which they participated), only business-to-business salespeople were allowed to access and respond to the survey. As such, the sample consisted of 324 respondents (12.2% of salespeople who accessed the survey), which was refined to a final sample of 279 (10.5%) after eliminating those with incomplete responses. To determine the extent to which nonresponse bias may be a problem, a time extrapolation test comparing early to late respondents was used (Armstrong and Overton 1977). Based on the results (F = 0.940, significance of F = 0.572), nonresponse bias does not appear to be a problem.

The sample consists of primarily male (58%) married (69%) business–to-business salespeople with an average age of 47. They have an average of 19 years of sales experience. These salespeople have on average been with their company 10 years, 41% having been with their company for 1-5 years, 25% 6-10 years, 12% 11-15 years and the remainder 16 years or greater. Approximately one third (32%) of respondents have at least some college, many (48%) have an undergraduate

degree, and 10% have received a graduate degree. Regarding compensation, 43% are paid via salary, 21% via commission and 36% receive some combination of salary, commission and bonus. These salespeople sell physical goods (46%), services (23%) or a combination of both (31%). Organizations represented by these salespeople include manufacturing (29%), wholesaling (26%), service (42%), government (2%) and nonprofit (1%) across a variety of industries.

Operationalization of Study Variables

A multidimensional measure developed and validated by Liden et al. (2008) was used to assess *servant leadership* (SL). This measure is comprised of 28 items that encompass seven factors: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering subordinates, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. Salespeople were asked to provide their beliefs regarding their managing supervisor using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree".

Two items were used to capture *social media support* (SMS). This construct was designed to assess salespeople's perceptions of their sales manager's support of their use of social media. It focuses not only on sales managers' willingness to allow salespeople to use social media, but to their encouragement of its use

as well. We let respondents define "encouragement" as this might entail any number of things such as tangible incentives, verbal cues, role modeling, training, etc. Salespeople were asked to respond using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree".

Social media usage (SMU) was measured using a scale developed by Schultz, Schwepker and Good (2012b). This scale consists of seven items comprising different sales tasks for which salespeople may use social media to accomplish. Respondents provided answers using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "don't use" to (8) "strongly agree" to the following statement, "I use social media in my selling efforts to:" For each of the social media measures, respondents were provided with a point of reference with regards to the meaning of "social media" by prefacing the questions with "The following questions apply to social media such as Youtube, Twitter, Facebook, Linkedin, and blogs."

Measure Assessment

To account for differences in measurement scale formats, the data was standardized. Based on Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha, each scale possesses acceptable reliability with coefficient alphas above .70 (Nunnally 1978). Descriptive statistics, reliabilities (along the diagonal) and intercorrelations for the variables used in the study are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and
Intercorrelation Matrix of Variables in the Study

	SL	SMS	SMU	Age
Mean	4.55	3.95	4.02	46.6
Standard Deviation	1.34	1.62	2.27	11.4
Servant Leadership	(.98)			
Social Media Support	0.41**	(.80)		
Social Media Usage	0.36**	0.58**	(.98)	
Social Media Usage	-0.01	-0.10	-0.18**	na
**significant at 0.01				

Confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 16 (Arbuckle 2007) was used to determine convergent and discriminant validity of the measures. The statistically significant t-values (greater than 2.0) for the parameter estimates found in Table 2 indicate convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). In addition, convergent validity exists when the proportion of variation in the indicators captured by the underlying construct is larger than the variance attributed to measurement error (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The average variance extracted for each construct is higher than a suggested critical value of .50 (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Table 2
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results: Factor Loadings and t-Values

	Factor Loading	t-Value
Servant Leadership (Liden et al. 2008)		
Emotional Healing	**.898**	**-------**
SL1 Would be someone I turn to if I had a personal problem	.833	-------
SL2 Cares about my personal well-being.	.885	18.71
SL3 Takes time to talk to me on a personal level.	.886	18.74
SL4 Can recognize when I'm down without asking me.	.840	17.17
Creating Value for the Community	**.762**	**12.53**
SL5 Emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.	.917	-------
SL6 Is always interested in helping people in our community.	.964	30.55
SL7 Is involved in community activities.	.903	25.13
SL8 Encourages me to volunteer in the community.	.815	19.52
Conceptual Skills	**.895**	**12.67**
SL9 Can tell if something is going wrong.	.788	-------
SL10 Is able to effectively think through complex problems.	.891	16.86
SL11 Has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals.	.779	14.17
SL12 Can solve work problems with new or creative ideas.	.864	16.19
Empowering Subordinates	**.708**	**11.41**
SL13 Gives me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job.	.896	-------
SL14 Encourages me to handle important work decisions on my own.	.919	24.40
SL15 Gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.	.933	25.32
SL16 Allows me to make an important decision at work without consulting him or her.	.883	22.15
Helping Subordinates Grow and Succeed	**.931**	**15.84**
SL17 Makes my career development a priority.	.933	-------
SL18 Is interested in making sure that I achieve my career goals.	.920	27.81
SL19 Provides me with work experiences that enable me to develop new skills.	.884	24.56
SL20 Wants to know about my career goals.	.884	24.56
Puts Subordinates First	**.894**	**15.17**
SL21 Seems to care more about my success than his/her own.	.932	-------
SL22 Puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.	.967	34.49
SL23 Sacrifices his/her own interests to meet my needs.	.957	32.87
SL24 Does what she/he can do to make my job easier.	.845	22.06
Behave Ethically	**.844**	**13.70**
SL25 Holds high ethical standards.	.895	-------
SL26 Is always honest.	.928	25.17
SL27 Would not compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.	.937	25.79
SL28 Values honesty more than profits.	.906	23.67
Social Media Support (new scale)		
SMS1 My supervising manager encourages the use of social media for sales.	1.00	-------
SMS2 I believe my supervising manager is not afraid of letting employees use social media.	.667	14.92

Table 2 (continued)

Social Media Usage (Schultz, Schwepker and Good 2012)

SMU1	I use social media in my selling efforts to build awareness.	.903	-------
SMU2	I use social media in my selling efforts to maintain good business relationships.	.932	26.88
SMU3	I use social media in my selling efforts to communicate thoroughly.	.922	26.06
SMU4	I use social media in my selling efforts to prospect.	.973	31.05
SMU5	I use social media in my selling efforts to obtain leads.	.959	29.46
SMU6	I use social media in my selling efforts to obtain referrals to other potential prospects.	.950	28.57
SMU7	I use social media in my selling efforts to connect with customers and keep them feeling important.	.914	25.44

Notes: [a]constrained to 1.0; p < 0.001 for each factor loading
X^2 = 1,809.0, df = 620, p = .000, CFI = .91, TFI = .91, RMSEA = .08

Table 3 provides support for the discriminant validity of the constructs. As shown, the average variance extracted by each construct from its indicators is larger than its shared variance with every other construct (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The fact that the correlations between each pair of study constructs does not contain the value of 1.0 at a 95 percent confidence interval provides additional support for the discriminant validity of the constructs (Anderson and Gerbing 1988).

Discriminant Validity:
Average Variance Extracted, Shared Variance, Confidence Interval

	Shared Variance	Confidence Interval
SL (.798)[*] < --- > SMS (.723)	.143	.041 to .245
SL < --- > SMU (.877)	.139	.045 to .233
SMS < --- > SMU	.436	.302 to .570

*The average variance extracted for each construct is in parentheses.

The survey instrument included several elements (anonymity; using scale formats with unambiguous scale items; ensuring respondents that there are no right or wrong answers; physical separation of constructs on the questionnaire; and not using bipolar numerical scale values) that reduce the potential of common method variance (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Harman's one factor test (as described in Podsakoff et al. 2003) was conducted to determine if all measurement items load on a single factor. The poor fit statistics for this model (X^2 = 12,354.6, df = 630, p = .000, CFI = .13, TLI = .08, RMSEA = .26) suggests that all measurement items do not load on one factor, signifying that common method variance should not be considered a serious problem.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To test for multicollinearity among the model's constructs, multiple regression analysis was conducted to find the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each variable. A VIF, the inverse of $(1 - R^2)$, close to 1.00 indicates little or no multicollinearity exists (Hair et al. 2006). VIF values less than or equal to 10.00 are considered acceptable (Hair et al. 2006). Given that the highest VIF is less than 10 (servant leadership -VIF = 1.52, R^2 = .19), multicollinearity among the variables should not be considered a problem.

The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling with AMOS 16 (Arbuckle 2007). In doing so, servant leadership is modeled as a second order factor comprised of its seven factors (i.e., emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering subordinates, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically), each represented by its respective items. To control for sources of variation outside the hypothesized relationships, age was included as a control variable given its significant negative relationship with social media usage. The CFI (.91), TLI (.90) and RMSEA (.08) reported in Table 4, indices believed to be robust from sampling characteristics (Netemeyer et al. 1997), suggest a moderate fit (see Hair et al. 2006 for suggested fit statistics).

Table 4
Final Path Model
Structural Parameter Estimates

Path	Hypothesis	Coeff.	t-value	R^2	
SL→SMS	H$_1$ (+)	.377	6.25	.142	Significant
SMS→ SMU	H$_2$ (+)	.595	11.48	.449	Significant
SL→ SMU	H$_3$ (+)	.150	2.94		Significant
Control Variable Age →SMU		-.070	-1.55		
Goodness-of-fit Statistics:		χ^2 = 1,904.7 d.f. = 657, p = .000 CFI = .91 TLI = .90 RMSEA = .08			

Hypothesis one suggesting a positive relationship between servant leadership and sales managers' social media support is supported (beta = .377, p < .001), suggesting that sales managers practicing servant leadership are more likely to support salespeople's use of social media. As expected in hypothesis two, there is a positive relationship between sales managers' support of social media and salespeople's use of social media (beta = .595, p < .001). Hypothesis three predicted a positive relationship between servant leadership and salespeople's use of social media. The significant path (beta = .150, p < .05) between these constructs suggests that sales managers practicing servant leadership behaviors can positively influence salespeople's use of social media. Finally, with regards to the control variable, age is not significantly related to social media usage in the model.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

If managers and researchers are going to advocate the adoption of social media in the salesforce, linking social media usage to leadership styles should have long-term value to sales organizations. This argument parallels previous studies calling for applications of the servant leadership style examined in diverse managerial and organizational settings (e.g., Bambale 2014; Parris and Peachy 2013). This study provides additional support for the significance of servant leadership as it influences perceived social media support and social media usage. As outlined below, insight gleaned from this study can be used to encourage social media usage among the salesforce.

Hypothesis one found a positive relationship between sales manager servant leadership behavior and perceived sales manager support for social media use. Leaders provide support to subordinates and it appears that the servant leader is no exception, as this leader is perceived as being supportive of social media use. This is important because previous research finds sales manager support to be an important influence on salespeople's attitudes and behaviors (Jaramillo and Mulki 2008; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich 2001; Netemeyer et al. 1997). While social media support is not specific to servant leadership, servant leaders do want to help employees achieve their goals. Thus, salespeople who view social media as a means to achieving their goals are likely to find support in this regard from the servant leader. Therefore, if sales managers are interested in enhancing salespeople's perceptions of their support for social media it would be beneficial for sales managers to practice servant leadership behaviors (e.g., putting subordinates first, helping subordinates grow and succeed, empowering subordinates).

Given the significant positive relationship found between salespeople's perception of their sales manager's support for social media usage and salespeople's social media usage, as proposed in hypotheses two, sales managers have a vested interest in being perceived as supportive with regards to social media. Naturally, this assumes the goal is to foster salespeople's use of social media. By encouraging and nurturing means for salespeople to adopt social media techniques, sales managers may facilitate salespeople's use of social media. Although this study did not examine specific types of managerial support, it may be safe to assume that this could come in a variety of means that would be viewed in a positive light. This could entail initiatives such as providing training (or access and resources for training) in social media use, outfitting salespeople with the appropriate technology and technology support necessary to execute social media strategy, or being patient with and encouraging (perhaps even through monetary incentives) salespeople exploring strategies for social media selling. Because the servant leader in part wants to make the employee's job easier and help him or her succeed, he or she is willing to provide support to facilitate employee success. By encouraging and supporting salespeople's use of social media, sales managers are facilitating a path (i.e., social media for selling) to goal attainment as suggested by path-goal theory (House and Dessler 1974).

Hypothesis three found a positive relationship between servant leadership and social media usage. Thus, salespeople who perceive their supervising manager as practicing servant leadership behaviors are more likely to incorporate social media in their sales roles. These salespeople are apt to use social media such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Linkedin and blogs for a variety of sales tasks ranging from prospecting to maintaining good business relationships. However, this research does not inform us of specifically how social media tools are used to accomplish these tasks. Nevertheless, sales managers are more likely to encourage the adoption of social media selling practices amongst their salespeople by practicing servant leadership behaviors (i.e., those found in the servant leadership measure).

While steps should be taken to encourage social media use given its positive relationship with sales performance (Schultz, Schwepker and Good 2012a; Rodriguez, Peterson and Krishnan 2012), caution should be maintained given our lack of understanding of customers' openness and long-term response to social media. There may be some concern if salespeople put too much reliance on social media at the expense of other selling activities that may be beneficial to prospecting, closing and developing customer relationships (e.g., what are the effects of less personal contact and more

social media contact?). Furthermore, with more than one third of customers' evaluations of products and services stemming from social media conversations today (Chui, Sarrazin and Yee 2013), it is critical that salespeople are on point with their messaging. This may require training from the sales organization to ensure appropriate and consistent messaging.

Finally, this research sheds some light on concerns regarding how sales managers, who tend to be Baby Boomers and those from Generation X, who also happen to use social media less than millennials, might approach its use in the salesforce. At least one type of leader, the servant leader, does appear to be supportive of social media usage. However, it is important to note that given this research did not collect data on the age of salespeople's managers it is possible these servant leaders are from the millennial generation. Future research with regards to this is warranted.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As with most research, there are limitations with this study. First, this study included a small range of variables. As such, the proposed model does not capture the breadth of antecedents and consequences associated with the model's constructs. Second, it is possible that results may differ if social media support and social media usage were measured differently. Sales managers may support their salespeople in a number of ways (e.g., providing resources such as technology, training, money, etc.). This study examined sales manager support from the standpoint of the sales manager providing encouragement and the "go ahead" for social media use among salespeople. It is also possible that there may be means beyond those examined by which salespeople may utilize social media. Nevertheless, these measures do provide insight regarding sales management support and social media usage. Third, this study focused on business-to-business salespeople. Although this provides insights regarding one group of salespeople, it is possible that results may differ among a differently distributed population and/or sample, such as business-to-consumer salespeople. Fourth, only one source was used to collect the data for this study using self-report measures. Given the nature of the questions and the anonymity provided, there is no reason to suspect respondent answers are not truthful (Good and Stone 1995; Randall and Fernandes 1991). Fifth, this study examines salespeople's perceptions regarding leadership style and support provided by sales managers. However, it is important to note that these perceptions, regardless of some "objective reality", are likely to drive their attitudes and behaviors. Finally, this study was solicited and completed electronically via email and the Web. Consequently, there may be a bias towards respondents who already embrace tools commonly used in social media. However, the two tools used in this study (i.e., email and the Web) are commonly used by most salespeople in the workplace today.

There are several opportunities for future research. Given the limited scope of this study's measure used to assess sales managers' support of social media, future studies may want to incorporate a broader measure of support including items such as training in social media, technology support for social media, and budgeting for social media. This could provide additional insight regarding means for encouraging the salesforce to adopt social media.

This study only examined one style of leadership. That naturally begs the question regarding the relationship between other leadership styles and social media usage. Are other styles (e.g., transformational or ethical leadership) more or less effective in driving salespeople's use of social media to sell? Further, is it possible that certain dimensions of servant leadership play a greater role than others in determining social media usage? Understanding this may help sales managers highlight those behaviors most responsible for fostering social media usage among salespeople.

This study looked at social media usage. While it asked salespeople their reasons for using social media (e.g., prospecting, obtaining leads, etc.), it did not determine which of these tasks benefit most from the use of social media. It may be constructive in the future to determine the full extent to which social media may be used and for which purposes it is most effective. Moreover, it may be beneficial to determine the types of social media tools (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Foursquare, Yelp, etc.) that are most effective for accomplishing these tasks, as well as the means by which these tools can best be used.

The average age of salespeople in this study is 47. Given that younger salespeople are more prone to use social media, it might be instructive to include a larger number of younger salespeople in a study. It might be possible to examine the constructs studied in this manuscript across career stages or examine differences between younger and older salespeople.

The current research sought to determine how leadership might drive social media usage. Future research may want to examine how "success" is defined when it comes to using social media by both internal (i.e., salespeople, sales managers, top management) and external (i.e., customers) constituencies. The manner in which success is measured may have a significant impact on the use of social media. Just because salespeople may use social media does not mean they are necessarily using it efficiently and effectively.

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