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### Intention to Pursue a Sales Career: A Dyadic Study of Students and Parents Extended Abstract

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# **Intention to Pursue a Sales Career: A Dyadic Study of Students and Parents**

## **Extended Abstract**

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### **INTRODUCTION/LITERATURE REVIEW**

The current research focuses on one major influence in a student's decision to enter into a sales career: parental influence. The current study consists of three sections of literature review to understand the theoretical linkages of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), Affective Events Theory (AET), and Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX).

#### ***Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)***

SCCT, (Lent et al., 1994) is a complex theory relevant to this study and has been examined extensively as a theory of career choice. The cognitive contextual factors that are involved in career choice selection are divided into subgroups due to their proximity to career selection:

1. There are background influences that an individual experienced that affect cognition and interests.
2. Proximal influences play a role at a critical choice moment.

#### ***Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX)***

The LMX theory is applied to the influence a parent has on their student is relevant in this study. According to LMX theory individual in a position of authority will not have the same style of interactions with all subordinates. Loyalty is an effect playing a role in LMX, where both parties maintain loyalty to each other, supporting the decisions/actions of each other (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

#### ***Affective Events Theory (AET)***

A student deducing what type of career to pursue will include satisfaction in their choice. It is in this regard that AET will be applied to this study. Researches have argued that job satisfaction is achieved by distinguishing cause and effect. Therefore, experiences at work, satisfaction of one's job or results from the performance or emotional experience will distinguish the cause and effect of satisfactions. The beliefs resulting in job satisfaction is derived from work experiences

and beliefs about one's job (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Thus, a judgement approach in the understanding of how job satisfaction is related to the work environment and how that satisfactions occurs will play a role in the individuals career choice selection (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

### ***Parental Involvement***

Because every family has its own unique traditions and history, this can be complimented with the parent's background and how involved they become in their child's career choice selection. Therefore, supporting the claim that the student's family members have the most influence on their career selection (Lankard, 1995).

### ***Parental Education***

The parents educational background will also influence career choice selection (Lankard, 1995). Researchers have found that when parents had open discussions about their careers with or in front of their children, it had an influence on the student's career choice. Therefore, the children were aware of the parent's career expectations and requirements, this understanding led to a positive or negative perception about that career, either sparking their interest or deterring them from it (DeRidder, 1990).

## **HYPOTHESIS**

This research will focus on the paired state level of students and their parental figure to provide a better understanding of the role the parental figure plays in the student's choice to pursue a career in sales.

**H1:** When a student's and parents' perceptions of sales interact such that when the perceptions of both are highly positive, interest in a career in sales will be greater. However, when student perceptions of a sales career are highly positive and the parental perceptions of sales are negative, then the interest in a career in sales will be weaker.

This dyadic study included a closed-end, multiple-choice questions with a 5-point Likert scale (Mason & Kahle, 1988). This was used to gather information on demographics, student's major, and information on parental influences. Two independent surveys were administered: one to the student and the other to their parental figure. Survey questions provided information on parents' education, profession, and attitude toward sales, selling ethics, sales profession, and sales knowledge.

## **FINDINGS**

When students and parents interact and their discussions reveal that they have highly positive perceptions about the sales profession, the student's interest in a career in sales will be greater. However, when a student's perceptions of the sales profession are highly positive but parental perceptions are negative, then their interest in a sales career will be weaker.

The results show that the student/parent interaction effect is not significant ( $\beta = .010, p = .175$ ); therefore, H1 is not supported, and only the main effects can be interpreted. The main effects of students' and parents' attitudes toward sales affect a student's intention to pursue a sales career. The parent's attitude toward sales is not significant ( $\beta = .072, p = .125$ ); however, the student's

attitude toward sales is significant ( $\beta = .33$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $F = 23.553$ ,  $R^2 = 37.1\%$ ). Therefore, as a student's attitude toward sales becomes more positive, so does their intention to pursue a sale's career. The rationale behind this hypothesis was to gain an understanding that if the parental figure had a positive perception of sales, it would positively influence their child's perception toward the profession and may influence them to pursue a sales career.

**Keywords:** Sales, Influences, Motivations, Dyadic

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