Antecedents of Sales Coachability

By Concha Allen, David E. Fleming, Stacey Schetzsle, and Lisa R. Simon

With an increased projection of new sales jobs and reported shortage of sales talent, the authors aim to identify individual and situational factors leading to coachable graduates. A model is proposed to investigate antecedents to coachability through a study of collegiate sales competition participants. Specifically, the study examines leadership style, trait competitiveness, motivation, and adaptive selling behaviors as antecedents of coachability. Leadership style is found to influence coachability. The study also finds intrinsic and extrinsic motivational traits increase the likelihood of coaching, and individuals with adaptive behaviors are more receptive to coaching. Trait competitiveness, however, has no direct effect on coachability but rather has an indirect effect through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Further, the authors provide guidance to firms to select coachable employees as well as suggestions for academics to prepare coachable and work-ready graduates.

INTRODUCTION

With two million new sales jobs projected by the end of 2020 (Bolander, Bonney, and Satornino, 2014) and a reported shortage of skilled entry-level sales talent (Manpower Group – 2019 Talent Shortage Survey), the demand for qualified sales candidates with potential for performance continues to grow. As a result, employers are seeking work-ready graduates to not only add immediate value but also long-term career potential within the hiring organization. Coachability, closely tied to the capacity for development and personal growth, has been shown to influence sales performance. Drawing from the concept of coachability in the competitive sports domain, Shannahan, Bush, and Shannahan (2013b) define salesperson coachability as "the degree to which salespeople are open to seeking, receiving and using external resources to increase their sales performance in a personal selling context" (p. 41).

Concha Allen (Ph.D., University of North Texas), Professor of Marketing, Central Michigan University, concha.allen@cmich.edu

David E. Fleming (Ph.D., University of South Florida), Director Sales & Negotiations Center and Professor of Marketing, Indiana State University, david.fleming@indstate.edu

Stacey Schetzsle (Ph.D., Purdue University), Associate Professor of Marketing, The University of Tampa, sschetzsle@ut.edu

Lisa R. Simon (MBA, University of Southern California), Faculty Emeritus, Marketing, Orfalea College of Business, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA, lsimon@calpoly.edu

Coachability is an important capability for employers as it is found to motivate salespeople and enhance sales performance (Onyemah, 2009, Shannahan et al., 2013b).

Previous studies have provided evidence that graduates from university sales programs outperform those from non-sales programs (Bolander et al., 2014, Bolander et al., 2020). A potential tool for the development of coachable graduates is the participation in extracurricular events such as university sales competitions designed to enhance the skillset students gain in the classroom. Since the launch of the National Collegiate Sales Competition in 1999, university sales competitions are popping up rapidly both in the US and internationally. Students, faculty, and corporate partners have embraced sales competitions as a means for developing and assessing current and prospective selling skills. Sponsored competitions, with corporate partners often playing the role of the "buyer," require financial and human resources from professional salespeople, sales managers, and recruiters. In addition to the upfront costs of sponsoring a competition, corporate partners incur time and travel costs to assist at a competition. Furthermore, universities with limited resources must determine the value of competitions in terms of preparing students for work after graduation and how to select the members of their team who will best work to represent the university to these potential corporate partners.

There is agreement about the role of sales managers in development of salespeople and the positive impact of

a coaching leadership style on salesperson performance (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich, 2001). Managerial coaching is described in the organizational psychology literature as distinct from, but related to, training in that coaching is more individualized and open-ended than traditional training (Hall, Otazo, and Hollenbeck, 1999; Heslin, VandeWalle, and Latham, 2006). Coachability is an individual difference manifested by a situational trigger such as a motivational coach or manager, yet there is little empirical evidence of the antecedent effects of coaching behaviors by managers and other individual differences of salespeople on coachability. To address this gap, we propose a model to investigate antecedents (both in terms of manager behaviors and individual differences) to coachability through a study of collegiate sales competitions to further our understanding of coachability among participants. The current study extends the coachability and coaching literature to sales education. By integrating relevant theories, the study provides a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which coachability is influenced. Specifically, this study contributes to our understanding of individual and situational factors that influence coachability among students pursuing degrees and potentially careers in professional sales. The results are intended to provide guidance to firms in how to select the most coachable employees and how to lead them in order to get the most out of their new hires, as well as help universities do the same when it comes to developing their sales teams. The paper will begin by examining the construct of coachability, followed by the creation of a conceptual model of its antecedents using the extant literature, then the results of an empirical test of the model are presented. The paper ends with a discussion of the implications of the results for academicians and practitioners as well as future research directions.

Coachability

Following the charge of Churchill et al. (1985) and Verbeke, Deitz, and Verwaal (2011) to focus on influenceable determinants of sales performance to aid sales managers in selecting, motivating, coaching and training, Shannahan, Shannahan, and Bush (2013a) introduced the influenceable aptitude factor of salesperson coachability. Coachable behaviors leading to improved sales performance include willingness to learn from and provide information to the sales coach, trust and respect for the sales coach, flexibility and adaptability, and the desire for and use of feedback to improve sales performance (Shannahan et al., 2013b). As an influenceable characteristic linked to sales performance, coachability is often among the characteristics recruiters are seeking in entry-level sales candidates (e.g., Badrinarayanan et al., 2015). Coachability fits within the notion of work-ready graduates as it is being promoted at the university level. Work readiness is considered a multidimensional construct consisting of factors such as personal characteristics, organizational acumen, work competence, and social intelligence (Caballero et al., 2011). Included within these broad factors are attributes such as adaptability, motivation, and personal growth/development. These attributes map closely to constructs widely researched in the sales performance literature. The stated purpose of sales competitions is to allow students to practice and demonstrate their skills and connect with prospective employers (National Collegiate Sales Competition). Thus, the coachability of students who engage in these competitions is of interest as an avenue for examining this relatively new construct.

ANTECEDENTS TO COACHABILITY

Coaching and Leadership

In order to be coachable, as defined by Shannahan, Bush and Shannahan (2013b), one must be given the external resources to enhance their sales performance often referred to as coaching. Coaching is the "process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective" (Peterson and Johnson Hicks, 1996, p. 14). In the sales context, sales coaching is defined more specifically as "a sequence of conversations and activities that provides ongoing feedback and encouragement to a salesperson or sales team member with the goal of improving that person's performance" (Corcoran et al., 1995, p. 118) and has been deemed an important tool to motivate salespeople and enhance sales performance (Onyemah, 2009; Rich, 1998). Coaching goes beyond mere supervision through the use of feedback mechanisms and taking advantage

of teaching opportunities to assist subordinates in accomplishing tasks (Corcoran et al., 1995; Jolson et al., 1993; Rich, 1998). Prior research provides evidence that coaching influences motivation, role ambiguity, job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor and job performance (Onyemah, 2009). Sales coaching behaviors have received little attention in academia despite increased emphasis as a critical salesperson development tool (Badrinarayanan et al., 2015).

Academic coaching parallels the characteristics of sales coaching outlined by Badrinarayanan et al. (2015) yet empirical research examining the impact of faculty coaching behaviors on student outcomes in sales education is scarce. Badrinarayanan et al. (2015) suggest "A better explication of the return on investment from coaching investment is likely to enhance the interest of sales organizations in coaching endeavors" (p. 1105). Badrinarayanan et al. (2015) recommend future research investigate the "characteristics, orientations and leadership styles of managers and supervisors who can be effective coaches" (p. 1097). Leadership theories provide insight into the influence of leaders on the attitudes and behaviors of subordinates through leader dispositional traits and/or actions across various situational and individual characteristics. Effective sales coaching behavior "empowers and instills confidence in each individual salesperson and thus stimulates that individual's internal drive or motivation to improve continuously" (Rich, 1998, p. 54). According to Rich (1998), coaching consists of three constructs: supervisory feedback; role modeling; and trust in manager. Rich notes that "providing feedback is distinctly different than praising a salesperson's monthly sales volume or other output" (Rich, 1998, p. 61). Output feedback is more transactional while behavioral feedback is consistent with the individualized consideration dimension of transformational leadership. Using transformational leadership theory, positive feedback is consistent with individualized consideration, role modeling and trust.

Transformational leadership theory suggests that "subordinate values, goals, and aspirations can be transformed through various leader behaviors, and they will perform work because it is consistent with their values, rather than because they are rewarded for their efforts (Schwepker and Good, 2010, p. 300). Transformational leadership requires intellectual stimulation and a heightened awareness of the importance of outcomes and going beyond one's own self-interest (Bass, 1997). "Through internalization and integration individuals can be extrinsically motivated and still be committed and authentic" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 74). Transformational leadership enhances motivation and self-confidence among followers, thus providing the necessary environment for intrinsic motivation and integrated extrinsic motivation. Transformational leadership has also been found to have a significant positive impact on moral judgment (Schwepker and Good, 2010) and customer-oriented selling (Martin and Bush, 2006). Through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders "help sales personnel become adept at identifying and responding to prospects' differing needs, problems, and buying motives" (Dubinsky et al., 1995).

H1a: Transformational leadership is positively related to coachability.

Transactional leaders rely on reward and punishment behaviors to motivate subordinates to achieve goals and is concentrated on providing punishments and rewards based on the behavior of subordinates. Burns (1978) conceptualized transactional and transformational leadership as being the extremes of a single continuum. Leaders on the transactional end excel at the functions of management, as they are concerned about day-to-day progress and conforming to organizational norms. Bass (1985) identifies two distinct forms of transactional leadership behavior that are contingent reward behavior and contingent punishment (also called management by exception). According to Jaworski and Kohli (1991), the contingent reward of positive feedback acts as a means to provide both motivation and information and significantly affects salespeople's satisfaction and performance. Negative feedback as a contingent reward only works as an informational delivery route but does not impact motivation and has minimal impact on performance (Jaworski and Kohli, 1991). The transactional leadership feedback (both positive and negative) provided by coaches should be served as a conduit for information delivery on ways to improve performance and thus improve the coachability.

H1b: Transactional leadership is positively related to coachability.

Trait Competitiveness

Another logical antecedent to examine when it comes to coachability is competitiveness given the nature of the sales role. Competitiveness is considered a desirable trait and is often among the attributes considered by recruiters in the hiring of entry level sales candidates with potential to become high performing salespeople (Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010). Trait competitiveness is a personality trait involving "the enjoyment of interpersonal competition and the desire to win and be better than others" (Spence and Helmreich, 1983, p. 41) and has been considered a personality characteristic of great salespeople (Brewer, 1994). Additionally, competition has long been a tool used in sales organizations to motivate salesperson performance (Brown, Cron, and Slocum, 1998). In competitive environments, salespeople who are competitive tend to strive toward more difficult sales goals (Brown et al., 1998). However, studies investigating competitiveness as an antecedent to performance outcomes have produced mixed results, with effects dependent on context thus leading to an interactionist perspective (Shannahan, 2013b). This interactionist perspective implies that joint effects of individual traits and situational variables explain variance beyond main effects of the individual variables. Competitiveness, like many other personal characteristics, is considered a driver of sales performance as well as organizational commitment (Schrock et al., 2016), and its effect on performance in a sales context is enhanced when there is an organizational climate of competitiveness (such as the climate surrounding collegiate sales competitions). "Competitive activities offer optimal challenges and feedback that may affirm one's competence so that the person enjoys the task." (Bumpus et al., 1998, p. 253).

H2: Trait competitiveness is positively related to coachability.

Motivation

Motivation is another potential antecedent of coachability given the fact that it looks at the individual's receptivity to increasing their performance in a sales context, which is a volitional choice driven by some discrepancy between their current state and an ideal state. Motivation is described as a psychological state that drives behavior and is defined specifically related to sales as "the amount of effort salesperson desires to expend on each of the activities or tasks associated with the job" (Walker, Churchill, Ford, 1977). The sales performance literature is rich with evidence that motivation is a predictor of sales performance (e.g., Churchill et al., 1985; Miao et al., 2007). Motivation is often considered a global construct consisting of two factors, intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is defined as "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The impact of intrinsic motivation on performance is well documented in the sales literature (Churchill et al., 1985; Sujan, Weitz, and Sujan, 1988). Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) find intrinsic meaning of work is increased when transformational leaders align subordinates' efforts with a collective identity. Additionally, salespeople guided by transformational leaders are better at solving problems leading to heightened confidence in work abilities (Dubinsky et al., 1995).

According to self-determination theory (SDT), human beings have an innate tendency to be intrinsically motivated and seek challenges and growth; however, the social context within which a person engages can support or thwart continued development. Because intrinsic motivation is seen as an evolved propensity, the theory is not concerned with what causes it, but rather the "conditions that elicit and sustain, versus subdue and diminish, this innate propensity" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 70). Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) is a sub-theory of SDT and argues that "social-contextual events (feedback, communication, rewards) that conduce toward feelings of competence during action can enhance intrinsic motivation for that action" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 70). CET research has demonstrated that autonomy, through choice, acknowledgement of feelings, and self-direction, facilitate intrinsic motivation, while extrinsic rewards and control tactics, such as deadlines and directive, diminish intrinsic

motivation. Coachability and its outcome of personal growth, development and improvement serve to help sate the desires of the intrinsically motivated individual.

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation refers to "the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 71). Organismic integration theory (OIT), another subtheory of SDT, outlines the various forms of extrinsic motivation from externally regulated, based on an external demand or reward contingency, to identified and integrated regulation, which are more autonomous and self-determined (Ryan and Deci, 2000). When external forces, such as a coach, boss, or teacher, attempt to motivate behavior in others, the person may be completely unwilling, may passively comply, or may personally commit to the desired behavior. Internalization and integration of extrinsically motivated behaviors is a function of relatedness, competence and autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Integration requires a person to grasp meaning and synthesize that meaning with respect to their own goals and values, which can take place through autonomy supportive leadership. Studies indicate that more autonomous extrinsic motivation through identified and integrated regulation results in positive outcomes such as engagement, performance, well-being, and relationships (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In the context of sales coaching, the extrinsic rewards associated with better performance would also drive the increased receptivity to coaching for those extrinsically motivated individuals.

While some theorize that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation work in opposition, there is support for the additive effects of the two, such that persons who are intrinsically motivated toward an activity show higher levels of creativity under external reward conditions (Amabile et al., 1994) and the two dimensions can have reciprocal effects on state-level experience (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Intrinsically motivated sales students are more likely to strive to be better through learning and accepting feedback from coaches. Collegiate sales competitions provide an intrinsically motivating task that includes clear goals, optimal challenge for engaging one's skills, and immediate feedback for noting progress. Extrinsic motivation has been associated with positive responses to wins (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). While intrinsic motivation is more likely to influence coachability, extrinsically motivated students with integrated values through autonomy, competence, and relatedness are also likely to be high in coachability.

H3: Students who exhibit a higher degree of extrinsic motivation will be more coachable than those who exhibit a lower degree.

H4: Students who exhibit a higher degree of intrinsic motivation will be more coachable than those who exhibit a lower degree.

Adaptive Selling Behavior

Adaptive selling refers to "the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan, 1986, p. 175). Adaptive selling behavior has a positive influence on performance (Franke and Park, 2006) and adaptive selling skills enhance a salesperson's ability to use external customer-based competitive intelligence to position and differentiate a product, resulting in increased value and profit margins (Hughes, Le Bon, and Rapp, 2013). Roman and Iacobucci (2008) suggest that the intrinsic drive to learn enhances one's confidence in adapting to a sales situation and subsequently adaptive selling behaviors. Thus, it is also reasonable to posit that individuals who are adaptable are also receptive to external resources that will better enable them to achieve their goals and provide them with additional adaptive options in the future. Likewise, students who engage in adaptive selling behaviors are more willing to accept feedback from coaches in order to try tactics that will better serve customers.

H5: Students who exhibit a higher degree of sales adaptability will be more coachable than those who exhibit a lower degree.

METHODS

Sample

Surveys were administered online to student participants in major student sales organizations and competitions via an email request. Approximately 47% of student

respondents were male and 78% of respondents were under the age of 23. Of the 299 usable responses, 166 had participated in at least one collegiate sales competition and were able to answer the leadership items.

Measures

All scales for this study are taken from the literature. Leadership was measured using a five-facet scale from Dubinsky et al. (1995). Each facet (transactional leadership, charismatic leadership, inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) was measured using three items. Extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation were each measured by two-facet (compensation seeking and recognition seeking for extrinsic and challenge seeking and task enjoyment for intrinsic) scales from Miao, Evans, and Shaoming (2007). Each facet was measured by three items. Adaptability was measured using the six-item adaptive selling behavior scale from Miao and Evans (2013) that was adapted from Spiro and Weitz (1990). Trait Competitiveness was measured using a four-item scale from Shannahan, Bush and Shannahan (2013b). Coachability was measured by a 24-item scale also used by Shannahan et al. (2013b).

Analysis and Results

Reliability Analysis

The first step in the analysis process was to check the psychometric properties of the measures. This was done via a reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha as the key statistic. Each facet of each scale was assessed (if the scale contained multiple facets) as well as the scale as a whole, and the results can be seen in Table 1. In the adaptive selling behavior scale, item 5 was removed because it had a negative item-to-total correlation while all the others were positive and the item was not reverse coded; in addition the item-to-total correlation was below 0.50 and removing the item raised the alpha from 0.693 (slightly below acceptable) to 0.910. The rest of the items, facets and scales exhibited acceptable psychometric properties according to Nunnally (1967) as evidenced by the composite reliabilities and communalities also in Table 1.

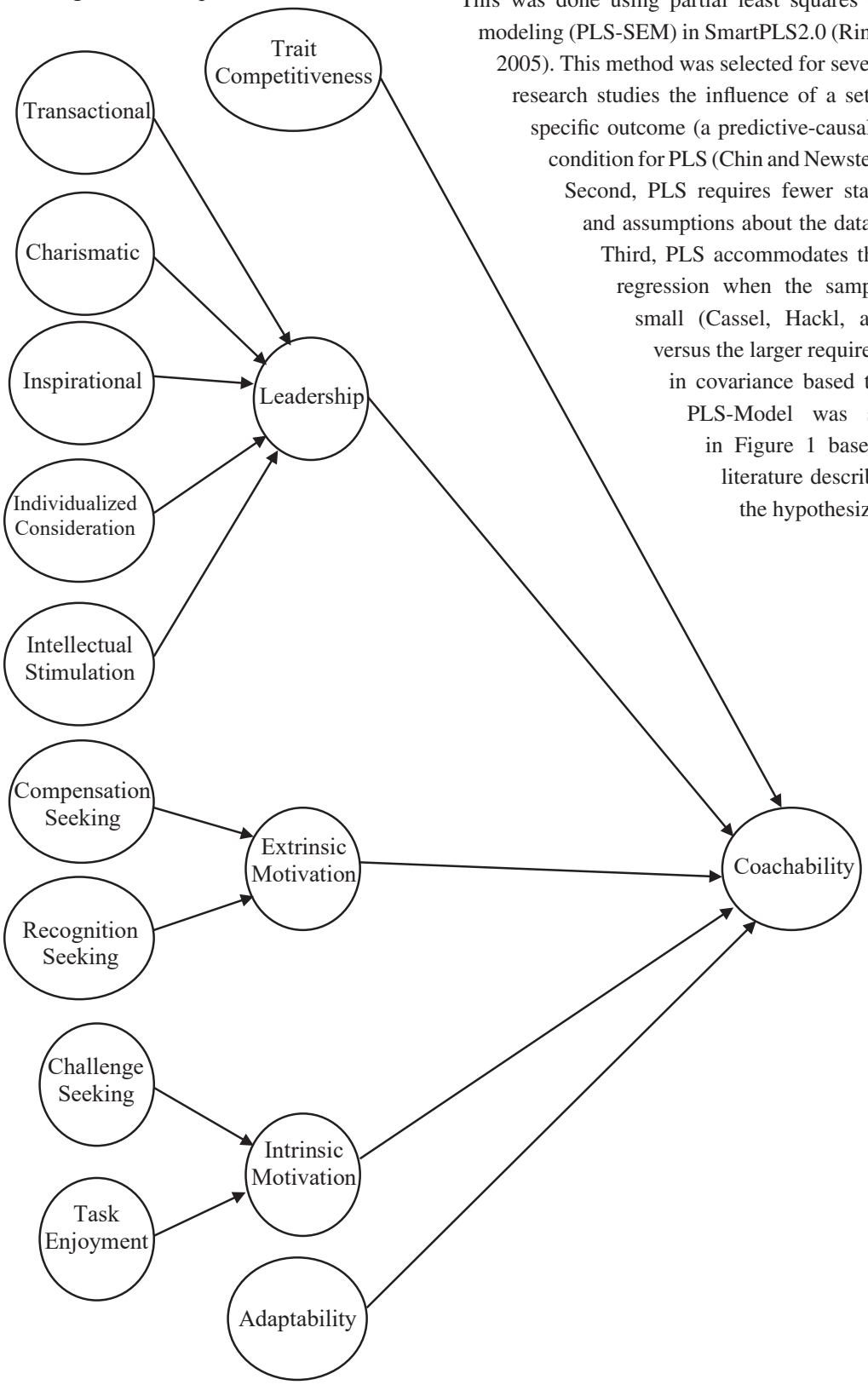
Table 1: Facet/Scales Reliability Analysis Results

Facet/Scale	Initial Items	Retained Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Communality
Leadership - Transactional	3	3	0.918	0.9954	0.9862
Leadership - Charismatic	3	3	0.946	0.9969	0.9907
Leadership - Inspirational	3	3	0.939	0.9967	0.9901
Leadership - Intellectual Stim	3	3	0.921	0.9957	0.9873
Leadership - Individualized Consideration	3	3	0.938	0.9962	0.9887
Leadership	15	15	0.978	0.9985	0.9776
Extrinsic Motivation - Compensation	3	3	0.860	0.9177	0.788
Extrinsic Motivation - Recognition	3	3	0.728	0.8636	0.6826
Extrinsic Motivation	6	6	0.838	0.8926	0.5847
Intrinsic Motivation - Challenge	3	3	0.909	0.9438	0.8484
Intrinsic Motivation - Task Enjoyment	3	3	0.888	0.9313	0.8189
Intrinsic Motivation	6	6	0.818	0.869	0.5262
Adaptive Selling Behavior	6	5	0.910	0.9329	0.736
Trait Competitiveness	4	4	0.865	0.9082	0.7123
Coachability	24	24	0.952	0.9583	0.4937

PLS-SEM Models

The second step in the analytical process was to test the hypotheses. This was done using partial least squares – structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS2.0 (Ringle, Wende, and Will, 2005). This method was selected for several reasons. First, this research studies the influence of a set of antecedents on a specific outcome (a predictive-causal analysis) which is a condition for PLS (Chin and Newsted, 1995; Wold, 1982). Second, PLS requires fewer statistical specifications and assumptions about the data including normality. Third, PLS accommodates the need for multiple-regression when the sample size is relatively small (Cassel, Hackl, and Westlund, 2000) versus the larger required sample size needed in covariance based traditional SEM. The PLS-Model was specified as shown in Figure 1 based on the scales and literature described above along with the hypothesized relationships.

Figure1: Conceptual Model



An examination of the inter-facet and inter-factor correlations in the hypothesized model (as shown in Table 2) supports the multi-faceted specification of leadership, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation as evidenced by the high correlations among the facets that made up each higher order construct. Additionally, the high average variance explained metrics for each facet and construct provide further evidence of the strength of the model specification and along with the high loadings for each indicator which support the proposed measurement model.

Table 2: Inter-facet/factor Correlations and AVE

Facet/Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Leadership - Transactional	**0.986**														
2. Leadership - Charismatic	0.988	**0.991**													
3. Leadership - Inspirational	0.986	0.990	**0.990**												
4. Leadership - Intellectual Stimulation	0.981	0.983	0.987	**0.987**											
5. Leadership - Individualized Consideration	0.986	0.988	0.988	0.985	**0.989**										
6. Leadership	0.994	0.995	0.996	0.993	0.995	**0.978**									
7. Extrinsic Motivation - Compensation	0.143	0.123	0.131	0.134	0.143	0.136	**0.788**								
8. Extrinsic Motivation - Recognition	0.150	0.147	0.151	0.142	0.160	0.151	0.588	**0.683**							
9. Extrinsic Motivation	0.163	0.149	0.157	0.154	0.168	0.159	0.921	0.857	**0.585**						
10. Intrinsic Motivation - Challenge	0.251	0.240	0.243	0.254	0.263	0.252	0.476	0.365	0.479	**0.848**					
11. Intrinsic Motivation - Task enjoyment	0.094	0.103	0.107	0.113	0.101	0.104	0.319	0.238	0.321	0.265	**0.819**				
12. Intrinsic Motivation	0.225	0.223	0.227	0.238	0.237	0.231	0.507	0.385	0.510	0.832	0.755	**0.526**			
13. Adaptive Behavior	0.153	0.141	0.147	0.157	0.155	0.151	0.509	0.324	0.481	0.567	0.347	0.585	**0.736**		
14. Trait Competitiveness	0.234	0.225	0.221	0.231	0.237	0.231	0.568	0.505	0.605	0.530	0.236	0.496	0.442	**0.712**	
15. Coachability	0.282	0.273	0.285	0.286	0.304	0.288	0.523	0.355	0.506	0.583	0.396	0.625	0.573	0.452	**0.494**
* Note: Numbers on the Diagonal Elements are AVE															

The paths from the second-order constructs of leadership, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation as well as from the first-order constructs of adaptive behavior and trait competitiveness to coachability were examined to assess the hypotheses in this study. The significance of each path was assessed using the bootstrapping techniques in SmartPLS2.0 which generates a t-value for each path that can be compared against critical values to determine statistical significance. As can be seen in Table 3, all of the hypotheses were supported at the $p < .01$ level of significance with the exception of hypothesis 2 which proposed a significant positive relationship between trait competitiveness and coachability.

To more clearly understand the underlying drivers of the antecedent coaching behaviors, facet level analyses were also conducted. The facets were linked to coachability via direct paths in a simplified PLS-SEM model to see if any specific facets were driving the findings. As shown in Table 4, this was the case with only two of the five leadership facets and one of the two facets for extrinsic motivation significantly impacting coachability while all of the facets for intrinsic motivation were significant antecedents. These findings also clarify the two parts of H1 with two of the transformational leadership behaviors influencing coachability, which supports H1a. On the other hand, transactional leadership behaviors did not influence coachability, thus H1b was not supported. However, it is important to note that all of the transformational leadership facets were highly correlated and interacted with each other strongly in the facet model, thus we cannot rule out the importance of a single facet in a higher order construct on the basis of the main effect only.

Table 3: PLS-SEM Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	t-Value	Significance	Support
H1	Leadership → Coachability	0.135	3.002	p < .01	Yes
H2	Trait Competitiveness → Coachability	0.041	0.550	NS	No
H3	Extrinsic Motivation → Coachability	0.160	2.393	p < .01	Yes
H4	Intrinsic Motivation → Coachability	0.340	4.690	p < .01	Yes
H5	Adaptive Behavior → Coachability	0.260	3.561	p < .01	Yes

Coachability R-Square = 0.499

Table 4: Facet-level Influences on Coachability

Hypothesis	Facet	Coefficient	t-Value	Significance	Support
H1a	Leadership – Charismatic*	1.343	1.671	p < 0.05	Yes
H1a	Leadership – Inspirational*	.0454	0.615	NS	No
H1a	Leadership - Individualized Consideration*	1.252	1.624	NS	No
H1a	Leadership – Intellectual Stimulation*	-0.184	0.304	NS	No
H1b	Leadership - Transactional	-0.007	0.020	NS	No
H3	Extrinsic Motivation – Compensation Seeking	0.195	2.906	p < 0.01	Yes
H3	Extrinsic Motivation – Recognition Seeking	0.009	0.156	NS	No
H4	Intrinsic Motivation – Challenge Seeking	0.239	3.227	p < 0.01	Yes
H4	Intrinsic Motivation – Task Enjoyment	0.182	1.921	p < 0.05	Yes
*Note that there were significant interactions between the following pairs of leadership constructs in the model: Inspirational-Charismatic, Inspirational-Individualized Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation-Charismatic, Intellectual Stimulation-Individualized Consideration.					

DISCUSSION

The findings above highlight the two-fold nature of finding a coachable employee. The first is the trait side which according to the results is due to the individual's inherent motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. That is selecting employees who are highly motivated, preferably both by the nature of the activity itself (e.g., the challenge of the activity and/or the task itself) and also by the positive consequences possible from performing well on the task (i.e., compensation and/or recognition) increases the likelihood that they will be coachable because they see coaching as a means to help them achieve their desired outcomes. The other side of the equation is one of training and guidance. The results suggest that providing transformational leadership in the forms of transformational leadership behaviors, as noted in the facet level analysis, can lead to individuals being more receptive to coaching; thus educators who are trying to make students more work ready or employers who want to enhance their ability to coach young salespeople should examine what, if any, leadership they are providing to their employees. Specifically, it is worth noting that while the facets of transformational leadership work together interactively to increase coachability, the use of output feedback (a form of transactional leadership behavior) does not. Another part of the training spectrum is that of adaptive behaviors. The findings suggest that more adaptable individuals are more receptive to coaching, and according to the research in the area of adaptive selling this type of skill can be taught (e.g., Eckert, 2006; Fleming and Hawes, 2016). Therefore, educators and firms should work with young employees on developing their repertoire of adaptive selling skills which will make them more receptive to coaching in other areas and more likely to succeed in their career.

One surprising finding was that higher levels of trait competitiveness did not lead to an increase in coachability. However, when the definition of trait competitiveness is considered, this may not be as surprising as it appears on the surface. Just because a young employee has a desire to win and enjoys competition does not mean that they will be receptive to coaching, especially if they think that they already know how to win. In the literature there are several ways that the relationship between trait competitiveness and motivation has been conceptualized. Wang and Netemeyer (2004) imply that motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic which they combine in the construct of work effort) and competitiveness act independently of each other in their test of the validity of salesperson creative performance. Fletcher, Major, and Davis (2008) proposed a contingent relationship between trait competitiveness and motivation, based on the organizational climate, in which higher trait competitiveness leads to higher motivation only when the climate is supportive of competition. Finally, Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1998) proposed a direct link from competitiveness to motivation; they believe that those with higher trait competitiveness will be more motivated through competition (extrinsic motivation) and thus perform better. This structural specification was also supported for intrinsic motivation by Frederick-Recascino and Schuster-Smith (2003) who found that sport competitiveness lead to an increase in interest motivation (a form of intrinsic motivation similar to task enjoyment in this study). Based on these last two studies, the model was refit to examine the possibility of trait competitiveness having an indirect effect on coachability through the two types of motivation.

The respecified model with trait competitiveness as an antecedent to both types of motivation did not change the r-squared value of coachability which remained at 0.499. This indicates that trait competitiveness had no direct effect at all on the coachability of the respondents. On the other hand, the respecified model does indicate an indirect effect of trait competitiveness through the mechanisms of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Trait competitiveness is significantly positively related to both extrinsic motivation (standardized path coefficient = .608, t-value =14.465, $p<.01$) and intrinsic motivation (standardized path coefficient = .501, t-value =9.880, $p<.01$) and generates significant r-square values on each (.370 and .251 respectively). Thus, while a higher level of trait competitiveness does not make individuals more coachable, it does increase their levels of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation which in turn leads to more coachable individuals along with other desirable sales outcomes including performance (Brown et al., 2008), self-efficacy and learning (Wang and Netemeyer, 2002).

IMPLICATIONS

Academic

For those involved in sales research, the findings of both the main study and the follow-up respecification should guide future research into the mechanisms of coachability and how they interact with other desirable traits from the literature as both antecedents and outcomes. For those in academia who are involved in preparing sales students for the workforce, the findings suggest that a focus on teaching adaptive selling behaviors along with providing the types of leadership noted in this study would go a long way in preparing those students for the coaching they will need to succeed in the work force. There is some debate about how much of a role faculty coaches should play in preparing and assisting students at collegiate sales competitions.

One competition has implemented a "no coaching" policy for their sales management case competition based on feedback from industry sponsors wanting to see how students can problem solve independent of faculty advisors. While this is certainly understandable, our findings support the importance of coaching in developing a more coachable candidate to enter the workplace receptive to and more likely to benefit from training and developmental coaching by sales managers. As the number of competitions continues to grow, with increasing demands on faculty and university time and financial resources, the return on investment is important to consider. Coachability is an influenceable characteristic linked to sales performance, thus important to understand the individual and situational factors that have a positive impact, especially those that can be influenced by faculty as part of the college experience.

Practice

For those engaged in the hiring, training and retention processes for young salespeople, the findings of this study provide guidance for selecting the type of employees that have personality traits which make them more receptive to coaching. Specifically, selecting those who score higher on measures of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and trait competitiveness enhances the likelihood that these employees will be receptive to the coaching necessary to succeed. Additionally, providing contingent reward transactional leadership, charismatic leadership, inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation and/or individualized consideration can encourage employees to be more receptive to coaching efforts from the organization. Leadership style, not amount of time or guided vs. independent, has a significant impact on coachability. With limited time resources, this is good news. By utilizing a transformational leadership style, faculty can prepare students for the workplace by increasing their coachability. While individual level traits play a role in coachability, situational context also plays a significant role. This study sheds light on an influenceable characteristic and the mechanisms through which it manifests. This is a finding that is likely to have major implications for sales managers who have limited time to coach their salespeople but can adapt their sales leadership style, as suggested by Crick, Fleming, and Allen (2019), to achieve performance gains. Finally, if firms work with new hires on increasing their adaptive selling behaviors, it is expected to increase their receptivity to other coaching as they will then be able to see how to use this new information to enhance their selling skills.

LIMITIATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the first limitations of this paper that should be addressed in future research is that the sample only consists of those students who chose to participate in sales competitions. These students may be inherently different from other students or new salespeople, thus rendering the findings of this research only applicable to those who are already interested in sales to the extent they seek out opportunities to engage in activities that allow them to develop and practice sales skills. In addition, sales competition participation is capped, limiting the number of students who are able to compete. Future research should address this in two ways, the first being to test the model in the manuscript with students in general, most likely those in sales classes, to determine if the same antecedents to coachability apply to all those willing to learn sales or only those with a higher level of interest and involvement along with the impact of any prior sales experience the student may have. A second study should examine the antecedents of coachability for newly hired salespeople

to see how sales force coachability differs from sales student coachability. Another aspect of interest in future research would be to evaluate not only the coaching behaviors, but to examine the credibility of individuals providing the coaching along with the coaches' level of sales experience.

Another limitation of this study is that it relies only on the student's perception of the leadership they received in preparation. A future study should be dyadic and evaluate the leadership behaviors and level of effective coaching (Nguyen et al., 2019) actually provided by the coach and the leadership behaviors perceived by the student on both student coachability and performance outcomes. A longitudinal version of this study would also overcome the cross-sectional nature of the current study to determine if the type leadership received over time changes the coachability of the receiver.

A final area for future research should examine the match between the type and style of leadership received from the coach to what is needed by the recipient. This study would empirically test the conceptual claims made by Crick, Allen and Fleming (2019) regarding leadership type and style congruity in the application of adaptive leadership.

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