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Harnessing the Power Within: The Consequences of Salesperson Moral Identity and the Moderating Role of Internal Competitive Climate

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the notion of salesperson moral identity as a prosocial individual trait and its associated effects on customer and coworker relationships. In addition, this study examines the underlying processes in which these effects occur as well as the moderating role of internal competitive climate. Our empirical investigation of business-to-business (B2B) sales professionals reveals that moral identity has both direct and indirect effects on a salesperson's customer- and team-directed outcomes. Specifically, our results demonstrate that salesperson moral identity positively affects both salesperson-customer identification and organizational identification, which, in turn, impact customer service provision and teamwork. Our findings also indicate that internal competitive climate exacerbates the positive effects of salesperson moral identity on customer service provision and teamwork.

Keywords: salesperson moral identity; customer identification; organizational identification; internal competitive climate; teamwork; service provision; social identity theory

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Introduction

In today's dynamic marketplace, salespeople are being tasked with not only having to achieve sales targets, but also an increased responsibility in managing relationships with both external clients and internal coworkers in order to enrich customer- and job-related outcomes. Indeed, modern salespeople are operating in a sales ecosystem that consists of an increasingly complex social environment and richer mutually dependent interpersonal relationships, where salespeople are now expected to constantly engage with and meet the demands of various internal and external stakeholders (Hartmann et al. 2018). The formation and maintenance of these relationships are heavily based and dependent on an individual's: 1) personal identity (e.g., Steward et al. 2009) and 2) social identity (e.g., Beeler et al. 2020). Personal and social identity are where the sense of "self" emerges, which is the driving force behind one's attitudes and behaviors (Hogg et al. 1995). This "self" also determines and influences the interactions, relationships, and behaviors salespeople enact with customers and coworkers (Kalra et al. 2017). The importance of an individual's identity in sales settings is evident in research that underscores the profound impact of salesperson identification (e.g., with an organization) on customer-related outcomes and job performance (Ahearne et al. 2005; Beeler et al. 2020; Kalra et al. 2017; Wieseke et al. 2009). This is because identification acts "as the primary psychological substrate for the kind of deep, committed, and meaningful relationships" that are important to build between salespeople and organizations as well as customers (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003, p. 76).

For salespeople, identification-based relationships have the power of "oneness or belongingness" with an identification object, with a focus on organizations and customers (e.g., Ashforth and Mael 1989). For example, a recent study by Beeler and her colleagues (2020)

examines the impact of salesperson organizational identification, as a sense of oneness with the organization, on job-outcomes (i.e., turnover intention, sales performance) and customer responses (i.e., acquisition, salesperson trustworthiness) when it comes to selling to friends in a direct selling context. While extant research has mainly focused on the role of salesperson identification as it relates to aspects of the job and a state-based sense of belongingness, scholars have neglected to consider other prevailing and arguably important types of trait-based identities that are anticipated to have an impact on how salespeople behave and react in their roles. In particular, moral identity, which is broadly defined as "the degree to which being a moral person is important to an individual's identity" (Hardy and Carlo 2011, p. 12), is believed to have a prominent role in sales settings, which, surprisingly, up to this point has not been examined in the sales ethics literature.

Moral identity is aligned with the internalization of Kantian-like moral traits into the self (Hannah et al. 2020). The "self-model" of moral functioning, developed by Blasi (1983), reveals the importance of studying moral identity in understanding why and how individuals behave with others. More precisely, moral identity, which "reflects individual differences in the degree to which being moral is a central or essential characteristic of the sense of self" (Shao et al. 2008, p. 514), increases an individual's concern toward others as well as the respect for other people's rights and well-being (Hardy et al. 2010). In psychology, identity, or self-importance, is similar to identity salience, where a more prominent central identity is chronically accessible and activated by an individual across situations (Stets 2010). Individuals with high moral identity identify themselves as being moral and take moral actions in favor of the well-being of others (Hardy et al. 2014) as a way to promote their moral self. They are described as virtuous individuals whom moral schema is habitually accessible for assessing and understanding the

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social landscape (Lapsley and Narvaez 2005).

While the notion of moral identity has gained recent interest in the marketing literature (e.g., Fajardo et al. 2018) and management literature (e.g., Johnson and Umphress 2019), it has largely been overlooked in the sales literature despite the potential value of its implications. The role of moral identity is especially critical for salespeople, who not only have to constantly overcome negative stereotypes about being unethical (e.g., Sparks and Johlke 1996), but also face unique ethical dilemmas on a frequent basis (McClaren 2000). Bush and her colleagues (2017) indicate that when it comes to ethics, salespeople, unlike other members of an organization, "face different challenges both within and outside that organization which could result in a different mindset when it comes to ethical behavior" (p. 550). This is largely owing to the boundary-spanning and fluid character of the sales role (Ameer and Halinen 2019), where salespeople are responsible for a host of activities within and between customer-, work-, and peer-related situations where ethical concerns may arise (Rousselet et al. 2020). As part of this, salespeople have to constantly balance their own interests as well as the interests of their customers and coworkers, which, at times may come in direct conflict with one another. In addition, salespeople are faced with considerable pressure to perform and meet sales quotas, and they may be away from direct observation (DeConinck 2011), making the sales profession more prone to ethical conflicts and misconduct (Itani et al. 2019). The combination of these factors as well as the multifunctional nature of sales underscores the need to explicitly examine and better understand the role of individual moral identity in sales settings in order to further describe moral functioning.

The literature suggests that morality is essential when it comes to "developing mutually beneficial relationships with two critical stakeholders—customers and salespeople" (Evans et al.

2012, p. 97). As such, and given the prominent role of identification and belongingness in the sales domain, we consider the impact of moral identity on the identification-based relationships that a salesperson develops with their firm (e.g., Gabler et al. 2014) as well as the organization's customers[1] that they serve (e.g., Cardador and Pratt 2018). Specifically, we take a moral agency perspective in an attempt to describe and understand salesperson moral identity as the driving force behind salesperson-organization identification and salesperson-customer identification and the resulting customer- and coworker-directed outcomes – namely, customer service provision and teamwork. Our research is therefore guided by the following research questions: (1) What is the impact of salesperson moral identity on customer- and coworker-directed outcomes? (2) What are the processes in which salesperson moral identity affects these outcomes? (3) What important boundary condition influences the effects of salesperson moral identity, and how?

To address these questions, we leverage a social-cognitive approach of moral identity and social identity theory (Aquino and Reed 2002) to empirically investigate the process through which salesperson moral identity affects customer service provision and teamwork through identification, or a salesperson's perceptions of "oneness or belongingness" with an object (e.g., Ashforth and Mael 1989). We argue that salesperson moral identity serves as an important two-sided moral agent that drives salespeople, on one side, to focus on better serving their customers by means of identifying with them even further. On the other side, we contend that salesperson moral identity impacts teamwork with coworkers, by way of higher levels of organizational identification. In other words, we suggest that moral identity plays a chief role in motivating salespeople to show concern and better serve external business partners and their internal business team (e.g., Plouffe et al. 2016). Additionally, Walker and Frimer (2007) have called for

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[1] In business-to-business (B2B) sales settings, customers are buying organizations represented by individual buyers that salespeople work with and sell their product or service offerings to.

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"more systematic exploration of the interaction of personal and situational variables in the moral domain" (p. 857). This interactionist view provides better understanding of salesperson work attitudes and behaviors (Agnihotri et al. 2019). So, we also identify and claim that the internal competitive climate in which salespeople operate is a significant situational factor that acts as a boundary condition on the linkages between salesperson moral identity and its consequences. Our conceptual model that summarizes the relationships hypothesized is depicted in Figure 1.

This study offers multiple contributions to the literature. First, this study formally introduces the notion of salesperson moral identity as a critical individual difference variable and underscores the relevance of moral psychology in selling situations. As a result, this research departs from existing sales ethics research that primarily focuses on ethical behaviors (e.g., Lussier et al. 2019) and brings to light how certain salespeople are morally motivated and wired to sincerely do well by and for others. Second, this research ascertains the effects of salesperson moral identity on diverging job-directed outcomes as they relate to customers and coworkers. By recognizing customer service provision and teamwork as important outcomes of salesperson moral identity, we offer insight into how moral identity uniquely influences the sales force when it comes to exerting effort in developing and maintaining both customer and coworker relationships. This goes beyond the literature that largely identifies the individual benefits of moral identity (e.g., Aquino and Reed 2002). Third, we contribute to the growing sales literature on identification by examining the dual and simultaneous role of identification (i.e., salesperson-customer identification and organization identification) on salesperson behaviors with customers and coworkers. In doing so, we expand on the limited research that explores the mechanisms linking moral identity to action (Hardy et al. 2014). Lastly, our research advances internal competitive climate, where research on the subject remains scarce (e.g., Kalra et al. 2020;

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Schrock et al. 2016), as an important situational factor that impacts the effects of the schema-activated moral identity of salespeople. As such, we further emphasize the significance of the interaction between individual and situational factors (Ross and Robertson 2003). Overall, we offer insights and a novel theoretical model related to moral identity, where "much work is need" (Hardy and Carlo 2011, p. 216) and pave the way for future studies in this previously unexamined research area in sales.

-- Insert Figure 1 about here --

Theoretical Framework

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory posits that one's self-concept spreads through a personal-self and social-self, which are characterized by the relationships an individual has with another person or entity (Tajfel and Turner 1979). The theory is rooted in sociology and psychology research, and encompasses a few interconnected topics, such as an individual's self-concept, interpersonal relationships, group solidity, and members' relations (Hogg et al. 1995). As such, social identity theory has been widely used as an overarching framework in organizational and customer identification research (e.g., Ahearne et al. 2005; Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Hughes and Ahearne 2010).

Social identity theory posits that an individual develops certain identification that "may occur as one's identity expands to include another target, be it a customer, an organization, or a work group" (Cardador and Pratt 2018, p. 2074). For example, when self-identity is embedded as part of a group, identification with organizations or customers is based on the notion of "feeling of belongingness" and "consciousness of kind" with other group members (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006). Identification-based relationships help individuals "satisfy one or more key self-

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definition needs" (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003, p. 77). In this way, the "social-self" is expanded

by the identification that individuals have with an organization, community, and customers

(Fombelle et al. 2012).

Identification is active, selective, and volitional on the individual's part and causes them

to engage in favorable, as well as potentially unfavorable, identification object-related behaviors

(Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Accordingly, individuals hold on to particular identities when they

internalize certain roles characterized as "sets of behavioral expectations associated with given

positions in the social structure" (Ebaugh 1988, p. 18). These roles are "social" in nature as their

meaning depends on whom the individual interacts with when he or she enacts that role.

Therefore, role identities need to be considered and understood through the connection an

individual has with other individuals or entities (Serpe and Stryker 2011).

Social identity theory also suggests that individuals are active agents in their self-identity

(Ashforth and Mael 1989). As such, identities guide the behaviors of individuals who seek

activities that are consistent with how they view themselves. That is, the meanings and

expectations form certain identity beliefs and values direct an individual's behavior (Burke and

Reitzes 1981). Individuals behave in line with their identities in a matter of self-definition, self-

verification, and identity-based expectations. As part of this, identification-based relationships

drive individuals to participate in actions that are beneficial to the group (Hogg and Terry 2000).

Furthermore, from a social identity perspective, people value the groups' members with

whom they identify with (Hogg and Turner 1985). As part of "in-group" dynamics, identification

leads individuals to seek a common ground with other members by, for instance, helping them

and behaving altruistically and in solidarity with group members (Levine et al. 2005). It also

motivates individuals to favor, collaborate with, and support these members (Algesheimer et al.

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2005). When it comes to salesperson identification, there is a sense of a "psychologically

intertwined" fate and "belongingness" with the organization, customers, or coworkers (Mael and

Ashforth 1992). For example, a meta-analysis by Lee et al. (2015) reveals that organizational

identification engenders employees' work attitudes, such as job involvement, and satisfaction,

and has a positive impact on in-role and extra-role behaviors.

Moral Identity

In their seminal work, Aquino and Reed (2002) show that an individual identifies one's self with

moral traits and values that are assimilated into the self to develop a moral identity. These traits

are internalized within one's self and are a "deep and relatively stable part of one's self-concept

or self-schema" (Weaver 2006, p. 345) linked together through an associative social and

cognitive network. Moral identity is separated into two dimensions: internalization ("having",

more private and inward-focused) and symbolization ("doing", more public and outward-

focused). Internalization represents the degree to which an individual's moral traits are rooted at

the core of one's self (Aquino et al. 2009) and reflects the self-importance or centrality of moral

traits to one's self (Skarlicki et al. 2016). In contrast, symbolization includes the behavioral

outcomes of moral identity as a reflection of one's moral concerns (Hannah et al. 2020). In the

current study, our definition of moral identity focuses on the internalization dimension. The

symbolization dimension is not included in this study since "it is less consistent with

conceptualizations of moral identity in the literature and is less frequently predictive of moral

outcomes" (Hardy et al. 2014, p. 47). While Aquino and Reed (2002) initially developed both

dimensions of moral identity, their findings show inconsistency in outcomes between the

dimensions. The same authors, as well as others, have opted to mainly use the internalization

dimension to represent moral identity in their later studies (e.g., Aquino et al. 2009; Skarlicki et

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al. 2016; Hannah et al. 2020). Reviews on moral identity research show that internalization, compared to symbolization, yields more consistent results (e.g., Hertz and Krettenauer 2016; Jennings et al. 2015).

Moral identity is characterized by the cognitive and social schema, a unique and organized mental knowledge structure, that an individual holds about the virtuosity of one's character and represents the chronic accessibility of the moral self (Aquino et al. 2009). An individual's self-concept "can also be organized around moral characteristics and that moral identity is another potential social identity that may be a part of a person's social self-schema" (Aquino and Reed 2002, p. 1424). Moral identity implicates a unity between an individual's sense of morality and identity (Blasi 1995). The definition of moral identity "implies that if the identity is deeply linked to a person's self-conception, it tends to be relatively stable over time" (Aquino and Reed 2002, p. 1425). Furthermore, moral identity acts as a "kind of self-regulatory mechanism that motivates moral action" (Aquino and Reed 2002, p. 1423) and a key resource of moral motivation since individuals normally desire to sustain self-consistency (Blasi 2004).

The moral associative-cognitive network is chronically stronger for individuals with higher moral identity (Choi and Winterich 2013). In line with the social-cognitive model, moral identity guides a moral self-schema to be highly accessible and organizes matters of right and wrong in social situations to drive moral behaviors (Stets 2010). This centrality shapes the "self" of an individual around: 1) moral traits, such as being caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, hardworking, helpful, honest, and kind (Aquino and Reed 2002) and 2) an individual's moral actions toward others through his or her self-consistency and responsibility (Stets and Carter 2011). This conceptualization is consistent with McAdams' framework of personality in which moral identity is said to be conceptualized as a trait-like attribute (McAdams 2015). While

additional individual traits may be used to describe morality, the nine traits proposed by Aquino

and Reed (2002) are found to have appropriate content validity as "identity-invoking stimuli"

with an array of relations with other associated traits linked with one's moral self-concept. Given

that these traits are internalized and a stable component of one's self-concept, individuals with

stronger degrees of moral identity are more likely to behave morally towards others in the same

way (whether they are customers, coworkers, friends, or family) in order to maintain and validate

a consistent self-concept, which is a central part of their personality.

According to the social-cognitive perspective, the more central moral identity is to one's

self, the more it is internalized and available within the active self-concept that drives individuals

to act in a way constant with their conception of morality (Detert et al. 2008). Moral identity

forms a self-schema that constitutes moral priorities, values, and behavioral scripts (Sparks 2015)

and reflects the strength of defining one's self to a moral character (Aquino et al. 2009). The

prominence of moral self-schema to one's general self-concept varies among people (Blasi

2004). Aquino and Reed (2002) assert that "the stronger is the self-importance of the moral traits

that define a person's moral identity, the more likely it is that this identity will be invoked across

a wide range of situations and the stronger will be its association with moral cognitions and

moral behavior" (p. 1425). In other words, the more central moral identity is to one's self, the

more it drives an individual to use and retrieve his or her moral schema making it more

accessible and active across different contexts and situations, influencing moral attitudes and

behaviors (e.g., Stets 2010; Hardy et al. 2020).

Moral identity also influences the kinds of relationships an individual has with others,

even those who might belong to out-groups. For example, Reed and Aquino (2003) found that

the higher (lower) moral identity individuals possess, the more (less) they perceive personal

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obligations toward members from out-groups. Individuals with a stronger moral identity have more expansive social group boundaries and hold a reduced psychological distance with others (Winterich et al. 2009). The moral identity literature does not indicate that moral identity motivates moral behavior towards only a select group of individuals. That is, moral behaviors are not limited towards only those that are part of an in-group as opposed to an out-group, or the other way around.

Moral identity supports social exchanges and helps build better relationships between individuals. We suggest that it is associated with self-expansion or identification (Cardador and Pratt 2018). As examples of this self-expansion process, prior studies have found a strong positive association between moral identity, moral behaviors, and the "inclusion of other in the self" (e.g., Choi and Winterich 2013; Hardy et al. 2010). Thus, according to social identity theory, moral identity drives and increases self-expansion and allows stronger identification between an individual and others (Ashforth et al. 2016). Our rationale hinges on the notion that others (e.g., customers and coworkers alike) become important to the "self" through identification, or a sense of belongingness and oneness.

Further, moral identity supports social bonding through self-expansion of the beholder's circle of moral regards (Reed and Aquino 2003). Individuals with stronger moral identity have a tendency to to expand their moral concerns and regards towards the broader social groups that they interact with. This moral regard for others leads to minimizing the psychological distance between individuals (Hardy et al. 2010). Moral identity leads to prosocial attitudes and behaviors by means of identification with customers or coworkers, strengthening a sense of oneness and belongingness regardless of group categorization. We claim that moral identity reduces the cognitive distancing between salespeople and their customers and coworkers. In other words,

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salesperson moral identity has to do with increased levels of bonding, closeness, and

belongingness between salespeople and their customers, as well as their organizations, leading to

heightened prosocial behaviors and interactions.

Hypotheses Development

Drawing on social identity theory and moral identity literature, we develop a conceptual model

that represents the dual effects of salesperson moral identity on customer- and coworker-directed

outcomes. Explicitly, we expect that salesperson moral identity will result in higher levels of

customer service provision and teamwork. We also expect that these effects will be mediated by

salesperson customer-identification and company-identification, respectively. In addition, we

surmise that internal competitive climate will be a critical boundary condition on the effects of

salesperson moral identity, because salespeople compete with each other for compensation,

recognition, promotion, and status (e.g., Schrock et al. 2016).

Salesperson Moral Identity and Customer Service Provision Behaviors

Customer service provision behaviors refer to salespeople's "activities that aim to help

customers fulfill their needs through their current product/service consumption portfolios"

(Jasmand et al. 2012, p. 22). These activities include, and are not limited to, identifying

customers' exact problems, providing best solutions to customers, and handling customer

complaints in the best way possible. Such activities take place during interpersonal interactions

and conversations between salespeople and their customers leading to better customer

experiences and overall positive service exchanges (Agnihotri et al. 2017; Itani et al. 2020). We

theorize that salespeople who hold stronger moral identity will behave in favor of their customers

by further engaging in service provision behaviors. This is because moral identity helps explain

why and how individuals behave in the service of others (Blasi 1983).

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According to the literature, moral identity stimulates the exchange of particularistic resources, such as love and service (Reed and Aquino 2003). It also encourages an individual to exhibit more concern about the welfare of others (e.g., Youniss and Yates 1999). A salesperson "who has a highly central moral identity should feel obligated to adhere to the behavioral prescriptions associated with his or her moral self-schema to avoid self-condemnation" (Aquino et al. 2009, p. 125). At lower levels of moral identity, an individual is mainly concerned about one's self, whereas at higher levels, the individual holds more concern about the well-being of others (Narvaez 2001). Individuals who prioritize and possesses a stronger moral identity, which includes traits such as being caring, compassionate, friendly, and honest, are more alert to the interests and needs of other individuals as they act with higher empathic concern (Aquino et al. 2009). As part of this empathy and moral regard for others (e.g., customers), salespeople will understand another individual's feelings and thoughts by placing themselves in that other individual's position, which entices them to engage in more helpful and supportive behaviors (Detert et al. 2008). Moral identity therefore reinforces social exchanges and facilitates rapport building between customers and salespeople. It clarifies why and at what time an individual acts in a virtuous way and engages in behaviors and processes that function in the best interest and welfare of others (Zhu et al. 2011).

Moral identity will result in salespeople holding higher onto the concerns related to their customers, leading them to internalize and carry-out the maximum effort to ensure exceptional customer experience in a service exchange. Thus, we posit that salespeople with stronger moral identity will engage in higher levels of customer service provision behaviors to serve their customers in the finest methods when it comes to delivering better interactions, increasing service quality, solving more customer problems, and providing an overall excellent customer

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experience. That is:

> **H₁:** Salesperson moral identity is positively related to customer service provision behaviors

Salesperson Moral Identity and Teamwork

Teamwork is defined as the "propensity for working as part of a team and cooperatively on work group efforts" (Loveland et al. 2015, p. 240). Teamwork plays a key role in selling organizations as selling-related tasks and sales productivity require the coordination between salespeople, their coworkers, and service employees (Itani et al. 2019). Teamwork is also a critical factor that increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover (Guenzi et al. 2019). Salespeople who are good team players engage in helping and sportsmanship activities with other employees and members of the organization (Itani et al. 2019), which, in turn, "lubricate the social machinery of the organization, reducing friction, and or/increasing efficiency" (Organ et al. 2006, p. 199). Despite the benefits of teamwork, not all salespeople hold teamwork initiatives at the same level, as employees may differ when it comes to how they interact and collaborate with their coworkers (Bahrami and Evans 1997). Modern salespeople have to spend a lot of time persuading workmates to collaborate with them in order to accomplish their expanding job tasks (Plouffe et al. 2016). Thus, to solve any internal problems that might arise as well as other key challenges that salespeople encounter with customers and coworkers, they should participate in teamwork (Hartmann et al. 2018). In this study, we speculate that salespeople's teamwork is related to their level of moral identity, which plays a vital role in the way salespeople behave with their coworkers and the relationships they develop with them (Shao et al. 2008).

Moral identity motivates individuals to link their sense of self and behavior with a consistent self-identity that is characterized by caring about and supporting the welfare of others (Hart et al. 1998). The more salient and central moral identity is to individuals, the more likely

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they are to build trust-based relationships with their managers (Hu and Jiang 2018), deploy

organizational citizenship behaviors (Gerpott et al. 2019), enact prosocial behaviors (Hardy

2006), and engage with their work (He et al. 2014). At the same time, moral identity has been

shown to have a negative effect on workplace deviance behaviors (O'Fallon and Butterfield

2011), self-interest behaviors (DeCelles et al. 2012), and moral disengagement (Zheng et al.

2017). Moral identity presents a basis for sustaining a positive view of oneself as a "just"

individual, which, in turn, influences further justice-based decisions and judgments (Hegtvedt

and Scheuerman 2010). Accordingly, we predict that moral identity will motivate salespeople to

coordinate and cooperate with other members in the organization. Salespeople with stronger

moral identity will therefore be more attuned to the needs and interests of other team members

(e.g., Aquino et al. 2009) resulting in more teamwork. Hence, we postulate:

H2: Salesperson moral identity is positively related to teamwork

The Mediating Role of Salesperson-Customer Identification

The multi-layered employee-customer identification model suggests that social agency drives

employees to identify with their customers, and identification, in turn, is capable of enhancing

service effectiveness (Cardador and Pratt 2018). Customer and organizational identification act

as the critical glue that hold a salesperson's psychological connection to the organization and its

customers (Wiesenfeld et al. 1999). Salespeople may come to identify with a general image of

the "customers" they serve (e.g., Johnson and Ashforth 2008). Based on social identity theory,

we maintain that the influence of salesperson moral identity on customer service provision

behaviors is mediated by a salesperson's identification with his or her customers. Specifically,

we predict that salesperson-customer identification is the mechanism through which moral

identity affects customer service provision behaviors.

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Given that customers play an important part in an employee's identity dynamics, salesperson-customer identification aligns salespeople's objectives with those of their customers. It is a form of relational identification that "refers to the extent to which one defines oneself in terms of a given role relationship" (Cardador and Pratt 2018, p. 2055). On the other end, moral identity motivates salespeople to expand and maintain their relationships with customers. Moral identity drives salespeople to consider customers as psychologically proximal. In turn, customer-identification discloses the quality relationships salespeople have with customers. It drives salespeople to personally share in the fate of their customers due to feelings of oneness and belongingness with their customers. This drives salespeople with strong moral identity to cognitively and psychologically devote more care to customers they identify with, resulting in salespeople interacting more cooperatively with customers as they jointly work towards achieving communal goals (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003).

Prior studies show that moral identity drives individuals to shorten the psychological distance with others by personally absorbing the needs of others and possessing a higher moral regard for these other individuals (Choi and Winterich 2013; Reed and Aquino 2003). For salespeople, moral identity extends the social self beyond an individual to include customers and coworkers in their organizations. Moral identity impacts behaviors by reducing the psychological distance between individuals through an expansion of the circle of moral regards (Reed and Aquino 2003) and the increased inclusion of others in one's self-concept (Hardy et al. 2010). This supports a social identification influence of moral identity based on the notion of "feeling of belongingness" and "consciousness of kind" (e.g., Bergami and Bagozzi 2000) that salespeople experience with their customers.

Identification with customers helps a salesperson find a satisfying self-defining

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relationship with the customers who purchase the products they sell. This self-expansion,

associated with identification, drives extra service-related behaviors as frontline employees

become like the customers that they serve (Cardador and Pratt 2018). In their study, Johnson and

Ashforth (2008) surveyed employees with work responsibilities that require direct interaction

with customers and found that employee-customer identification increases customer-oriented

service behaviors. This is important for sales success since social identity theory suggests that

social identification directs people to look for unanimity and solidarity with customers by

helping and serving them (e.g., Levine et al. 2005). As belonging to a customer circle, the

salesperson is inspired to collaborate and engage with the customer in order to overcome any

obstacles and achieve collective goals (Reicher et al. 2008). In sum, moral identity has to do with

increased levels of bonding, closeness, and feeling of oneness between salespeople and their

customers, which, in turn, is used to drive enhanced customer service provision behaviors. Thus:

> **H3:** The positive relationship between salesperson moral identity and customer service
> provision behaviors is mediated by salesperson-customer identification

The Mediating Role of Salesperson-Organization Identification

Individuals "classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as organizational

membership" (Ashforth and Mael 1989, p. 20), leading to the formation of organizational

identification that relates to "more fundamental concerns regarding identity–psychological

oneness between the individual and the organization" (Lee et al. 2015, p. 1062). Organizational

identification is important for employees as it has been found to influence work-related attitudes,

behaviors, and other contextual variables (see meta-analysis by Riketta 2005). It also has the

power to align salespeople's principles and objectives with those of the firm and drive a sense of

belongingness with other team members (Kalra et al. 2017). Extant sales research has

demonstrated that salesperson-organizational identification has a positive impact on adaptive

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selling (Rapp et al. 2015), brand effort and brand extra-role behaviors (Hughes and Ahearne 2010), creative performance (Kalra et al. 2017), organizational commitment (Mallin et al. 2017), salesperson customer orientation (Thakor and Joshi 2005), job participation (Gabler et al. 2014), and sales performance (Wieseke et al. 2009). As such, we posit that salesperson-organizational identification could be a process in which salesperson moral identity influences teamwork.

Organizational identification is associated with the intraorganizational relationships salespeople have with their coworkers. These relationships are vital for individuals who center one's self on moral identity (Youniss and Yates 1999). Identification helps salespeople maintain satisfying self-defining relationships with their organizations (Riketta et al. 2005). Moreover, this identification has the power to support the individuals' objective of possessing a moral identity by reducing the psychological distance between individuals who work in the same organization (Hardy et al. 2010). Smith et al. (2014) empirically demonstrate that moral identity has the power of bringing and binding individuals together, even those that are deemed to be members of an out-group. Similarly, Sachdeva et al. (2009) show that moral identity increases cooperative decision-making behaviors among individuals. Furthermore, prior studies have found significant positive correlation between an employee's moral identity and organizational identification (e.g., Wang et al. 2019). Hence, we suggest that moral identity, through organizational identification, makes salespeople incorporate their organizations and coworkers in their self-definition, motivating salespeople to perform selfless and group promoting activities – namely, teamwork.

Indeed, employees who strongly identify with their organizations are more psychologically connected to their organizations as well as their coworkers, and will be even more engaged in their jobs for the purpose of contributing to the company's mission and objectives (Lee et al. 2015). The more coworkers are included in the salesperson's self-

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definition, the less selfish behaviors will be exhibited (Bandura 1999). In sum, we conjecture that

moral identity motivates salespeople to behave cooperatively and "team up" with their coworkers

because of the identification, or oneness, they form with the organization they each share, as

salespeople are generally concerned about the welfare and best interests of their organizations

and coworkers. More formally:

> **H4:** The positive relationship between salesperson moral identity and teamwork is
> mediated by salesperson-organization identification

The Moderating Role of Internal Competitive Climate

In consonance with social identity theory, organizational and contextual environments, such as

group climate (e.g., Chen et al. 2015), create conditions that drive employees' tendency to align

or vary their identities and behaviors across different contexts (Hogg and Terry 2000). Based on

the social-cognitive framework of moral identity advanced by Aquino et al. (2009), situational

factors that stimulate the moral self-schema may increase or decrease the accessibility of moral

identity within an individual's working self-concept. According to the framework, moral

identity, a relatively stable individual characteristic, and situational factors jointly influence the

activities that determine social responsiveness to the needs and welfare of others. In essence,

self-schema is activated through a dynamic interaction with contextual cues (Lapsley and

Narvaez 2005). Additionally, an interactionist perspective suggests that organizational factors

interact with individual employee characteristics to influence job-related attitudes and behaviors

(Barrick et al. 2013; Fletcher et al. 2008; Mulki and Lassk 2019).

This is in line with trait activation theory (Tett and Burnett 2003), which suggests that

salespeople's personal characteristics and environment factors interact with each other to impact

work-related attitudes and behaviors. According to this theory, task, social, and organizational

sources of trait-relevant cues help explicate the activation of trait-based behavior at work (Tett

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and Burnett 2003). Organizational sources of trait-activation-cues embody the makeup of the organization, such as organizational culture and climate (Mullins et al. 2020). This interactionist perspective is further supported in recent research by To et al. (2020) who indicate that "the competitive climate approach has often been used in combination with trait-based approaches" (p. 7). Along these lines, prior sales studies have tested the moderating role of organizational competitive climate on salesperson work-related attitudes and performances (e.g., Brown et al. 1998; Plouffe et al. 2010; Schrock et al. 2016).

As such, it can be inferred that the effects of salesperson identity depend on the social-contextual factors found in the workplace. More specifically, we posit that an internal competitive climate (a group climate factor) moderates the relationships between moral identity (an employee characteristic) and salesperson-customer and -organization identification as well as customer- and coworker-directed outcomes. That is, we posit that the interaction between salesperson moral identity and internal competitive climate can explain more variance in salesperson work-related attitudes and behaviors than any one of the factors alone.

Internal competitive climate refers to the level of rivalry that exists in a salesforce due to perceptions of individual salespeople experiencing better selling outcomes, enjoying more job-related advantages, having better relationships with management, and obtaining higher commissions (Anaza and Nowlin 2017). Salespeople working in organizations with highly competitive climates recognize that their performance is dependent on the comparative standing among their coworkers (Brown et al. 1998). Attuned to these comparisons, a salesperson may become more sensitive and concerned about her or his contributions (Schrock et al. 2016). Internal competitive climate is part of the organizational psychological climate and includes the "felt sense of inherent competition in the organization" (Plouffe et al. 2010, p. 541). While

management's intention is to foster a healthy level of workplace competition that results in favorable organizational and individual outcomes, the use of recognition and other internal rewards can lead to unhealthy competition, poor communication, and a lack of collaboration (Chandrasekar 2011). As a result, in these competitive climates, salespeople often engage in continuous social comparisons with their coworkers (Sunder et al. 2017).

Despite reported advantages of social comparisons for salespeople (e.g., motivation to work harder towards objectives, see Suls and Wills (1991)), unfavorable comparisons arise when other individuals are perceived to be competitors (Arnold et al. 2009). Salespeople who work in highly competitive environments will actively look for new ways to gain advantages over their peers (Martin and Bush 2006). In these situations, social comparisons may become a hindrance for an individual salesperson. For example, in a general sense, competition among individuals may result in increased uncertainty and feelings of stress (Beehr 1998), which leads to adverse consequences in sales (Itani and Inyang 2015; Jaramillo et al. 2006). Salespeople may also withhold knowledge from others as a result of internal competition, viewing coworkers as challengers and rivals (Anaza and Nowlin 2017). Research has shown that a competitive climate leads to lower levels of work satisfaction and firm commitment (Fletcher et al. 2008). Competitive climate was also found to increase salesperson interpersonal deviance directed toward coworkers (Jelinek and Ahearne 2006). In a similar vein, internal competitive climate was shown to negatively moderate the relationship between salesperson exploratory navigation behavior and sales performance (Plouffe et al. 2010).

Contextual and situational factors can activate or suppress the influence of moral identity (Forehand et al. 2002). Along these lines, the working self-concept is an interactive function of the self-interest promoting situational factor and moral identity (Aquino et al. 2009). From a

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social identity theory, an internal competitive climate can weaken the alignment between an

individual's identity and behavior (Hogg and Terry 2000). In addition, the social-cognitive

framework suggests that situational factors such as internal competitive climate do activate a

self-interested facet of identity and results in a psychological tension with moral identity, thereby

reducing the accessibility of the moral self-schema (Aquino et al. 2009). Stated simply, the effect

of moral self-schema is dependent on various situational cues (Stets 2010). Accordingly, we

argue that higher levels of internal competitive climate will hamper the relationships between

salesperson moral identity and other work-related identification (customer and organization), and

job-directed outcomes (customer service provision behaviors and teamwork). An internal

competitive climate with higher levels of internal competition does not "fit" the values of

salespeople with higher moral identity due to how competition can deteriorate the interpersonal

relationships between salespeople engaging in unhealthy social comparisons with perceived

rivals (e.g., Anaza and Nowlin 2017). Therefore, we advance the following:

> H_{5a}: Internal competitive climate weakens the positive relationship between salesperson moral identity and salesperson-customer identification

> H_{5b}: Internal competitive climate weakens the positive relationship between salesperson moral identity and customer service provision behaviors

> H_{5c}: Internal competitive climate weakens the positive relationship between salesperson moral identity and salesperson-organization identification

> H_{5d}: Internal competitive climate weakens the positive relationship between salesperson moral identity and teamwork

Methodology

Sample

A web-based survey was developed and shared online through a reputable market research

company that offers business data sourcing services in the United States. In B2B relationships,

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salespeople represent the sellers and are responsible for interactions and encounters with buyers. As such, the B2B market was deemed to be an appropriate context to test our conceptual model. Potential respondents were contacted by email. Two additional reminders were also sent to them during a one-month period. Incentives were provided to enhance participation. The survey was accessed by 642 respondents (response rate 19.1%), but since only B2B salespeople were allowed to participate in the study, salespeople working in business-to-consumer (B2C) markets were filtered out. In total, 322 B2B salespeople participated in the study but only 313 responses gathered were included in the final sample after eliminating nine incomplete responses (9.3% effective response rate)[2].

We compared early respondents with late ones across demographic and study variables to check for nonresponse bias (Armstrong and Overton 1977). The comparison shows nonsignificant difference between the two groups. Females accounted for 27.5% of the sample, which is reasonable in a B2B sales context. The gender distribution of the sample is similar to those reported in previous B2B sales and ethics studies in which males constituted the majority of the samples utilized (e.g., Badrinarayanan et al. 2019; Bill et al. 2020; Lussier et al. 2019).

Salespeople participating in the study had an average of 10.05 years of sales experience (Standard deviation = 7.79) and the majority held a college degree or more (85.3%). The average age was equal to 33.3 years (Standard deviation = 8.75). Within the sample, salespeople represented a wide range of company sizes based on yearly revenues, including less than $1 million (20.8%), $1-10 million (38.3%), $11-50 million (19.2%), $51-100 million (12.8%), and greater than $100 million (8.9%). The sample characteristics are summarized in Appendix A.

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[2] This response rate is in line with what is reported in other similar studies in the context of B2B sales (e.g., Chakrabarty et al. 2008; Zhang et al. 2013) and business ethics (e.g., Bacha and Walker 2013; Brik et al. 2011; Schwepker and Good 2011).

Measures

A survey was developed based on valid and reliable multi-item measures that were adapted from

previous studies. The scale of moral identity self-importance – internalization – developed by

Aquino and Reed (2002) was utilized to measure salesperson moral identity (Cronbach's alpha =

.82). The higher the level of internalization, the more moral identity is rooted at the core of one's

self and reflected in one's beliefs and behaviors (Aquino and Reed 2002). The moral identity

internalization scale represents the self-importance of moral traits ("having") to an individual and

is highly used in previous studies (e.g., Shao et al. 2008; Jennings et al. 2015) for its positive

psychometrics properties and robustness in predicting moral outcomes and concern for others

(e.g., Aquino et al. 2009; Hannah et al. 2020; Skarlicki et al. 2016). A sample item from this

scale is: "*It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.*" Moral

identity internalization is consistent with conceptualizations of moral identity in the literature and

has been found to be a significant predictor of moral outcomes (Hardy et al. 2014). The

internalization dimension has been utilized by researchers to represent moral identification (e.g.,

Aquino et al. 2009; Skarlicki et al. 2016; Hannah et al. 2020). The scale has been shown to be

both reliable and valid across numerous studies in different research domains. For example, the

scale reliability was found to have a higher Cronbach's alpha than the recommended cutoff level

(.7) in multiple research studies (Aquino et al. 2009; Johnson and Umphress 2019; Skarlicki et

al. 2016). In addition, empirical evidence for distinct aspects of validity using this same scale

exists in different studies (Shao et al. 2008, Jennings et al. 2015, Hertz and Krettenauer 2016).

      To measure salesperson-customer identification and salesperson-organizational

identification, we adapted the scale developed by Ashforth and Mael (1989). These scales

measure the "oneness" salespeople have with their customers (Cronbach's alpha = .85) and

organizations (Cronbach's alpha = .91), respectively. An example item reads: "*My customers'*

(company's) success is my success." This measure of organizational identification is well utilized

in prior research due to its reliability and validity. In a sales context, for example, the scale is

used to measure salesperson identification with organizations, manufacturer's brands,

distributors, and sales units (Beeler et al. 2020; Badrinarayanan and Laverie 2011). This

measure, and our conceptualization, does not necessarily explicitly mention any specific or direct

team members or coworkers. Rather, "organization" in this case is an abstract representation of

the company itself that does not necessarily include specific members into an in-group. The

"organization" is stable over time and, as long as a salesperson doesn't change jobs, he or she

will only have "one" organization that they work for and can identify with. Organization

identification keeps the focus on a salesperson's sense of belongingness with his or her

organization, going beyond any specific team members and coworkers. Prior studies provide

evidence of reliability (e.g., composite reliability = 0.89 and Cronbach's alpha = .88), convergent

and discriminant validity, and adequate levels of average variance extracted (Menguc and

Boichuk 2012). In another study, Kalra et al. (2017) reported the following regarding the

salesperson-organizational identification scale (composite reliability = .89 and Cronbach's alpha

= .84).

The scale advanced by Jasmand et al. (2012) was adapted to capture salesperson

customer service provision behaviors (Cronbach's alpha = .89). The scale captures salesperson

activities to serve customers in the best way. One of the items states: "*During conversation with*

customers I usually try to calm complaining customers, so that we can jointly handle their needs/

complaints about their products." In their study, Jasmand et al. (2012) provide details in support

of construct, convergent, and discriminant validity of the scale and report adequate reliability

(e.g., composite reliability = 0.9). Further evidence reliability and validity of this scale is provided in more recent studies that have adapted it (e.g., Agnihotri et al. 2017; Mullins et al. 2020). Agnihotri et al. (2017) show that the scale is reliable and valid (composite reliability = 0.8), while Mullins et al. (2020) also report satisfactory reliability levels of the scale, adequate factor loadings, and discriminant and convergent validity.

To measure teamwork (Cronbach's alpha = .86), a measure with a four-item scale was adapted from Oliver and Anderson (1994). The scale captures a salesperson's tendency to effectively work in a team with others in the same organization. One of the items states: "*I am willing to do my part for the good of the team.*" The scale does not focus only on "direct" team members or colleagues but instead on "general" team members, which may sometimes include other coworkers and employees. In one study, Itani et al. (2019) find that the measures possess feasible levels of reliability (e.g., Cronbach's alpha = .78, composite reliability = 0.8) and convergent as well as discriminant validity.

Internal competitive climate (Cronbach's alpha = .95) was measured using a four-item scale from Anaza and Nowlin (2017). This scale captures salesperson's perceived sense of internal competition in the organization and the rivalry and hostility between coworkers. As an illustrative item: "*Some of my coworkers are hostile to one another when one coworker outperforms the rest.*" Anaza and Nowlin (2017) report a satisfactory Cronbach Alpha (>.83), and composite reliability (.95) of the scale. They also confirm construct discriminant and convergent reliability.

In terms of covariate variables, a general measure of job satisfaction (Cronbach's alpha = .94) was added to the model to control for its effects on salesperson's attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Alnakhli et al. 2020; Brown and Peterson 1993; Valentine et al. 2011). In addition,

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salesperson experience, age, education level as well as company size (i.e., yearly average revenue level) were included as covariates (e.g., Gabler et al. 2017). Finally, to account for the potential effects of social desirability, we adapted a shortened scale to measure social desirability (Reynolds 1982). Socially desirable responding was checked by controlling the possible effect of social desirability bias on the endogenous factors[3]. Table 1 includes the inter-factor correlations, constructs descriptive statistics, and square root of the average variance extracted of the constructs in the model. All items were measured using a Likert-type 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, except for the job satisfaction measure which also included an item that utilized a Likert-type 7-point scale (1= extremely dissatisfied; 7 = extremely satisfied).

-- Insert Table 1 about here –

Results

Measurement Model

Partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied to test the relationships postulated in our model. PLS-SEM is appropriate for testing non-normal data and complex models with a large number of factors and items used as well as multiple interaction effects using a product indicator approach (Chin et al. 2003; Hair et al. 2012).

The psychometric properties of the measures were examined by checking internal-consistency, reliability, and validity. Internal consistency was evidenced with the lowest Cronbach's alpha (α) equals to (.82). Furthermore, reliability of the scales is achieved with composite reliability (CR) equals to (.88). Average variance extracted (AVE) of the measures as well as the owere above the cutoff level (.5) with the lowest AVE equals to (.63). To check for

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[3] Findings show that social desirability has a nonsignificant effect on the results found. Moreover, a nonsignificant correlation was found between salesperson moral identity and the social desirability construct ($r = .08$, $p > .1$).

convergent validity, the outer loadings of all the items were found to load significantly ($p < .01$) on their respective factors except for one item in the moral identity scale that loaded poorly. This item was dropped from the analysis. No problematic cross loadings were found. Additionally, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) that shows support for a multi-factor model providing evidence of convergent validity. Discriminant validity was first checked using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. In all comparisons, the inter-factor correlations examined were lower than the square root AVE. Secondly, the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) criterion was assessed. The HTMT ratio between pairs were below (.85), providing further proof of discriminant validity (Henseler et al. 2015). Finally, no evidence of multicollinearity was found (variance inflation factor VIF < 3.5). These results as well as the measurement items and respective factor loadings are summarized in Table 2.

-- Insert Table 2 about here --

Procedural remedies, such as measures and items separation as well as different scale points were utilized when possible to avoid common method bias (CMB). Based on the suggestions provided by Podsakoff et al. (2003), we physically separated the measurement of the predictor and criterion variables. The measures were provided on different survey pages with multiple page breaks in between in order to provide an additional layer of measurement separation. Furthermore, some of the items were scrambled on different survey pages. We also notified respondents that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential. Finally, we included a different response format in the job satisfaction measure.

Statistical remedies were also used to check for CMB. The Harman's single factor criterion was conducted by testing a one factor model using an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The one factor model explained only 25.6% of the variance. In addition, the marker

variable criterion was utilized (Lindell and Whitney 2001). The results didn't differ between the

original model and the model with the marker variable. Altogether, our tests and analyses show

no evidence of CMB.

Structural Model

Multiple models were tested to assess the relationships hypothesized. The analyses in SmartPLS

were based on structural equation modeling. First, to examine H_1 and H_2, a direct effects model

was tested. In this model the direct effects of salesperson moral identity were examined as well

as the effects of the control variables. Findings show support for both hypotheses with

salesperson moral identity positively influencing customer service provision behaviors ($\beta = .68$,

$p < .001$) and teamwork ($\beta = .66$, $p < .001$). Moreover, the model demonstrates positive effects of

salesperson moral identity on salesperson-customer identification ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$) and

salesperson-organizational identification ($\beta = .46$, $p < .001$).

Next, a mediated effects model was tested. The mediation tests were conducted by adding

additional links in the model (a link between salesperson-customer identification and customer

service provision behaviors; and a link between salesperson-organizational identification and

teamwork). The mediated effects model was then compared with direct effects model (Table 3)

to access the changes in the direct effects of salesperson moral identity on teamwork and

customer service provision behavior. This allowed us to examine the mediated relationships

hypothesized in H_3 and H_4. Here, two more links were included in the model: (1) a link between

salesperson-customer identification and customer service provision behaviors and (2) a link

between salesperson-organizational identification and teamwork. Findings indicate that the link

between salesperson-customer identification and customer service provision behaviors is positive

($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) and that, after adding this link, the relationship between salesperson moral

identity and customer-service provision behaviors is weaker ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$). The change in the coefficient is significant ($\Delta\beta = .16$, $p < .01$). The results suggest that the relationship between salesperson moral identity and customer service provision behaviors is partially mediated by salesperson-customer identification, supporting H$_3$.

Findings also demonstrate that the link between salesperson-organization identification and teamwork is positive ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$). After adding this link, the relationship between salesperson moral identity and teamwork decreases ($\Delta\beta = .18$, $p < .01$) from ($\beta = .66$, $p < .001$) to ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$). Thus, findings show that the relationship between salesperson moral identity and teamwork is partially mediated by salesperson-organization identification, in support of H$_4$. Further examination of the mediated relationships was conducted. The indirect effects results provide additional support to the partial mediations found with significant indirect effect of salesperson moral identity on customer-service provision behaviors through salesperson-customer identification as well as the indirect effect of salesperson moral identity on teamwork through salesperson-organization identification. According to the results, the two mediated relationships can be described as complementary mediation (Zhao et al. 2010).

Finally, a full (hypothesized) model including internal competitive climate and the interaction term between moral identity and internal competitive climate was tested. In this model, H$_1$ – H$_4$ are supported (see Table 3). In terms of the hypothesized interactions, the results indicate that the interaction between internal competitive climate and salesperson moral identity has no effect on salesperson-customer identification ($\beta = .12$, $p > .1$) and salesperson-customer identification ($\beta = -.06$, $p > .1$). However, there is a negative effect on customer service provision behaviors ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .05$) and teamwork ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$), offering support for H$_{5b}$ and H$_{5d}$. While not hypothesized, internal competitive climate holds a positive influence on salesperson-

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customer identification ($\beta = .14$, $p < .01$) and customer service provision behaviors ($\beta = .1$, $p < .05$). Further analysis shows that the indirect effect of salesperson moral identity on teamwork through salesperson-organizational identification is significant ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$). Similarly, the indirect effect of moral identity on customer service provision behaviors through salesperson-customer identification is significant ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$). These results are in support of the mediated relationships hypothesized.

-- Insert Table 3 about here --

Post-hoc analysis using PROCESS regression path modeling was also conducted to check the possibility of any moderated-mediation relationships in our model (Preacher and Hayes 2008). Specifically, we tested if competitive climate moderates the relationships between moral identity and customer service provision behavior, and teamwork. Thus, the overall model was tested in PROCESS by testing first, the moral identity-external customer-related path and then, the moral identity-internal organization-related path taking into consideration the moderating effect of internal competitive climate in both paths. Both models analyzed using PROCESS included the covariates. The PROCESS regression path modeling was also used as a robustness check to confirm the results found in the PLS-SEM analyses. While the findings provide no evidence for moderated-mediated relationships, further support was provided in favor of the mediated relationships hypothesized in H_3 and H_4. In addition, the post-hoc analysis shows that the R^2-change in both significant moderated relationships is significant (H_{5b}: $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $F_{(1,303)} = 19.9$, $p < .001$) and (H_{5d}: $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $F_{(1,303)} = 6.99$, $p < .05$). Following Aiken et al. (1991), the moderating effects can also be analyzed using simple slopes (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

-- Insert Figure 2 and Figure 3 about here --

The slope analyses show internal competitive climate to weaken the positive effect of

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moral identity on customer service provision behavior. Salespeople who consider moral identity

as central to their self-concepts will not be able to serve customers in an optimal way when faced

with intense internal competitive climate (see Figure 2). Alternatively, a salesperson who doesn't

consider moral identity as central to oneself is likely to serve customers better when internal

competition is intense, suggesting that such competition can motivate salespeople who don't

centralize their self-concepts around moral identity. The positive relationship between moral

identity and teamwork is deteriorated when internal competition increases at work. Thus, internal

competitive climate also holds a negative moderating effect on moral identity-teamwork

relationship. The highest level of teamwork is evidenced in the workplace when salespeople with

high moral identity are operating under low internal competitive climate (see Figure 3).

Accordingly, intense competitive climate will hinder salespeople with central moral identities to

execute their best teamwork skills in the workplace.

Discussion

In this study, we sought to explore salesperson moral identity, which has not been previously

examined in the sales literature. Grounded in social identity theory and applying a social-

cognitive approach, we developed a model that includes consequences and underlying

mechanisms associated with salesperson moral identity. Our empirical investigation of B2B sales

professionals reveals that moral identity has both direct and indirect effects on customer- and

coworker-directed outcomes. Specifically, our results show that salesperson moral identity

positively affects both customer-identification and organizational-identification, which, in turn,

impact customer service provision and teamwork. We also find that internal competitive climate

moderates the relationships between salesperson moral identity and important job-directed

outcomes. Specifically, we find that salespeople whose moral identity is central to their self-

concepts are affected by the intense internal competitive climate at work as their ability to serve

their customers in the optimum way possible is hindered. This in line with prior research findings

that show how competitive climate creates pressure for salespeople, driving them to decrease

their cooperation with others (Brown et al. 1998) and feel dissatisfaction at work (Schrock et al.

2016). Therefore, we think it would be better for salespeople with strong moral identity to work

under lower levels of internal competitive climate. On the other hand, salespeople with weak

moral identity will serve customers better when competition is higher.

These results demonstrate the intrinsic motive of moral identity in driving salespeople to

serve customers and protect their welfare, despite the challenging conditions salespeople might

experience as a result of internal competition. Regarding teamwork, the higher moral identity is

to the salesperson, the higher teamwork will take place. This positive relationship is deteriorated

when internal competition increases at work. Teamwork is the highest for salespeople with high

moral identity operating under a lower internal competitive climate. The insights from our study

have theoretical and managerial implications, which we discuss next.

Theoretical Implications

Our study is the first in the sales literature to introduce the notion of salesperson moral identity.

Indeed, moral identity is an essential element of the actual nature of morality (Reed et al. 2007;

Weaver 2006). Building on past research on social identity theory and moral identity research

(e.g., Aquino and Reed 2002; Hardy and Carlo 2011), we underscore the application and

significance of this concept in sales settings. While past research has examined the role of

salesperson identification (e.g., Ahearne et al. 2005), it has largely focused on "outward" related

entities and targets that salespeople identify with. That is, research has primarily focused on

customers and organizations as external entities in which a salesperson may identify with (e.g.,

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Kalra et al. 2017). In this regard, research has shown the positive impact of salesperson "external" identification. Much of the sales research on external identification has emphasized a sense of belongingness with others and taken more of a situational perspective. However, scholars have not previously fully examined "inward" related sources of identification that are "internal" to a salesperson. That is, by introducing the trait-based conceptualization of moral identity, we not only fill this gap in the literature but also demonstrate the worthiness of salesperson moral identity as an important theoretical and personal identity construct.

More so, our research "peels off" a layer from the literature on salesperson ethics by focusing on *why* salespeople behave morally, as opposed to past research which has primarily focused on *what* salespeople do or don't do ethically. With salesperson moral identity, scholars should further incorporate the fact that salesperson moral "make-up" and trait-like tendencies can be used to help explain why salespeople "behave good" as opposed to why they "ought to." This goes beyond just the academic discussion around what is morally right or wrong for a salesperson to do, to one that describes that doing the right thing is an integral part of an individual's identity (Hardy et al. 2014). In other words, by taking a moral agency perspective and introducing moral identity to the sales literature, we stress the importance of researchers not only asking on behalf of salespeople, "what should I do?" and "what principles should I follow" but to also asking, "who am I?" (Weaver 2006). Researchers should therefore take into account a moral agency perspective in sales settings and keep in mind any moral schemas that a salesperson might possess rather than only keeping a focus on specific ethical behaviors.

Salesperson moral identity is important when it comes to ethical and moral decision making. The dominant paradigm in the sales ethics literature is the ethical decision making (EDM) model (e.g., Schwepker 2019; Rousselet et al. 2020). The premise of EDM theory (see

Schwartz 2016) is that, when it comes to ethical decision making, a salesperson cognitively

progresses through four consecutive stages: 1) recognizing a moral issue, 2) making a moral

judgement, 3) establishing moral intent, and 4) engaging in moral behavior. Numerous factors

affect this process, including characteristics of the decision-maker (McClaren 2000). The EDM

process is also categorized by moral issues and moral agents (Zollo et al. 2017). By viewing the

salesperson as a moral agent, we further bring to light the unique characteristics (i.e., moral

identity) of the decision maker. Based on EDM, salespeople with high moral identity are more

morally attentive and sensitive, as they possess automatic moral awareness, which is a major

driver of ethical decision making (Kim and Loewenstein 2020; Reynolds and Miller 2015). So,

while past research on sales ethics has primarily focused on individual factors and variables such

as gender, age, education level, and individual values (e.g., Ferrell et al. 2019; McClaren 2013;

Ross and Robertson 2003), we go beyond demographic and descriptive variables to spotlight the

significance of moral identity, a trait-like factor, of a salesperson who is also a moral agent.

In addition, our research sheds light on the consequences of salesperson moral identity as

an individual difference variable. Existing research shows that there are a number of general

benefits to moral identity. For example, research has shown that moral identity is linked to

prosocial behaviors (e.g., volunteerism) as well as moral evaluations, emotions, and judgements

(Aquino and Reed 2002; Shao et al. 2008). Indeed, individuals with higher moral identity are

more likely to engage in moral action (see meta-analysis by Hertz and Krettenauer 2016). For

salespeople, we suggest that moral identity is advantageous as it may be used to guide prosocial

interactions and actions with those partners whom they are responsible for interacting with on a

regular basis. That is, we demonstrate how an ethics-based construct affects the interpersonal

work relationships – both internal and external to the organization – found in contemporary sales

environments.

In particular, considering salespeople with identities that revolve around morality-based traits (e.g., compassion, generosity) are concerned about the general welfare and well-being of others (Hart et al. 1998), there are positive benefits for both customers and coworkers. Since salespeople with high moral identity behave in ways that are coherent with their self-concept of being virtuous (Aquino et al. 2009), we show that customers will experience higher levels of customer service provision, while coworkers will enjoy more teamwork from salespeople with high moral identity. In this way, we illustrate how, in a sales setting, the effects of a circle of moral regard associated with moral identity (Reed and Aquino 2003) extends out to how salespeople interact and engage with both internal members of the organization as well as external customers. Indeed, moral identity is better for individual well-being and relationships (Hardy et al. 2014). Salespeople with high moral identity strictly consider matters of morality, so they will consciously behave in the best interests of both their customers and coworkers. For instance, salespeople with higher moral identity are less likely to engage in customer-directed sabotage in response to lower levels of customer justice, as they intrinsically follow the mantra "treat the customer as you would want to be treated" (Skarlick et al. 2016, p. 111). With regards to coworkers, research shows that an ethical and moral work environment leads to the formation of internal social capital, where team members sincerely work together and share a mutual commitment towards organizational goals (Pastoriza et al. 2015).

Our research also elucidates a dual process by which salesperson moral identity impacts behaviors and interactions with customers and coworkers. Literature on moral identity has identified a number of behavioral mediators, such as moral disengagement (Detert et al. 2008). We add to the literature by offering two social and cognitive-type mediators, which relate to

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perceptions of "oneness" with both internal and external salesperson constituents. Salespeople

with moral identity have a high standard of moral beliefs, which makes up their self-conception

(Blasi 2004) and is used to foster a sense of belongingness with those key stakeholders whom

they interact with. Moral identity has been described as a self-regulating construct that connects

an individual (personal identity) to others (social identity) (Aquino and Reed 2002). In particular,

a salesperson's moral motivation will trigger a sense of belongingness with key members in the

salesperson's social sphere and circle of moral regard (e.g., Reed and Aquino 2003). In this

study, we show that the effects of salesperson moral identity are simultaneously mediated

through intraorganizational and interorganizational mechanisms. Specifically, considering that

customers and coworkers are important constituents that a salesperson must serve (e.g., Plouffe

et al. 2016), we uncover customer- and organizational-identification as critical intervening

variables between salesperson moral identity and customer service provision and teamwork.

By emphasizing the dual mechanisms and social context related to salesperson moral

identity, we reinforce recent sales ethics research that has advocated for a practice-based view of

salesperson unethical behavior (Ameer and Halinen 2019). With this perspective, when it comes

to unethical salesperson behavior, the focus is on the activities that socially construct and

maintain practices as "the social context of sales is described as a constellation of actors who

interact with each other and thereby affect the formation, maintenance, and change of unethical

sales practices" (Ameer and Halinen 2019, p. 104). Our theoretical model expands on this view

by incorporating two distinct social identification-based factors. As we further demonstrate,

salespeople are connected to other actors both internally and externally in socially connected

interdependent relationships (e.g., Seevers et al. 2007).

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Lastly, given that moral identity is subject to contextual influences (Weaver 2006), we advance and find support for a sales-related environmental contextual variable that negatively influences the impact of salesperson moral identity. Specifically, we find that the effects of salesperson moral identity are contingent on the internal competitive climate, a situational factor, in which the salesperson operates. Situational factors are characteristics of the decision setting that go beyond those related to the individual decision-maker and influence the decision-making process as well as relevant outcomes (Ross and Robertson 2003). Internal competitive climate takes a much narrower view on the environment in which a salesperson operates in a day-to-day basis, unlike the broader view found in current research on ethical climates in the sales ethics literature (Martin and Cullen 2006; Itani et al. 2019). Ethical climate looks at employee's perceptions of the work environment that sets guidelines for organizational procedures, policies, and practices with moral consequences. Due to the predictability and controllability inherent in an ethical climate, it creates norms of behavior (Jaramillo et al. 2013). That is, ethical climate provides structure and guidance for salespeople, whereas an internal competitive climate does not, instead, it considers the hostility found between coworkers and does not offer prescriptions for salespeople to follow. Meaning, internal competitive climate is more about how members on a team behave and interact with each other. We show that research should not just be limited to examining the policies and procedures that are set by organizations and the broader ethical climate in an organization, but also expanded to account for the way members of sales teams engage and interact with each other.

While organizations use internal competition with the hopes of creating a healthy competitive environment in which productive and unproductive salespeople may be identified (Anaza and Nowlin 2017; To et al. 2020), our study shows that an internal competitive climate

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may inadvertently hinder the motivational effects of moral identity. When there is high

competition among coworkers, the advantages associated with moral identity on a salesperson's

job-directed outcomes (i.e., customer service provision behaviors and teamwork) will be

hampered. In the integrated EDM framework offered by Schwartz (2016), internal competitive

climate would most closely be considered to be an organizational environmental factor, as it

weakens the effects of moral identity on customer service provision behaviors and teamwork.

Our research therefore provides additional support for the significant interaction between

personal factors and environmental factors (e.g., Domino et al. 2015) on individual outcomes in

sales and ethics settings.

Managerial Implications

Managers have a significant role (Wang et al. 2019) and should look for ways to bolster the

moral identity of salespeople on their teams, especially those that might not be naturally inclined

to have their identities centralized around morality. For managers, the notion of salesperson

moral identity is especially important in today's dynamic sales world, which requires salespeople

to be even more involved with both their external and internal customers. Managers must

recognize that moral identity serves as a source of moral motivation and behavior (Shao et al.

2008), which can be an enabling factor in how salespeople effectively interact with their

customers and coworkers. Managers who understand that moral identity serves as the moral

agent that guides valued salesperson behaviors will be able to be on the active lookout for

salespeople who exhibit traits associated with moral identity, such as being fair, generous,

helpful, and honest (e.g., Aquino and Reed 2002). For example, managers can pay special

attention to see which members of their sales team volunteer to help their coworkers and go

above and beyond with their empathetic concern for others.

Recognizing which salespeople have higher levels of moral identity can assist managers properly and effectively align their salespeople with certain customers and coworkers. Sales managers can assign these salespeople challenging and difficult customer accounts, especially those that require high customer service levels, with the confidence that these salespeople will deliver exceptional customer service. Even in situations where there might be concerns with ethical dilemmas and temptations to behave unethically (e.g., McClaren 2000) with demanding customers, managers can rest assured once they have properly assigned salespeople with moral identity, who are able to automatically internalize what is right for the customer. By having an "other-person" oriented morality perspective, salespeople with high moral identity are always able to focus on customer goals in the most moral way. Managers are able to then worry less about salespeople's unethical actions, especially since those actions are hard to monitor (Tseng 2019).

Managers could also appoint salespeople with high moral identity as moral exemplars and as team leaders within the organization, as they openly display to others what matters most to them is what they see as morally right (Hardy and Carlo 2011). These salespeople could then lead the charge with regards to ensuring that effective teamwork exists. In an ethical/moral work climate, research has revealed that salespeople are more willing to cooperate and help their coworkers (Jaramillo et al. 2015). When the team is selling ethically, managers can expect that employee performance and customer satisfaction will improve (Jaramillo et al. 2006). Managers should therefore strategically assign sales team members with high moral identity to areas and teams that could benefit the most from teamwork.

In addition, managers need to engender customer-identification and organizational-identification by further indoctrinating salespeople with the relevance and significance of

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belonging to the "same team." This can be done, for example, by deliberately creating ways for salespeople to engage in activities that make them feel that they are truly part of the company "brand" and that their success should mirror the success of the organization and its customers. In order to do so, managers should highly encourage rich social interactions and gatherings for salespeople with high moral identity, especially in B2B sales where many salespeople tend to work in the field and remotely. This is particularly the case when it comes to fostering a sense of belongingness and connectedness with other members of the organization (Nowlin et al. 2018).

By scheduling a number of face-to-face meetings and specific fun activities (e.g., team building) between salespeople, managers can induce a sense of oneness between salespeople and the organization. This should not be limited to only social events within the organization, as sales managers should offer approval and support for salespeople to regularly meet with their customers with the sole purpose of developing a sense of belongingness. To get the most out of these interactions, managers should encourage these internal and external meetings to revolve around key themes related to the traits (e.g., compassion, friendliness, generosity) that salespeople with moral identity hold dearly. As part of this, sales managers should underscore the specific role of salespeople with moral identity in a sales ethics subculture (Bush et al. 2017; Ferrell et al. 2019; Merkle et al. 2020). By placing salespeople with moral identity in a pivotal role within the sales force, perhaps as peer-trainers sharing best practices related to sales ethics, managers can ensure that the sales ethics subculture is grounded in high morals and one that permeates a culture of superior customer service and teamwork. For sales teams, "doing the right thing" fosters teamwork among the team and benefits the firm customers (Itani et al. 2019).

Lastly, managers need to be aware of situational factors that trigger the effects of moral identity. Managers should recognize that their actions may have inadvertent effects on

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salespeople with higher extents of moral identity. Specifically, managers should be cautious

when it comes to fostering an internal competitive climate as there may be unintended

consequences. While internal competition might appear to be good for sales teams and is well-

intended, it actually diminishes the positive effects for salespeople with high moral identity when

it comes to customer service and teamwork. So, managers should ensure that there is no

resentment between team members and there is no hostility due to any perceived disadvantage.

In specific, managers should ensure fairness and equity in how they assign accounts, compensate

salespeople, and announce the results of individual salespeople to the team. In other words, for

salespeople with moral identity, managers should avoid enabling a "vicious circle of virtue

destruction" or "demoralization of the self" (Weaver 2006) with their actions. Instead, managers

should look for ways to prime the positive effects of moral identity by providing resources and

opportunities for salespeople to exercise their moral agency. They can do this through ethical

leadership (e.g., Gerpott et al. 2019), making salespeople aware of morality-related factors, and

by offering pinpointed training that can enhance the saliency of moral identity traits.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is not without its limitations, which also serve as opportunities for future research.

First, while the intention of this study was to take an initial step in establishing the notion of

salesperson moral identity, it relies on a cross-sectional sample. Given that identities evolve and

are subject to change over time, it would be interesting to capture the longitudinal nature and

consequences of salesperson moral identity. Although it is not uncommon for lower response

rates in studies that sample B2B salespeople, it would have obviously been more ideal to obtain a

higher number of responses. While we did have a representative sample of B2B salespeople to

draw statistical inferences, future studies can look to increase response rates by specifically

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targeting B2B salespeople and forgoing any pre-notifications, leveraging personalized email

solicitations, and sending between one to two follow-up attempts (Daikeler et al. 2020). Our

research also takes a one-sided perspective by sampling only sales professionals. Since the

benefits of salesperson moral identity are also experienced by other members in the salesperson's

social sphere, it would be insightful to capture perspectives from customers and coworkers. This

would also help control the limitations of using single source data (e.g., Podsakoff et al. 2012).

Our study focuses on identification as mediators of the impacts of moral identity on job-

directed outcomes. While the theoretical lens utilized in this study insinuates identification-based

underlying mechanisms, other studies have suggested additional mediators for the effects of

moral identity, such as social approval and self-consistency (van Gils and Horton 2019), moral

disengagement (Chowdhury and Fernando 2014), guilt and shame (Stets and Carter 2006), and

social responsibility (Hardy et al. 2013). As such, given that emotional traits are interpersonal

and thus impact social exchanges and sales relationships (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2000), future

research can examine the emotional side of ethical decision making (Agnihotri et al. 2012) and

what feelings and emotional processes are invoked when it comes to salesperson moral identity.

For instance, scholars can investigate the role of emotional intelligence (e.g., Chowdhury 2017)

in connection to salesperson moral identity, ethical decision-making, and unethical behaviors.

Given the infancy of salesperson moral identity, there are additional fruitful avenues for

future research. As a next logical step to the findings of our study, researchers should look to

show the relationship between salesperson moral identity and job-related outcomes, such as sales

performance and turnover intentions. Future studies could also explore the potential "dark side"

of salesperson moral identity, that is when an individual is mistaken by what really matters to

them or their motivation is driven by trying to deceptively please others and leave a good

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impression (Hertz and Krettenauer 2016). Our research shows that moral identity is largely

beneficial for salespeople when it comes to their interactions with customers and coworkers, but,

for instance, what happens when their efforts are perceived by others as being inauthentic?

Other research can begin to detect what drives salesperson moral identity. Research

suggests that morality is inherently social, so it is possibly that interactions with others play a

key role in the formation of moral identity (Shao et al. 2008). So, researchers can explore the

nature and types of interactions that are distinct to sales settings. Additional research can also

look at the role of moral identity in a non-Western context to see if there are any cultural

nuances. The majority of the extant research, including our study, focuses on Western settings,

where individualism and independence are part of the fabric of these cultures (Hertz and

Krettenauer 2016). For instance, in Eastern contexts, how would "saving face" (e.g., Richard and

McFadden 2016) relate to salesperson moral identity?

As another research opportunity, researchers can expand on our study's findings by

discovering important boundary conditions on the relationships between salesperson moral

identity, salesperson-customer identification, salesperson-organizational identification, customer

service provision behaviors, and teamwork. Finally, future research can consider what behaviors

by other salesperson constituents activates the effects of moral identity – both positively and

negatively. For example, scholars can explore the managerial levers that may be used to readily

prime the positive effects of salesperson moral identity.

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Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Individual Characteristic

Situational Factor

Identification-Based Relationships

External Customer-related Path

Internal
Competitive
Climate

Salesperson-
customer
Identification

Customer
Service
Provision
Behaviors

Salesperson
Moral
Identity

Controls
Job Satisfaction
Sales Experience
Education Level
Age
Company Size

Internal Organization-related Path

Salesperson-
organization
Identification

Teamwork

1

Figure 2. The Moderating Role of Internal Competitive Climate on the Salesperson Moral Identity-Customer Service Provision Behaviors Relationship
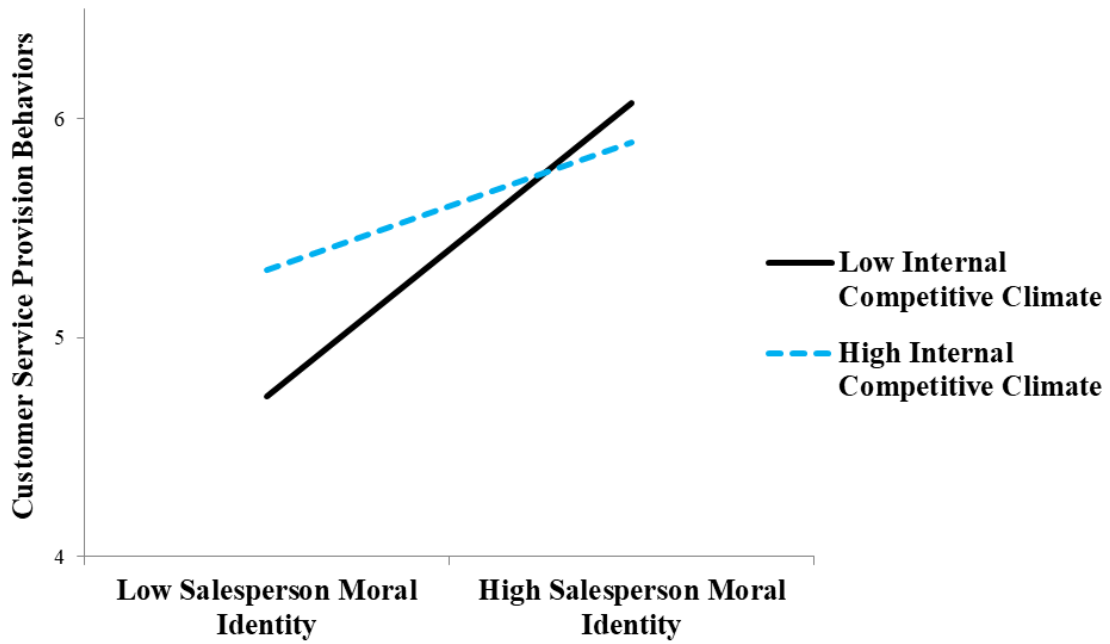
Figure 3. The Moderating Role of Internal Competitive Climate on the Salesperson Moral
Identity-Teamwork Relationship

Table 1. Correlations Matrix and Descriptive Statistics

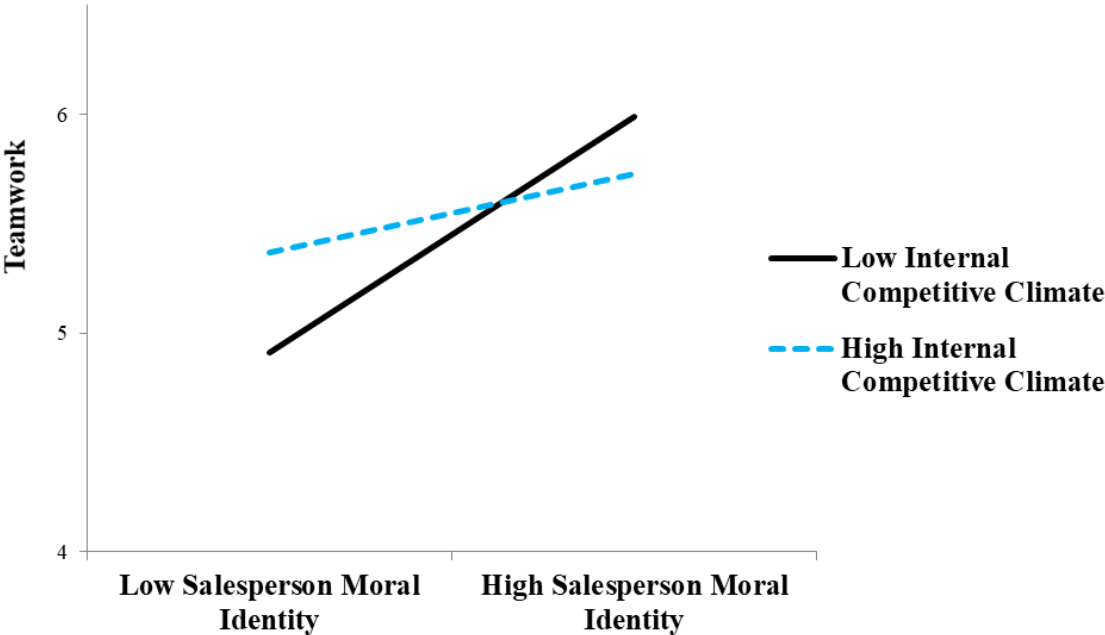|	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Salesperson Moral Identity	5.84	.99	*.81*								
2. Salesperson-organization Identification	5.53	1.17	.53[*]	*.85*							
3. Salesperson-customer Identification	5.31	1.07	.49[*]	.65[*]	*.79*						
4. Customer Service Provision Behaviors	5.62	1.02	.64[*]	.55[*]	.60[*]	*.83*					
5. Teamwork	5.52	.94	.67[*]	.61[*]	.55[*]	.60[*]	*.84*				
6. Internal Competitive Climate	4.19	1.67	-.23[*]	.07	.18[*]	.11	.05	*.90*			
7. Salesperson Job Satisfaction	5.64	1.26	.27[*]	.54[*]	.44[*]	.25[*]	.34[*]	-.12	*.94*		
8. Salesperson Sales Experience	10.05	7.79	-.11	-.03	-.10	-.03	-.02	.02	.01	—	
9. Salesperson Age	33.3	8.75	.13[*]	.03	.12	.18[*]	.12	-.09	-.03	—	—
10. Salesperson Educational Level	—	—	-.05	-.06	-.04	-.06	.06	.04	-.04	-.04	-.11
Cronbach's Alpha	—	—	.82	.91	.85	.89	.86	.95	.94	—	—
Composite Reliability	—	—	.88	.93	.89	.92	.90	.96	.96	—	—
Average Variance Extracted	—	—	.65	.73	.63	.69	70	.82	.89	—	—

N = 313; Numbers added along the diagonal are the square root average variance extracted; SD = Standard deviation; — Not applicable;
Significance level: [*]$p < .05$

Table 2. Constructs, Items, and Measurement Model

Construct/Items	Loading
Salesperson Moral Identity [α = .82; CR = .88; AVE = .65] (Aquino and Reed 2002)	
Listed below are some characteristics that may describe a person: *Caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind.* The person with these characteristics could be you, or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following.	
It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.	.80
Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.	.87
I would be ashamed to be a person who has these characteristics (R).	
Having these characteristics is not really important to me (R).	.62
I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	.90
Salesperson-organization Identification [α = .91; CR = .93; AVE = .73] (Ashforth and Mael 1989)	
I identify with my company.	.82
I am very interested in what others think about my company.	.88
When I talk about my company, I usually say "we rather than 'they'.	.85
My company's successes are my successes.	.88
When someone praises my company, it feels like a personal compliment.	.85
Salesperson-customer Identification [α = .85; CR = .89; AVE = .63] (Ashforth and Mael 1989)	
I identify with my customers.	.73
I am interested in what others including my coworkers think about my customers.	.76
When I talk about my customers, I usually say "we" instead "they".	.87
My customers' success is my success.	.85
When someone praises my customers, it feels like a personal compliment.	.74
Teamwork [α = .86; CR = .90; AVE = .70] (Oliver and Anderson 1994)	
I am known as a team player when performing in groups.	.87
I always fulfill my obligations to others I work with.	.84
I am willing to do my part for the good of the team.	.86
Teamwork is something I've always enjoyed doing.	.79
Customer Service Provision Behaviors [α = .89; CR = .92; AVE = .69] (Jasmand et al. 2012)	
During conversation with customers…	
…I usually try to calm complaining customers, so that we can jointly handle their needs/ complaints about their products.	.85
…I usually provide solutions to customers' concerns related to the products they currently own.	.83
…Having identified the customers' exact problem with their products, I solve it in a reliable way.	.86
…I usually listen attentively to customers in order to take appropriate action to handle their concerns regarding their products.	.81
…I usually pay attention to the customers' questions about their products to answer them correctly.	.82
Internal Competitive Climate [α = .95; CR = .96; AVE = .82] (Anaza and Nowlin 2017)	
Some of my coworkers are hostile to one another…	
…when one coworker outperforms the rest.	.90
…when one coworker appears to have more advantages.	.93
…when one coworker has a better relationship with the manager.	.91
…when one coworker achieves more with less effort.	.90
…when one coworker gets more bonus.	.90
Job Satisfaction [α = .94; CR = .96; AVE = .89] (Brown and Peterson 1993)	
Overall, I am satisfied with my job [a]	.94
I find real enjoyment in my job [a]	.95
How satisfied ae you with your overall job? [b]	.93

α = Cronbach's Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; *The item in italics was dropped*
[a] Agreement Scale (1 = strongly disagree vs. 7 = strongly agree)
[b] Satisfaction Scale (1 = extremely dissatisfied vs. 7 = extremely satisfied)

Table 3. Parameter Estimates and Hypothesized Effects

	Direct Effects Model	Mediated Effects Model	Hypothesized Model	Hypothesis & Support
SMI → SCI	.57***	.57***	.59***	
SMI → SOI	.46***	.46***	.51***	
SMI → CSPB	.68***	.52***	.48***	H_1 supported
SMI → TW	.66***	.48***	.36***	H_2 supported
SCI → CSPB		.29***	.18*	H_3 supported
SCI → TW			.34***	
SOI → CSPB			.21*	
SOI → TW		.39***	.20*	H_4 supported
ICC → SCI			.14**	
ICC → SOI			.04	
ICC → CSPB			.10*	
ICC → TW			.05	
SMI x ICC → SCI			.12	H_{5a} not supported
SMI x ICC → CSPB			-.19*	H_{5b} supported
SMI x ICC → SOI			-.06	H_{5c} not supported
SMI x ICC → TW			-.18*	H_{5d} supported
JS → SCI	.28***	.28***	.27***	
JS → SOI	.45***	.45***	.41***	
JS → CSPB	.13*	.05	-.05	
JS → TW	.18**	.01	-.04	
SE → SCI	-.07	-.07	-.06	
SE → SOI	-.02	-.02	.03	
SE → CSPB	.01	.03	.01	
SE → TW	.03	.04	.04	
Age → SCI	.01	.01	.03	
Age → SOI	.11*	.11*	.14	
Age → CSPB	.09	.10*	.10*	
Age → TW	.04	-.01	.03	
EL → SCI	.01	.01	-.01	
EL → SOI	.02	.02	.02	
EL → CSPB	.02	.02	.03	
EL → TW	.11*	.11*	.12*	
CS → SCI	.04	.04	.02	
CS → SOI	-.03	-.03	-.04	
CS → CSPB	-.01	-.02	.01	
CS → TW	.07*	.08*	.08*	

SMI = Salesperson Moral Identity; SCI = Salesperson-customer Identification; SOI = Salesperson-organization Identification; CSPB = Customer Service Provision Behaviors; TW = Teamwork; ICC = Internal Competitive Climate; JS = Job Satisfaction; CS = Company Size; EL = Education Level; SE = Sales Experience
Significance level: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Appendix A: Sample Characteristics

Exchange type (%)	
Services	18.8
Products	35.8
Both	45.4
Company Size (yearly revenues) (%)	
Less than $1 million	20.8
$1-10 million	38.3
$11-50 million	19.2
$51-100 million	12.8
More than $100 million	8.9
Average age (years) [SD]	33.3 [8.75]
Average sales experience (years) [SD]	10.05 [7.79]
Gender (%)	
Female	27.5%
Male	72.5 %
Education level (%)	
College degree or above	85.3%
Total Number of Salespeople	313