

ABSTRACT

Humility, Trust, and Satisfaction

Examining the Salesperson/Sales Manager Relationship

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In spite of the increasing presence of the use of virtues in the theory and practice of business management, humility is not considered one of the pertinent virtues in the corporate world. In addition, there exists an insignificant amount of empirical evidence regarding the importance of manager humility and its relationships with employee trust, performance, and satisfaction. This lack of research is even more significant within the context of business-to-business sales management. This paper explains the basic foundation of humility and its traits and how they may manifest in a sales-managers profession and performance. The purpose of this research is to investigate and provide empirical evidence regarding sales-manager humility and its relationship with employee trust and satisfaction. Manager humility has a significant, positive correlation with salesperson trust for and satisfaction with that manager. There is a notable relationship between employee religiosity and trust and employee religiosity and supervisor satisfaction as well.

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HUMILITY, TRUST, AND SATISFACTION
EXAMINING THE SALESPERSON/SALES MANAGER RELATIONSHIP

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

What characteristics and attributes cause managers to be successful in what they do? Should firms train their managers to adopt these characteristics—or should they simply seek these individuals out? There is always a most pertinent decision when it comes to choosing among candidates for the role of a sales manager—but the metrics for making this decision are still being and will continue to be redefined and studied so long as business-to-business sales remains profitable. In a similar way, the characteristics of humility and religiosity have been continually studied, defined, and redefined for millennia. The basic concept of humility has a thorough grounding in both philosophy and theology, and a considerable grounding in psychology. However, studies regarding humility and its benefits in miscellaneous professional and personal contexts have become increasingly popular in the last decade. In light of recent corporate scandals thought to have been fueled by the selfishness, entitlement, hubris, and pride of the executives involved (Boje et al., 2004), the virtue of humility has been looked towards as corporations seek to hire leaders who can yield long-term, sustainable success.

While the popularity of humility research in a business context has been a recent area of interest, it wasn't until the early 2000s that refined definitions of measurable or expressed humility were developed (i.e., Morris et al., 2005; Exline et al., 2004; Tangney, 2002; Templeton, 1997; Means et al., 1990). Even with the recent scholarly attention over the past two decades, there remain sizeable holes in our understanding of the true

meaning of the term humility. While some view humility as a dynamic, multidimensional, and exercisable strength (Tangney, 2000), many others simply associate the term with low self-image and humiliation (Exline & Geyer, 2004). While many of these definitions have been brought up and expanded on, there still lacks a widely accepted consensus among scholars. Furthermore, while there exist several examples of literature which point towards the possible effectiveness of the application of humility in a corporate setting, little to no evidential research exists to back such a claim at an empirical level. This is undoubtedly, in part, due to the lack of a widespread consensual definition and metric for humility.

In addition to a lack of widespread consensus on the meaning of humility, there also exists a wide array of definitions for the term religiosity. Particularly in a business context, there exists an obvious lack of empirical research on religiosity and its effect on both trust and performance within a corporate setting. However, one very recent study found a significant positive correlation between religiosity and salesperson job satisfaction (Onyemah et al., 2018). As the selling of a company's products and services is the primary source of income for a typical firm, the significance of salesperson satisfaction and performance cannot be overstated. Furthermore, a recent study including more than a million US-based employees revealed that the most common reason why employees quit their jobs is due to poor management or an unsatisfactory direct report supervisor (Lipman, 2016). Not only can high turnover rates damage a firm's reputation, it can significantly affect its bottom line as well. Having said this, we seek to find the importance of not only the follower's perceived humility in their direct report supervisor—but also their religiosity and perceived trust in that individual.

Contrary to perceptions of humility which paint the term in a negative or passive context--we hypothesize that followers who perceive their leaders to be humble will have a higher level of satisfaction with that individual as well. With respect to previous research, we want to provide additional empirical evidence to the theories established by reputable works in the previous few decades (i.e., Morris et al., 2005; Exline et al., 2004; Tangney, 2002; Templeton, 1997).

In order to accurately measure the effectiveness of humility in a leader/follower context, one must measure the influenced party's perception of the other's expressed behavior. Bearing this in mind, we will be using the Owens (2013) definition and metric for expressed humility, as this definition is focused on expressed behaviors of humility and their effect on the those who perceive them. We plan to test the salesperson's perspective of his or her manager's expressed humility, as opposed to the manager's expressed humility, in order to remove any self-serving bias (Davis et al., 2013). In addition, we will use a combination of different reputable surveys to measure religiosity, trust, and supervisor satisfaction. The overall goal for this study is to create much needed empirical evidence for the positive correlation (or lack thereof) between humility and leader/follower trust and supervisor satisfaction in a sales setting. We also want to study the relationship between religiosity and this humility/trust correlation, as it could prove to be a moderator for the relationship.

Although there exists a considerable amount of research on employee-employer trust and its positive yields for productivity, there is only a small amount of research for this within a salesforce management context. Likewise, it is difficult to find research regarding expressed leader humility and its effects on follower trust and performance

within a similar business setting. Due to these wide gaps in valuable research and human resource knowledge, we found that further exploration on these topics should help firms make more informed hiring decisions for leadership roles—particularly within business-to-business sales management. If this study is successful, we will ideally discover more about which characteristics of sales managers lead them to increased trustworthiness and efficiency. This knowledge can then be implemented by hiring managers in order to foster additional trust and productivity within their salesforce. Furthermore, this research aims to build on and strengthen the corporate understanding of the roles of trust, humility, and religiosity within a sales management and leadership context. Ideally, it should help inform managerial hiring and promotion processes within a corporate or sales context.

Humility Defined

For the sake of clarity in this study, the major definitions of humility must be established in detail. The word humility is derived from *humus*, meaning the earth beneath us. Although the term humility is mainly associated with religious virtue—particularly within the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—eastern religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Taoism also have their own inclusion and view of the term (Exline & Geyer, 2004). However, from a secular, philosophical perspective, humility is often theorized as a virtue—as it is a mean between pride and self-deprecation (Aquinas, 1981, 161). Additionally, more modern definitions of humility can be seen in the following literatures: Richards (1988), Snow (1995), Tangney (2000), Kupfer (2003), and Nielsen et al. (2010).

Although this term and virtue has been extensively studied by theologians and philosophers for millennia, it has seemingly lost its presence and value within current research (particularly in research regarding its effectiveness in a business context). This may be due to today's values of self-confidence and moderated pride as healthy towards achieving success, as some definitions of humility (particularly those with an emphasis on acknowledging unworthiness and a submission to others) conflict with these values. Because of this, it has been spurned as a characteristic unworthy of pursuing in a secular context (Davis et al., 2010). However, recent approaches—both empirical and theoretical—towards psychology and business ethics have “dealt with humility not as a weakness but as a strength of a person, emphasizing its contribution to social cohesion and the creation of trust” (Argandona, 2015). Furthermore, recent research suggesting a multi-dimensional approach to defining humility asserts that the trait can augment effective leadership as well (Nielsen, R., Marrone, J. A., & Slay, H. S. 2010).

Due to its complexity, we will not provide a singular definition of humility, as it has even more than one variety of meaning. A large barrier to overcome within humility research is the variance of available definitions for the term. Many believe that humility is simply the state of holding oneself in low regard, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as “the quality of being humble or having a lowly opinion of oneself; meekness, lowliness, humbleness: the opposite of *pride* or *haughtiness*.¹” In addition, *Webster’s New World Dictionary* and *Funk & Wagnall’s Standard College Dictionary* define humility simply as a state of being humble. Humble being a term defined as “Lowly in kind, state, condition, etc.; of little worth; unimportant; common; Lowly in feeling; lacking self-esteem; having a sense of insignificance, unworthiness, dependence, or sinfulness; meek;

penitent.” This provides more complications, as assertiveness can be seen as a valuable asset in many business contexts—especially in sales.

However, reputable literature asserts that there are six elements to a secular and psychological definition of humility:

1. An assessment of one’s abilities and accomplishments
2. The acceptance of one’s mistakes and acknowledgement of limitations
3. Open-mindedness
4. Contradictory advice and information
5. Keeping one’s progress in his or her vision
6. Low self-focus and appreciation of external values

(Tangney, 2005, p. 413).

Clearly, there is not one universal definition for the term—but there are two widely accepted dimensions to humility that we will focus on for the sake of the study: interpersonal and intrapersonal (Tangney, 2005). On the interpersonal level, humility involves the focus on others or the external. In a business context, it is important for sales managers to hold this trait, so they can manage and support their supervisees well. This also includes the amount of time spent focused on one’s surrounding and selfless extrospection. On the intrapersonal level, humility involves the accuracy of one’s view of the self. In a corporate context, this is ideally important for determining how the manager is perceived and trusted by his or her followers. This includes, among other things, how one views himself or herself with respect to others. Both of these aspects of humility are important to view in the evaluation of their roles and relations to trust. We believe that

the inclusion of both aspects are essential to defining the term with more accuracy than its conventional, misguided uses.

Regarding humility's role in trust, there is evidence pointing towards a strong correlation in multiple diverse, relational contexts. For example, recent research has shown a strong correlation between humility and trust levels within marriages and an overall increase in marital satisfaction (Wang, Edwards, & Hill, 2017). Specifically, in this case, humility is noted as a catalyst for the reparation of trust after it has become broken. Although it cannot be said that marital relationships are affected in the same way as supervisor-supervisee relationships, recent research suggests that there is clearly a strong correlation between humility and trust in organizational relationships as well (Lehman et al., 2018). Furthermore, additional recent research has shown that leaders who express humility can significantly reduce levels of counter-productive work behaviors and even increase trust levels between subordinates and themselves by augmenting their perceptions of interpersonal justice (Wang, 2018).

In order for this study to produce a valuable addition to corporate research and interpersonal understanding, trust must be defined as a key indicator of a healthy and effective leader/follower relationship. Because effective leadership is a dynamic and difficult concept to measure, this study will focus on trust and supervisor satisfaction, due to their empirically proven benefits within an employee-leader relationship. According to Gilly (2006), relationships between employees and leaders with a foundation of trust produce the following five benefits:

1. Enhancing and building managers' and employees' self-esteem

2. Enhancing productivity
3. Enhancing and building organizational communications
4. Enhancing and building organizational understanding
5. Enhancing and building organizational commitment

(Gilley, 2006)

All of the elements and benefits stated above are essential for the long-term success and growth of a company. It is clear from this research, along with a plethora of others, that trust is a vital element for building stronger and more productive relationships in every context. Particularly in sales, where labor is expensive and high productivity correlates directly with company growth, building this trust between a sales manager and salesperson is extremely important (Tzafrir & Dolan, 2004). Furthermore, additional research has shown that salesperson and sales manager trust directly correlate with higher levels of performance (Sallee and Flaherty, 2003). Bearing all of this in mind, this literature will measure trust due to its importance as a predictor of business-relevant outcomes regarding salesperson performance, job satisfaction, self-esteem, productivity, and retention (Sallee and Flaherty, 2003; Gilly, 2006). In addition, this research will measure presumed outcomes of effective leadership by the satisfaction levels a salesperson displays for his or her direct-report supervisor. We use this variable because supervisor satisfaction is widely known to be one of the most important indicators of effective leadership.

This literature makes the argument that higher levels of expressed humility will lead to higher levels of trust within the sales manager/employee relationship. With

respect to the lack of and recent emergence of humility research in corporate settings, we hope to build to the understanding of humility's value within a managing role. As seen in the literature by Tzafrir & Dolan (2004), there is already evidence for increased levels of satisfaction and trust for humble counterparts within leader/follower and marital relationships (Tangney, 2005). This is speculated to be related to humility's emphasis of honesty, selflessness, eagerness to receive feedback, and vulnerability within the admittance of limitations and inabilities. To build upon this understanding, we will test the follower's perceptions of their manager's humility—as humility is more easily and accurately observed in others than in oneself (Davis et al., 2013). Having said this, we hypothesize that there will be a significant positive correlation between expressed humility and trust among salespeople for their direct report supervisors.

Hypothesis 1. The level of a salesperson's trust for their sales manager will be positively correlated with the expressed humility of his or her leader.

Regarding religiosity, there exists a plethora of differing scales and definitions depending on the culture and institution conducting the research. In the last two decades, organization-based religiosity research has grown significantly (King, 2004). As religiosity has become a popular area of study, numerous scales and metrics have been created to measure it. Simply put, religiosity is an indication and measurement of one's religious devotion—and is therefore a derivative of religion (Bonne et al., 2008). Other sources define it as the extent to which an individual is committed to the religion he or she professes and its teachings, such that the individual's attitudes and behaviors reflect this commitment (Johnson et al., 2000). For the sake of this study, however, we will use a definition from a marketing and religion research study, Minton (2015) states,

“Religiosity is the degree to which one holds religious beliefs and values both through an internal spiritual connection and external religious practices and behaviors.” (12-13) We use this definition for religiosity throughout this literature due to its repute, context, and simplistic truth. Furthermore, it is important to measure both the internal and external activities and motivation one pursues and displays for his or her religion—as using only one or the other may fail to capture the range and essence of the construct.

Before diving into additional details about the study, we must acknowledge that this literature operates under the assumption that religiosity and religious affiliation are two entirely different metrics. While there exists a strong correlation between religiosity and trust—there is not enough research to assert that specific affiliations result in higher levels of trust as well. In addition, little to no research exists which correlates specific religious beliefs to marketplace, consumer, or relational trust. Because of this, we utilize the term, definition, metrics, and measurements for religiosity as opposed to metrics which may use language specific to any particular religion. While research shows that religious individuals are more trusted and trusting than others due to general religious commandments to treat others with respect—their specific religions do not significantly impact that same trust (Berggren and Bjørnskov, 2011; Orbell et al., 1992). However, there is some empirical evidence which points towards a relationship between religiosity and trust within a corporate context. For example, a study by Tan and Vogel (2008) has shown that a consumer’s level of trust for others in an economics simulation increased with their level of religiosity. Other studies have shown religiosity to lead to higher levels of interpersonal trust as well (Bahr and Martin, 1983).

This literature also makes the argument that religiosity should have a relationship with humility and trust. With respect to religiosity's role in the humility/trust relationship—it has been shown that religion can strongly influence core value development (Minton, 2015). For the purpose of clarity, core values drive the beliefs and behaviors of every member of a business transaction, from consumers to CEOs. Furthermore, additional research has shown that this development of core values strongly influences consumer and purchaser behaviors as well (LaBarbera and Gurhan, 1997; Minton and Kahle 2013). This could point towards a trend of salespeople with higher levels of religiosity showing more trust for leaders who are humble due to their core value development.

In addition, a sufficient amount of literature shows strong correlations between religiosity and trust in multiple different circumstances (Berggren and Bjørnskov 2011; Tan and Vogel 2008). Most of this research finds a positive correlation between trust and religiosity specifically with the religious individual. Simply put, those with higher religiosity typically show higher levels of trust for others, specifically with others like themselves. However, there is a lack of evidence to support that those who are not religious have a higher sense of trust for those who are. While it would be a bit presumptive to assume that those who are more religious simply trust others more or that those who are more religious see others as more humble, religiosity could serve as a moderator for the relationship between these two variables.

As stated earlier, there is little to no evidence to support the specific relationship between religiosity and its effect on the humility/trust relationship. It will be intriguing to see if there is a significant modification on this relationship, depending on the

salesperson's levels of religiosity. We hypothesize that salespeople with higher levels of religiosity will have a higher average perceived trust for leaders with higher expressed humility. Due to the high amount of time and communication salespeople spend with their managers, those with higher levels of religiosity should ideally recognize humility more distinctly in their leaders. This could also be due to an increased core value development within those who are more religious (Minton, 2015). Because of this, we propose that these followers will experience a stronger relationship between leader humility and follower trust. Furthermore, this research should shed some additional light on previous literature that has found correlations between religiosity and trust and satisfaction (Berggren and Bjørnskov, 2011; Tan and Vogel, 2008). Simply put, we propose that religiosity will enhance the relationship between leader humility and follower trust such that humility and trust have higher correlations when follower religiosity is high.

Hypothesis 2: Religiosity serves as a moderator for the humility/trust relationship, such that humility and trust are more correlated when religiosity is high.

Through this research, we believe that there will be a strong positive correlation between leader humility and supervisor satisfaction among salespeople. We plan to utilize this study to build upon the research done by Wang and colleagues (2018) which shows that humble leaders increase follower's perceptions of interpersonal justice. For the sake of clarity, interpersonal justice is the treatment of others with dignity and respect, particularly regarding the treatment followers receive when procedures are implemented by management (Conner, 2015). In addition, recent research has suggested that this form of justice can have positive effects on both employee work attitudes and

job satisfaction (Charoensap, Virakul, Senasu, & Ayman, 2018). Furthermore, we simply propose that leaders that express more humility, and in the process showcase a selflessness, strengthen social bonds, and optimize benefits of competitive traits will yield followers with higher levels of supervisor satisfaction (Davis et al., 2013; Tangney, 2005, p. 413). Therefore, our hypothesis is that expressed leader humility will also positively correlate with supervisor satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3. Observed leader humility will be positively correlated with supervisor satisfaction among followers

This literature also seeks to find the correlation between trust and supervisor satisfaction among salespeople. Although there is a considerable amount of literature pointing towards a connection between these two variables—there are very few studies which specify a relationship between trust and supervisor satisfaction within a sales context (Cho & Lee, 2011). In spite of there being a considerable amount of scholarly attention to trust as a useful managerial resource, there still exists a need for empirical evidence regarding trust's role in management. With the research and background listed above, it would seem that this is an area of study worth continuing to pursue. In addition, finding a strong correlation between these variables can significantly help firms increase their employee's supervisor and/or job satisfaction ratings. As research has made clear, higher job and supervisor satisfaction directly correlate with higher levels of performance and higher employee retention ratings (Sallee and Flaherty, 2003).

Hypothesis 4: A salesperson's trust for his or her leader will positively correlate with his or her satisfaction with that leader.

CHAPTER TWO

Method

In order to stay consistent with supporting research, the measures for trust were developed by McAllister's (1995). In addition, all the measures involving job/supervisor satisfaction were taken from Wood, Rutherford, Boles, and Madupalli's (2007). Furthermore, the religiosity and humility scales used were taken from Mensah & Azila-Gbettor's (2018) and Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell's (2013) respectively.

Appendix

Humility Scale Descriptive Statistics

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
1	This person actively seeks feedback even if it is critical.	1.00	5.00	3.74	1.15	1.33
2	This person admits it when they don't know how to do something.	1.00	5.00	3.90	1.13	1.27
3	This person acknowledges when others have more knowledge and skills than him or herself.	1.00	5.00	4.01	1.08	1.16
4	This person takes notice of other's strengths.	1.00	5.00	4.32	0.91	0.84
5	This person often compliments others on their strengths.	1.00	5.00	4.14	0.95	0.91
6	This person shows appreciation for the unique contributions of others.	1.00	5.00	4.07	0.92	0.85
7	This person is willing to learn from others.	1.00	5.00	4.02	0.96	0.93
8	This person is open to the ideas of others.	1.00	5.00	4.07	0.98	0.95
9	This person is open to the advice of others.	1.00	5.00	4.02	0.96	0.93

Trust Scale Descriptive Statistics

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
1	We have a sharing relationship.	1.00	5.00	3.67	0.97	0.94
2	We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes.	1.00	5.00	3.73	1.10	1.21
3	I can talk freely to this individual about difficulties I am having at work and know that (s)he will want to listen.	1.00	5.00	3.92	1.07	1.15
4	We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and we could no longer work together.	1.00	5.00	3.38	1.30	1.70
5	If I shared my problems with this person, I know (s)he would respond constructively and caringly.	2.00	5.00	3.96	0.90	0.80
6	I would have to say that we have both made considerable emotional investments in our working relationship.	1.00	5.00	3.39	1.20	1.43

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
1	This person approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication.	2.00	5.00	4.43	0.70	0.49
2	Given this person's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.	2.00	5.00	4.37	0.84	0.71
3	I can rely on this person not to make my job more difficult by careless work.	1.00	5.00	4.18	0.96	0.93
4	Most people, even those who aren't close friends of this individual, trust and respect him/her as a coworker.	1.00	5.00	4.23	0.96	0.92
5	Other work associates of mine who must interact with this individual consider him/her to be trustworthy.	1.00	5.00	4.23	0.98	0.96
6	If people knew more about this individual and his/her background, they would be more concerned and monitor his/her performance more closely.	1.00	5.00	2.41	1.42	2.02

Religiosity Scale Descriptive Statistics

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
1	How often do you read holy scripture?	1.00	5.00	2.54	1.62	2.61
2	How often do you pray?	1.00	5.00	3.14	1.61	2.61
3	How often do you attend religious services and activities?	1.00	5.00	2.16	1.20	1.44
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
1	I am very religious.	1.00	5.00	3.57	1.49	2.21
2	My religion is important to me and guides every decision I make.	1.00	5.00	3.52	1.51	2.29
3	I believe in a Higher Power	1.00	5.00	4.38	1.00	1.00

Supervisor Satisfaction Scale Descriptive Statistics

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
1	My manager really tries to get our ideas about things.	1.00	5.00	3.95	0.97	0.94
2	My manager has always been fair in dealings with me.	1.00	5.00	4.27	0.88	0.77
3	My manager gives us credit and praise for work well done.	1.00	5.00	4.22	0.86	0.75
4	My manager lives up to his/her promises.	1.00	5.00	4.18	0.92	0.85

Sample

Ninety-seven salespeople across many industries were contacted via email, LinkedIn, and phone. Of these salespeople, 56 were male and 41 were female. In addition, from the sample of 97, 85 were of the age of 22-30, nine were of the age of 31-40, two were of the age of 40-50, and one was of the 50+ age range. After agreeing to cooperate in the study, the Qualtrics survey was distributed via an anonymous link. The survey includes an explanatory letter which includes the IRB consent form, outlines the purpose of the study, and provides simple guidelines for its completion. The

questionnaire was sent digitally to business-to-business salespeople in multiple industries throughout the United States.

Procedure

To begin gathering data, the survey was sent via email, LinkedIn, and text message to salespeople within the researcher's network. In addition, Baylor University's Professional Selling alumni network was utilized, along with the contacts of multiple corporate partners within the Professional Selling Program at Baylor University. Several sales managers within this network also distributed the survey to one or more of their salespeople to further data gathering. This provided a wide diversity of industries and experiences while maintaining the fundamental business-to-business salesperson/sales manager relationship constant. All research subjects were notified in the beginning of the survey that their names and companies will not be disclosed and that their managers would not be able to see their responses. Additionally, the demographically identifying questions simply disclosed the participant's occupation, gender, and age group.

Measures

Some of the scale items were re-phrased or re-worded to apply to the salesperson/sales manager relationship and context. Before the questionnaire was sent, it was pretested by a sample of three salespeople to ensure its effectiveness. Scales for both perceived, affect-based and cognition-based trust were measured to the extent to which salespeople perceive their sales managers as honest, trustworthy, and genuinely concerned about his or her follower's welfare throughout the duration of his or her

supervision. Six items were used to measure the perceived, affect-based trust variable, while six additional items were used to measure the perceived, cognition-based trust variable.

Supervisor satisfaction was measured to the extent to which salespeople perceive their own satisfaction with their sales-manager. Four items were utilized to measure the salesperson/supervisor satisfaction variable. Salesperson religiosity was utilized as the extent to which each salesperson perceives and expresses his or her own religious devotion. Three items were utilized to measure one's own perception of his or her religiosity. In addition, three items including measurements for the frequency of reading holy scriptures, praying, and attendance to religious services elements were operationalized with a five-point scale (from 1 being more daily to 5 being less than once per week). Expressed humility was utilized to the extent to which each salesperson perceives his or her manager's level of humility. Nine items were utilized to measure the expressed humility variable.

Analysis

The contribution scores were collected and averaged to be utilized as the main criteria to test our hypotheses. A correlation analysis was conducted between each variable to support Hypothesis 1, 3, and 4. A regression analysis was then utilized to examine the relationship between humility and trust to see if religiosity serves as a moderator for the relationship. This was done in an attempt to support Hypothesis 2.

CHAPTER THREE

Results

Correlation Analysis

We conducted a correlation analysis utilizing SAS to examine the relationships between the following variables: salesperson religiosity, supervisor humility, salesperson/supervisor trust, and salesperson/supervisor satisfaction. Table I contains the correlations, means, reliabilities, and standard deviations of the variables for descriptive purposes. The results in this table display that humility maintained a strong positive correlation with salesperson-sales manager trust ($r=.681$, $p<.0001$); a strong positive correlation between humility and supervisor satisfaction ($r=.723$, $p<.0001$); and a strong positive correlation between salesperson trust and supervisor satisfaction ($r=.675$, $p<.0001$). There were no significant correlations for any variables with the religiosity variable.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 97							Simple Statistics	
Prob > r under H0: Rho=0								
Variables	Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6	Mean	Std Dev
Religiosity (Var 1)	1.0000						3.26	1.22
Humility (Var 2)	.2363 .0198	1.0000					4.03	0.70
Trust (Var 3)	.1510 .1399	0.6810 <.0001	1.0000				3.92	0.66
Satisfaction (Var 4)	.2792 .0056	0.7225 <.0001	.6748 <.0001	1.0000			4.15	0.71
Cognition	.1381	.5393	.8298	.6598	1.0000		4.29	0.69
Trust (Var 5)	.1775	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001				
Affect	.1187	.6577	.8747	.5490	.4956	1.0000	3.68	0.88
Trust (Var 6)	.2470	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001			

Regression Analysis

We conducted a regression analysis to examine the relationship between humility and trust to see if religiosity serves as a moderator for this relationship. Table II contains the regression results to test for moderation. In this case, the moderator term was not

significant. However, the R-Square value was .492 for the regression overall, indicating that humility was a strong predictor for trust.

Dependent Variable: Trust

R-Square: 0.4920

Parameter Estimates			
Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Pr > t
Intercept	4.27774	0.2377	<.0001
Age	-0.1755	0.1253	0.1646
Gender	-0.1135	0.1057	0.2855
Religiosity	-0.0226	0.0433	0.6036
Humility	0.6444	0.0735	<.0001
Religiosity*Humility	0.0863	0.0618	0.1658

Hypothesis Testing

In H1, we theorized that humble leaders foster greater levels of trust among their followers. For the humility/trust relationship, we found this to be supported. Observed supervisor humility showed a strong positive correlation with salesperson trust ($r=.681$, $p<.0001$).

In H2, we hypothesized that religiosity would serve as a modifier for the trust/humility relationship. Specifically, the prediction was that followers with higher levels of religiosity will display more trust for humble leaders than those who express

lower levels of religiosity. This hypothesis was not supported as the moderator term was non-significant ($b=.086$, $p=.1658$).

In H3, we hypothesized that salespeople show higher levels of satisfaction for leaders who express higher levels of humility. This hypothesis was supported as observed supervisor humility showed a strong positive correlation with salesperson-supervisor satisfaction ($r=.723$, $p<.0001$).

In H4, we hypothesized that a salesperson's trust for his or her manager will be positively correlated with his or her trust for that manager. This hypothesis was supported, as perceived trust showed a strong positive correlation with supervisor satisfaction ($r=.675$, $p<.0001$).

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion

In order to provide a significant contribution to the current understanding of the importance of humility within a corporate context, our ultimate objectives for this research were to (1) define and build off of the definitions for expressed humility used in previous literature (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013); (2) effectively measure observed leader humility to provide supporting evidence to its relation to religiosity, trust, and supervisor satisfaction within a sales context; (3) showcase the relevance of both humility and trust within the corporate context of sales management. The research we have provided has added at least three pertinent contributions towards today's literature. The first of these contributions would be the addition of empirical evidence of humility's relation to trust within a leader/follower relationship in a sales context. Although this does not necessarily prove that one variable is caused by the other—strong evidence of their relationship is now provided, supported, and replicable. With this supported hypothesis it can be inferred that humility is to be seen as a strong indicator that trust is present. In addition, due to the strong support of our third hypothesis, it can also be inferred that expressed leader humility can be seen as a strong indicator that supervisor satisfaction will be present. Again, although this does not provide any proof that one element is the cause of the other—it is safe to assume that humility is to be seen as a desired trait in its correlation with these two key elements of effective leadership (Tzafrir & Dolan, 2004; Sallee and Flaherty, 2003; Gilly, 2006).

The second major contribution that this research provides to current literature would be its application of the utilized variables within a corporate and particularly business-to-business sales context. It is important to note that there have been several qualitative and theoretical studies which point towards the significance of leader expressed humility (Morris et al. 2005, Nielsen et al. 2010, Owens and Hekman 2012). However, very few studies have tested the quantitative and empirical effects that a leader's humility can have within an organization. Among these, we were unable to find any examples which specifically provides insight into the business-to-business sales context. As stated earlier, this context is just as if not much more important than any other organizational context, as sales managers and their salespeople are the leading revenue drivers for the vast majority of companies (Tzafrir & Dolan, 2004). In addition, this study provides pertinent insight to employee trust and job/supervisor satisfaction literature. While there have been a considerable amount of studies showing a correlation between these two elements, this research provides additional evidence towards the relationship between the two variables and the importance of trust within a business-to-business sales context. With this relationship, it can be inferred that sales managers who are perceived to be more trustworthy foster higher levels of satisfaction among their salespeople. Although causation is not proved in this case—trust is further solidified as an important element for effective management.

The third and perhaps the most interesting contribution this research provides to current literature would be the strong relationship found between humility and supervisor satisfaction. A major goal of this research was to support the definitions of humility provided by authors who have studied humility within the context of its benefits and

positive effects (i.e., Morris et al., 2005; Exline et al., 2004; Tangney, 2002; Templeton, 1997; Means et al., 1990). Particularly with respect to definitions which paint humility in a negative light or emphasize it as a trait which fosters low self-image and passiveness, we were able to find evidence against this. By finding a strong relationship between leader humility and two variables which have been continuously correlated and viewed as vital for the health and success of a firm (Gilley, 2006) we are able to further support the importance of humility within a management or leadership context. Not only was leader humility positively correlated with follower trust, but its correlation with supervisor satisfaction was even more significant. Furthermore, the humility/satisfaction relationship showed an even stronger correlation than the corporately accepted trust/satisfaction relationship (Sallee and Flaherty, 2003). With this evidence, it can be inferred that followers are slightly more satisfied with humble leaders than leaders who are trustworthy.

Regarding our second hypothesis and its focus on religiosity being a moderator for the humility/trust relationship—we were unable to support this with enough statistical significance. Perhaps this is due to an insufficient sample or a variance within participant religious values. This result could also be due to humility's equal acceptance as a desired trait from both secular and religious perspectives. However, three of the four hypotheses that we conceived were supported by the data.

Future Research and Limitations

Although this research made noteworthy contributions to current literature, we also experienced some limitations. It would be more beneficial for the accuracy of the research to measure the trust levels from both sides of the supervisor/supervisee

relationship. By testing both sides, we could have also measured the expressed humility, religiosity, and supervisee satisfaction of the supervisors. However, this would have required dynamic surveying tools, a greater network, additional time, and a much more complex analysis. We chose to survey the supervisees on their perspective of their manager's humility as this is more statistically and theoretically pertinent (Davis et al., 2013). Having said that, we strongly recommend for future research, particularly with respect to studies of religiosity and management, that both sides of the relationship are tested. It would be interesting to see the relationship between leader religiosity and leader humility and its effect on follower trust. In this situation, our second hypothesis may be more applicable, as follower religiosity could easily moderate this relationship.

In addition, although this research provides a substantial groundwork for the definitions of humility, what it is associated with, and the variables it influences—it does not provide information regarding how humility can be cultivated in the workplace and which factors lead to increased humility in leadership. We see a need for additional research to shed light on the characteristics or attributes which develop expressed humility (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013). This additional understanding will better help inform organizations on methods for developing or selecting this attribute in future managers. While it is notable that some research points towards antecedents of expressed humility—some of which include family, educational, and financial backgrounds—an insufficient amount exists (Exline et al., 2004). Because of this, we recommend that future research steers in this direction, as its application is contingent upon the understanding of the trait and what leads to it.

An additional point that is important to make about humility research is regarding the consensus on its definition and measurements. Although significant advancements in positive psychology and organizational scholarship have brought more attention to virtues, including humility, researching these elements continues to pose some challenges (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Cameron et al., 2003). Although these virtues are often compared with psychological definitions, constructs, and elements, they are typically grounded with deep roots of philosophical and theological literature and significance. This makes coming to a consensus particularly difficult, as these virtues may have conflicting resources regarding their definitions and measurement. This research was based on the psychological and philosophical definitions of several reputable sources, as we hope to create the most unbiased and correct definition of the term with respect to current research (Snow, 1995; Kupfer, 2003; Tangney, 2005; Nielsen et al., 2010; and Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013). Having said that, a clear limitation is that there remains a lack of widespread consensus on the definition of expressed humility—and we recommend that further research be done to solidify this consensus.

The primary objectives for this research were to define and expand upon the definitions of expressed humility from previous literature (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013), effectively measure observed leader humility to provide supporting evidence to its relation to religiosity, trust, and supervisor satisfaction within a sales context, and showcase the relevance of both humility and trust within the corporate context of sales management. We believe that all of these objectives were met and completed in a way that is constructive and beneficial to current literature. Having said this, additional research and widespread academic consensus must be made regarding the definition of

humility. We hope that this literature helps to further this consensus. Furthermore, this research is of the first to measure the relationships between humility, trust, religiosity, and supervisor satisfaction within a business-to-business sales context. As three of our four hypotheses were supported, there is now evidence supporting the relevance of both humility and trust within the corporate context of salesforce management. We hope that this evidence will be considered within the hiring and training processes of companies in the future—and that additional research will expound upon the reasoning and further evidence to these relationships.

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